ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

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By being openly prejudiced, by being patronising and by having low expectations of the child's abilities, their effect on the black child are enormous and devastating. Pride and self-confidence are the best armour against the prejudice and humiliating experiences which they will certainly face in school and in the society" (Coard, 1971).

Dedication:

This thesis is dedicated to my two sons: Giovel and Anaya Amoh. I also dedicate this to my late father and siblings: Peter Akomaning, Josephine Akomaning and David Akomaning.

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ABSTRACT
FACULTY OF HEALTH SOCIAL CARE AND EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Attainment statistics spanning more than three decades have indicated continuing high levels of underachievement among Blacks, including Africans in schools in England and Wales. Data has always placed Black Africans into one composite category, making it nearly impossible to identify the sub-groups within this category who are underperforming. Yet there is limited research depicting the educational experiences of young people within the African group. The main aim of this study therefore is to single out one group from the Black African category, who are of Ghanaian origin and illuminate their voices concerning their educational experiences.

This thesis therefore examines the likely contributory factors internal and external to the school system, which influence their educational experiences either negatively or positively. Using a qualitative approach and a phenomenological methodology, the young people and key stakeholders involved in their education - parents, teachers and community leaders- have shared their views through in-depth semi-structured interviews. Following an evaluation of the limited utility of various theoretical lenses, such as Cultural Deficit theory, Post - Colonial Theory and Marxist Theory, a synthesis between Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory and Critical Race Theory is advanced to provide theoretical underpinnings for this study and a lens through which to analyse the research data.

The findings of this research reveal that negative stereotyping, low expectations by teachers and institutional racism in schools exist in British schools. Furthermore, there is strong evidence to suggest that there are insufficient Black role models, the Curriculum in English schools is Eurocentric, and parental involvement is key, in impacting on educational experiences and outcomes.

The conclusions drawn are that Race Relations and Equality guidelines in school policies should be monitored by Department for Education and Local Authorities to facilitate their translation into practice. While proposing that struggling to take up this challenge should be supported, parents must understand that the burden of educational responsibility is placed upon them, as recommended by the Educational Responsibility Model advanced in this thesis.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Cultural Capital, Race, Class, Stereotyping, Ghanaian.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abbreviations

AMMA   Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association

ARE   Anti-Racist Education

ASR   Academic Success Responsibility

BAME   Black Asian Minority Ethnic

CLS   Critical Legal Studies

CPD   Continuing Professional Development

CRT   Critical Race Theory

CYPU   Children and Young People's Unit

DES   Department for Education and Skills

DfE   Department for Education

GCSE   General Certificate of Secondary Education

GLC   Greater London Council

GRR   Gradual Release of Responsibility

GSS   Ghana Statistical Service

ILEA   Inner London Education Authority

IPA   Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPPR   Institute for Public Policy Research

ITT   Initial Teacher Training

JRF   Joseph Rowntree Foundation

KS2   Key Stage 2

LA   Local Authority

LDAEC   London Development Agency Education Commission

NUS   National Union of Students

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ONS   Office for National Statistics

PSHE   Physical Social Health Emotional

SEN Special Education Needs

TDATeacherDevelopmentAgency

UCLA University of California, Los Angeles

UK United Kingdom

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USA United States of America

Chapter One - Introduction

We barely discuss African students in attainment reports, as they have been the subject of relatively little research (Cassen and Kingdon 2007, p. 9).

This research study presents and critically analyses an account of the educational experiences of eighteen teenagers of Ghanaian origin, living in England. It focuses on their standpoint regarding the internal and external school factors that influence their educational experiences and academic outcomes. In addition, the study reports on the perspectives of key stakeholders, comprising, parents, teachers, and community leaders in their dealings with the teenagers regarding the issues that impact on their educational experiences and academic outcomes. A total of twenty-nine participants have been involved in this study. In this Chapter, I present the aims and significance of the study, a brief account of the presence of minority ethnic communities in the United Kingdom, my source of interest in this research area, the gap in knowledge, and an outline of the thesis chapters.

1.1 About the study

This study attempts to fill the gaps in the literature by examining the educational experiences of young people from Black Minority ethnic backgrounds with an emphasis on Ghanaians and how these experiences may affect their educational outcomes. This study further examines the experiences of stakeholders, such as community members and leaders inclusive of parents, religious leaders, and teachers in their dealings with such young people.

Several factors informed my choice of this research topic for my thesis. First, this project comes from my experiences of being a Ghanaian, having part of my educational experiences in England and teaching children in England for the past twelve years. As a school teacher, I have observed that the national data often reveals that the attainment levels of the majority of Black African pupils/students are persistently low compared with other ethnic groups, such as the Chinese and Indians. Although the achievement gap for

Black Africans is gradually closing in recent years, the persistent underachievement of Blacks in British schools has been the trend for many years (see for example Coard, 1971; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000). This is evident in a previous empirical study by the Youth Cohort Study Department for Education (DfE), 2015. The data below reveals a historical overview of the attainment of Blacks over a period of 15 years, between 1991 and 2006.
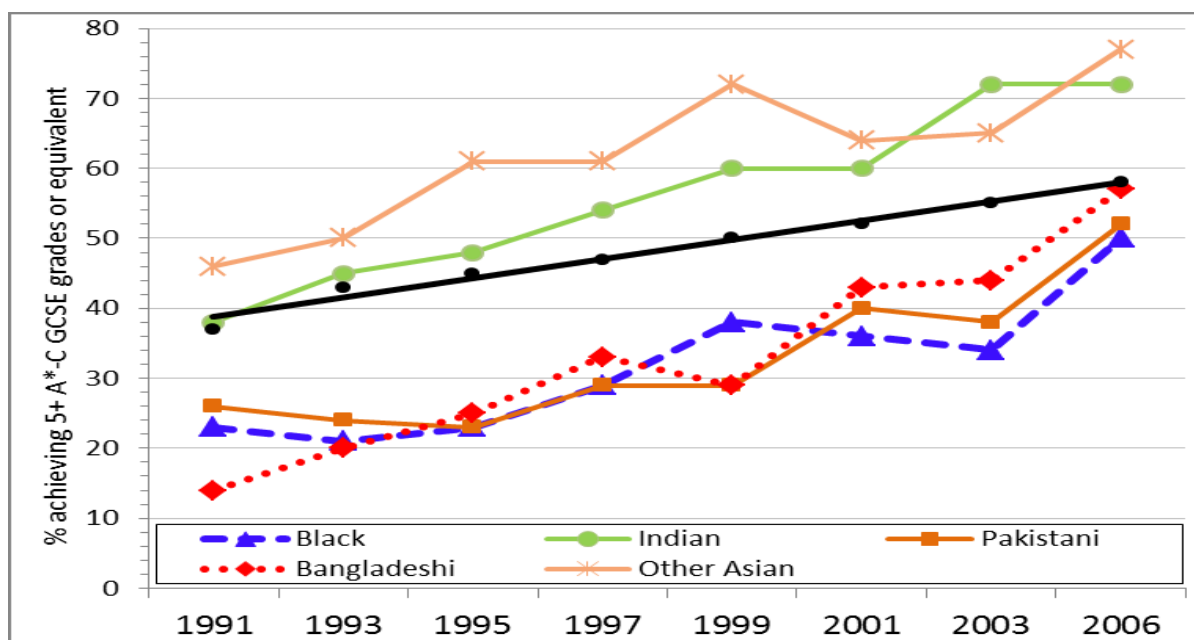
Figure 1:Percentage of 16-year-olds achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C: NYCS 1991-2006

Source: (DFE Ethnicity, deprivation and educational achievement at age 16 in England: trends over time Annex to compendium of evidence on minority ethnic resilience to the effects of deprivation on attainment 2015)

This data provides a primary source of data on ethnicity and educational achievement by ethnicity. Although Blacks narrowed the gap with other ethnic groups such as White pupils/students by improving their performance, the proportion of Blacks who achieved A*-C is lowest in comparison with the other ethnic groups, such as the Indians and Pakistanis.

Moving on to most recent attainment trends of minority ethnic groups, the DfE (2014), reports:

Pupils/students from Black background are the lowest performing group. 53.1% of pupils/students from a Black background achieved at least 5 A*- C GCSEs (or equivalent) grades including English and mathematics; this is 3.4 percentage points below the national average (56.6%). Although Black pupils/students have an expected level of progress above the national average, 75.5% of Black pupils/students are making the expected progress in English and 68.4% in mathematics; both above the national average of 71.6% for English and 65.5% for mathematics (p. 3).
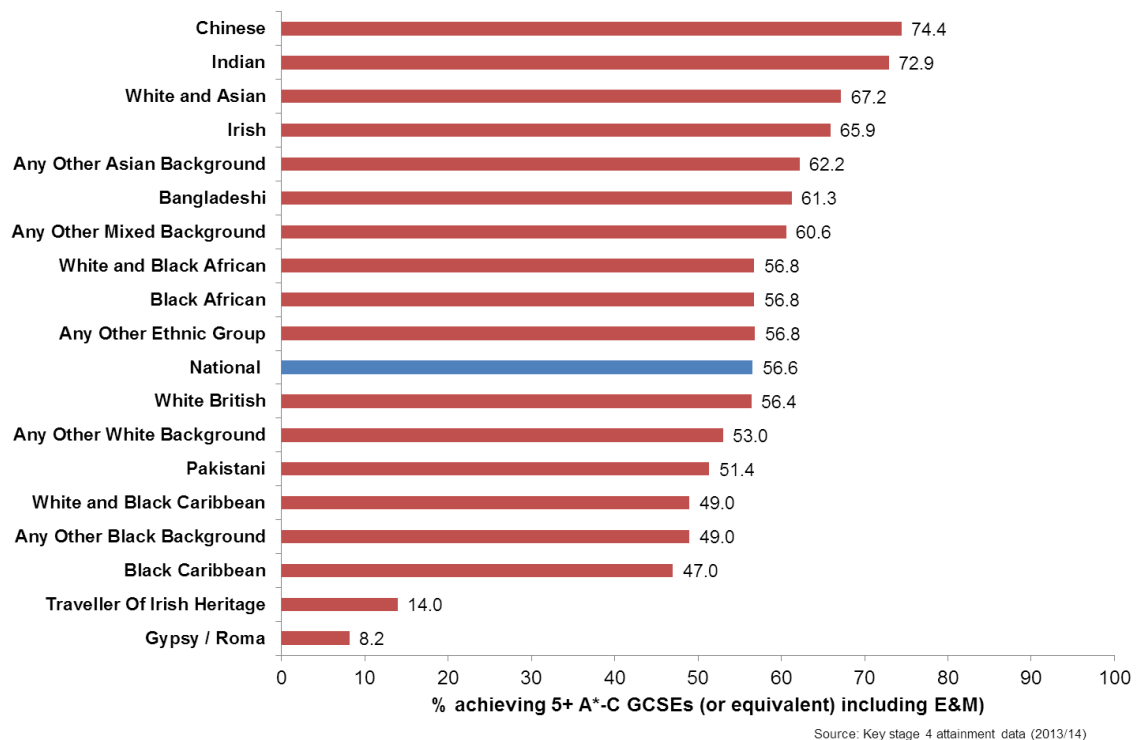
Figure 2: Percentage of pupils/students achieving 5+ A*- C GCSEs (or equivalent) grades including English and mathematics England, 2013/14

(Source: Statistical First Release GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics, 2013 to 2014 revised)

Figure 2 shows the attainment levels of varying ethnic groups in England at GCSE. The chart reveals the percentage of pupils/students attaining a minimum of 5A*- C or equivalents, including maths and English. It is evident from the chart that 74.4% of Chinese pupils/students achieved at least 5 A*- C GCSEs (or equivalent) grades including English and mathematics. This is 17.9% points above the national average (56.6%). Gypsy/Roma pupils/students are noted to attain the lowest levels with only 8.2% attaining 5A*s – C. The data unveils that Black Africans are gradually closing the attainment gap and the percentage of pupils/students attaining A*-C is just 0.2% above the national average totalling 56.8%.

However, the gap between Black Africans attainment and that of the Chinese or the Indians is still wide (17.6% and 16.1% respectively). One major critique regarding this and previous data is that Black African as a category has always been homogenised and put into one category disregarding the dynamics of the subgroups within the broad category of Black Africa. Africa is a vast continent comprising different ethnic groups and cultures. Generalising attainment levels for this group makes it difficult to ascertain which subgroups are struggling so that they can be targeted and the appropriate intervention strategies can be designed to improve their outcomes.

1.2 Scope of study

In this study, I explore perceptions, behaviours and attitudes within and outside the school environment, which may affect academic success or failure focusing on young people of Ghanaian origin. This issue has received limited attention in literature and therefore merits an in-depth study. There have been several reports and studies on the underachievement of African and Carribean pupils/students in general. For instance, Runnymede Trust (2007), reveals that, young people of African and Caribbean origin tend to have low attainments compared with other ethnic groups. Although there was an improvement in the attainment levels of Black Africans in 2011, (57.9% of the total of Black Africans who sat for the GCSEs), their attainment levels were still low compared to the Chinese, Indians and Bangladeshi pupils/students who attained 78.5%, 74.4% and 59.5% respectively. The report further states that:

> *'A reason for educational attainment differences could be unconscious bias from teachers, leading them to assume that children of certain ethnic groups are more (or less) likely to misbehave or work hard. There has been concern from a sizeable number of newly trained teachers that their training does not well prepare them for teaching pupils/students of different ethnicities. Improved teacher training on this issue may improve outcomes' (p. 4).*

It is reasonable to mention that the achievement gap for Black Africans is narrowing as depicted in Figure 1.2, which shows a better outcome for Black Africans, as it slightly surpasses that of White British. The trends in attainment data depicting Blacks, including Africans as underachieving, is a motivating factor for me to investigate into the perspectives of young people of Ghanian origin regarding their experiences, within the British education system. I am interested in getting an insight into their thoughts and feelings, and making known their voices regarding their own education. The voices of young people regarding the curriculum and education development are hardly heard and since they are at the receiving end, it is prudent therefore to involve them in this matter. It is intended that this study will further contribute to knowledge on education and race relations in the United Kingdom and on the experiences of this one, specific Ghanaian sub-group of Black African.

 In the succeeding sections, I outline the rationale and aims of the study, the research questions, the significance of pursuing a study about Ghanaians, gaps in knowledge and the structure of the thesis.

1.3 Developing a rationale for this study: A Personal Reflections

Perceptions of the Black race are played out in the public domain and have been for decades (see for example, Rampton Report, 1981; Swann Report, 1985 MacPherson Report, 1999). David Cameron's 2015 Conservative conference speech referenced a Black woman who had to change her name from Jorden to Elizabeth in order to get a job interview in 2012 (Staff, 2015). He raised concerns about the ease with which Black people find themselves in prison rather than in a top UK university (see also Lammy 2017). Viola Davis, a film actor, during her Emmy award speech for being the first African-American woman to win the best actor in a drama category highlighted: *"The only thing that separates women of colour from anyone else is simply opportunity."* Recently, the current government has set out a national agenda to tackle racial and ethnic inequalities in public service outcomes, which has long been in existence within the society. However, as part of government's transparency and accountability equality policy, the Inequality Audit Report lately published

revealed inequalities in wider society, are reflected in the education system too (see, Walker, 2016; Inequality Audit Report 2017; Cole, 2017).

For several years, the ubiquitous and derogatory depiction of young Black people, especially males by the media such as the newspapers, tend to have negative consequences on them (see, for example, Gillborn, 2007; Abbot 2012).

Originally from Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast), and a native of Assin Bosomadwe in the Central Region of Ghana, I moved to England about 14 years ago to further my education. Before enrolling as a trainee teacher, I had the opportunity of visiting a few schools in London to familiarise myself with the British educational system and to gain some work experience. During these visits and school placements, striking observations about the educational circumstances of Black pupils/students raised my personal and intellectual curiosity. It was evident some teachers gave more attention to 'White' children rather than 'Black' children. The picture was reversed when 'important' personalities paid visits to the school. The teachers in question appeared to pay more attention to the 'Black' children to give the impression of an inclusive atmosphere. In addition, in staff rooms, teachers' perceptions about 'Black' pupils/students were evident in the way and manner these pupils/students were discussed by teachers and support staff, regardless of my presence as a Black person, oblivious to the degrading nature of some of the comments.

There was a brief jolt during one of my placements as a trainee teacher in an inner-city school in London, in 2005. A five-year-old White British girl walked up to me and asked: 'Miss, why is your skin like this?' - an obvious probe into why I looked different from the other teachers. My initial reaction was not to blame her because I knew that I was the only Black adult in the school and that the majority of school, academic, non-academic reading materials and audio visuals she was exposed to are generally stereotypical of Black people.

As a Black student studying in the UK, there were some occasions when I felt ignored and treated differently on the grounds of race. In another context, while shopping on Christmas Eve in 2012, I had walked into a perfume shop to buy a gift. I had expected it to be wrapped as was being done with due attention for the 'White' customers. I was taken aback when

the shop assistant announced to me that it would not be possible to wrap mine due to the nature of the packaging. She indeed refused to wrap it, then I asked for a refund after it became evident that she was reluctant. On my way home, I kept wondering, did I not have the right to buy an expensive perfume? What was wrong with the way I looked?

Two years into my doctoral studies, my then six year old in year one, started to pass comments about his school and himself that I found to be very disturbing. One day he asked me why there was no "brown" person on his school's website. On another day, he brought home a leaflet advertising a summer fare within our county. When asked if he wanted to go? He responded *"I can't go because there is nobody with a brown skin on the paper."* This was an eye opener. I thought to myself that at a tender age my son could tell or he was made to feel he was different from his peers and he had less privileges. At the same time I had Black African and Caribbean friends who were always raising concerns regarding how they felt their children were labelled at school and were not given equal opportunities as their peers.

My personal experiences, those shared by friends and relatives and public figures have established a new personal interest in race relations, particularly as it relates to Black African children. My personal heritage and background as a Ghanaian immigrant, motivated me to narrow down this thesis to looking at the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian heritage in England.

There are considerable benefits as an indigenous person, researching into my community. As a member of the Ghanaian community, I have a unique position as an 'insider,' which assumes a level of 'taken- for- granted knowledge' (Kelly *et al.* 2012 p. 6). As a member of the community, I can act as a cultural broker by drawing upon my knowledge and lived experiences. As an 'insider', my role as a researcher is understood as a necessary and important aspect of a successful research project as many qualitative researchers may argue (Kelly *et al.* 2012 p. 7). It provides me with an empowering tool for this study as I can interact naturally with the group and its members.

Significantly, to facilitate the credibility and trustworthiness of this study, I must be reflexive at every stage of the research process, been aware of the importance to reflect on my bias and my subjectivity. I must acknowledge that my belief, position, and perspective might influence the study. This issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five. In the next section, I present the aims guiding this study.

1.4 Aims of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin who are living in England. This group is not homogenous but is multi-lingual with some participants having English as their second language, and others having English as a first language. The title of this thesis, The Educational Experiences of Young People of Ghanaian origin, reveals the importance of understanding and documenting what young people of Ghanaian origin and others within the Ghanaian community in the Midlands and the South of England think about their educational experiences.

The emphasis of this research is to gain meaning and detailed explanation of the respondents' circumstances surrounding their achievement. There is the need to understand and uncover their outlook regarding the factors that may influence educational experience through the narratives of the respondents themselves.

Another aim of this study is to explore what changes within schools and wider educational policy might be necessary to improve the educational experiences of Ghanaian heritage pupils/students specifically and Black Africans in general.

Additionally, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), every child has a right to quality of education irrespective of their social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Nonetheless, the minorities and the right to education document by UNICEF (2008) suggests that:

"The right to quality education is not enjoyed equally by all. Minorities in various regions of the world suffer disproportionately from unequal or restricted access to quality education and inappropriate education strategies. The absence of value instruction prompts refusal of common and political rights, including rights to the opportunity of development and flexibility of expression, and points of confinement investment in the social and financial existence of the State and public affairs, such as the exercise of voting rights" (p. 15).

The UK signed the UN Convention Rights of the Child in 1990 and it came into force in 1992. However, the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in the UK (2011), made some observations about the UK, showing that the concerns raised in the 2008 report were not being fully addressed by the UK government. The report notes:

"*The rate of school exclusion of Black pupils/students in the UK is decreasing, but is still disproportionately high. The Committee also notes the relative lack of success in addressing under-achievement in British schools, particularly for those groups which have been identified as most affected, notably, Gypsy and Traveller children, Black and Afro-Caribbeans' (articles 2 and 5(e)(v)). The Committee recommends that the State party (UK government) adopt an intensified approach towards preventing exclusion of Black pupils/students and set out in detail its plans for addressing under-achievement for those groups which have been identified as most affected particularly, Gypsy and Traveller children and Afro-Caribbeans.*" (p. 7)

Nearly a decade after these concerns were raised, most of the issues have still not been addressed. In 2016, the committee (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) reiterated, there are still measures, which ought to be taken by the UK government to eliminate any forms of discrimination faced by minority ethnic communities, including Africans. This study thus, aims at exploring the views of the young people regarding their right of non-discrimination.

1.5 Research questions

The current study is guided by the broad reasearch question: What are Ghanaian teenagers' perceptions regarding their experiences of the British education system? The following are the sub questions, which relate to the issues raised in the previous sections (1.2 and 1.3).

1. What are pupils/students', parents' and teachers' views regarding the extent to which the principle of non-discrimination as part of their rights as young people is promoted in schools?

2. What factors may affect their educational experiences and thereby, academic achievement in school?

3. To what extent are pupils/students and parents involved in the decision-making regarding their education and the degree to which their views are considered?

4. What are pupils/students' parents', community leaders and teachers' views regarding how they and schools can enhance Ghanaians' educational experiences and subsequently attainment levels?

1.6 The post-World War II growth of minority ethnic communities in the UK

A recognition by the UK government of the necessity to re-build the British economy after the Second World War, required a hefty influx of immigrant labour. Potential migrants from the Caribbean and elsewhere, including Africa, became aware of the needs of the labour market in the United Kingdom (UK). For the first time, large numbers of workers and their families outside Europe, principally from India, Pakistan, and the Caribbean, were attracted to the UK. In order to protect the rights of the immigrants from the Commonwealth and to control immigration, the British government introduced the British Nationality Act in 1948, when the government was seeking workers from the Commonwealth (Immigration Watch UK 2016). This enabled many subjects of the Commonwealth to migrate to the United Kingdom as they were given the rights to live and work. Their families were also given similar rights upon arrival to the UK.

Since the Second World War, and more recently, conflicts around the world for many years have led many vulnerable people, who are faced with harsh, life changing challenges such as civil war, violence and abuse, to migrate to different parts of Europe, including the UK,

for safety and to seek refugee status. In recent years this has been widely termed, the migration crisis in Europe, referring to the influx of migrants into Europe, including the UK.

As previously stated, the number of immigrants have increased over the years, in that the British capitalist system needs the services of Black immigrants and other immigrants such as Eastern Europeans to fill in shortages of unskilled labour, particularly menial jobs. According to Richardson, (2007), Black immigrants perform four major tasks in the UK: Firstly, Blacks increase the supply of labour through their presence, particularly unskilled labour. Secondly, Blacks perform many of the menial and unwanted jobs where otherwise, there would be a shortage of labour. Moreover, the presence of Black immigrants tends to divide the working class, with many unaware of this division, reducing working class aggressiveness towards employers and the employing class.

Lastly, Richardson (2007) reiterates that apart from receiving low wages, many Black communities receive poorer quality amenities such as schools, housing, health, and recreational facilities. Most Blacks are forced to live in areas that are over -crowded, run down areas with the least amenities, such as Hackney Wick in London, because of the extensive experience of prejudice and low wages. He argues:

> *'If the children of immigrants were to get equal educational opportunities, then in one generation there would be no large labour pool from underdeveloped countries prepared to do the menial and unwanted jobs in the economic system at the lowest wages and in the worst housing; for our children armed with a good education, would demand the jobs- and the social status that goes with such jobs- befitting their educational qualification.This would adversely affect Britain's social order, with its notions about the right place of the Black about White in society. Therefore, one way to ensure no changes in the social hierarchy and abundant unskilled labour is to adopt and adapt the educational system to meet the needs of the situation: to prepare our children for the society's future unskilled and ill-paid jobs'* (Richardson 2007, p. 52).

It is worth mentioning that in the current climate of Brexit, most of these comments are applicable to other immigrants such as the Polish and other East European. Children of immigrant families, have been faced with significant challenges in the UK compared to other

developed countries such as Norway (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) cited Davies, 2012). The Report specifically mentions:

> *'Children from immigrant as well as poorer backgrounds are more likely to be clustered in disadvantaged schools than their counterparts in other countries such as France, Sweden and the Netherlands. The phenomenon is illustrated by statistics in the latest Education at a Glance report, which found that 80% of children of immigrant families in the UK were being taught in schools with large numbers of other immigrant or disadvantaged pupils/students. The highest proportion of any country in the survey and significantly above the OECD average of 68%' (OECD 2012).*

Although the report from the OECD does not specifically mention Black immigrant families in the report, the argument by Richardson, (2007) explicitly demonstrates that African Caribbeans and Black Africans are likely to be affected by the adverse effects of immigration. This places them in disadvantaged positions within the society (see, also Amin et al. 1997; Rollock 2007; Rowntree Foundation 2007).

In recent years, other migrants have migrated to the UK either to further their studies, in search of greener pastures for themselves and their families or for other varied, often tragic, reasons. Migrants from Africa to the UK, are no exception. Africans account for a fifth of the foreign-born population in England and Wales (Office of National Statistics (ONS), 2015). According to the ONS, Ghanaians are amongst the top ten African-born national groups resident in the UK.

Ghanaian immigrants form part of Britain's super- diverse society (Vertovec, 2007) and most of them confidently call the UK their 'home' but they can be faced with diverse forms of challenges as immigrants, which will be discussed later in the thesis.

Thus, in the section following, I expatiate and justify why Ghanaians living in the UK merit a research study.

1.7 Making a case for a Ghanaian study in the UK

Ghana is a country situated on the West Coast of Africa, with a population of about 25 million (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2013). The distance between Ghana and the UK is approximately 3200 miles and 2758 nautical miles.

Although being a former colony of the British, Ghana has its own cultures and indigenous languages. There are 35 langauges spoken by different ethnic groups. however, English is the official language of Ghana. The educational system is based on the British education system.

The map below depicts the geographical locations of the two countries.
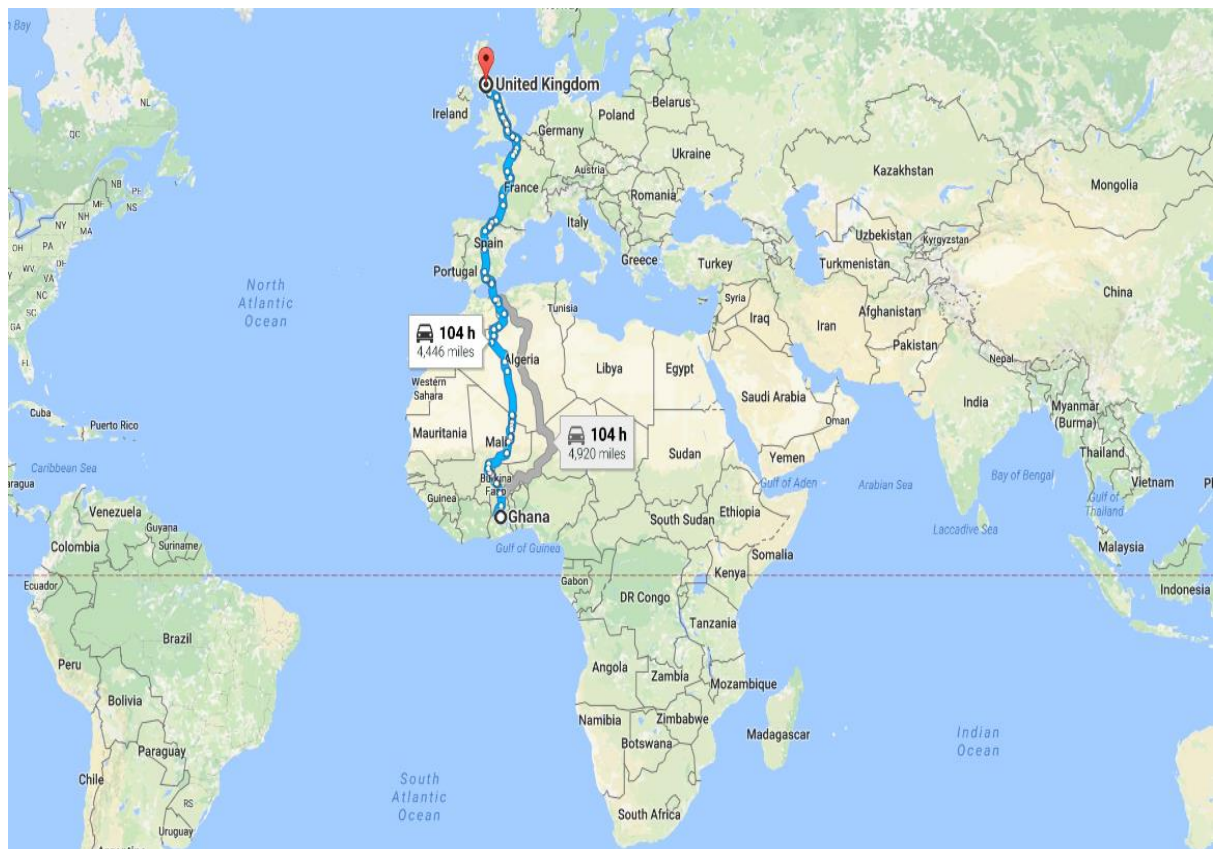
Figure 3: Geographical locations of Ghana and the UK

(Source: Google maps, 2017)

A question that one may ask and is worth asking is: What is the significance of the Ghanaian presence in the UK that makes it worthy of study? There are several justifications. As noted earlier, the Ghanaian community is one of the oldest West African communities in the UK.

The 2011 UK population census recorded there are 94,000 Ghanaian-born residents in the UK.

The British played a role in colonising Africa as well as the Caribbean and the slave trade meant that Ghanaians, either by compulsion or in time through trade, found themselves living in England. Ghanaians remain part of the growing immigrant community in England. It is fascinating to know that Black Africans, and for that matter, Ghanaians have been in the UK since the 16th century and they have contributed to the development of this country. For instance, Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, a Ghanaian arrived in England in 1772 and was the first African who demanded total abolition of the slave trade. He also helped to rescue Henry Demane, an African who had been kidnapped and shipped to the West Indies (see, for example, The Abolishing Project, 2013).

Many Ghanaians value and have valued the significance of education in one's life. Various prominent people brought their children or came to England themselves to be educated by the middle of the nineteenth century. Killingray (1994 p. 8), states that

> "*one of the terms of the British Asante treaty was that two of the royal family, Owusu Kwantabisa and Owusu-Ansah, should be taken as hostages and be educated in Britain at the expense of the British government.*"

He further notes:

> "*following the British defeat of Asante in 1874, the son of Asantehene (Asante king), Kofi Nti was sent to England to be educated, and he attended Surrey County School for six years but was expelled in 1881, guilty of an immoral act with a servant girl*" (p. 8).

In 1945, Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah came to the United Kingdom to further his education in law and he supported the organisation of the Fifth Pan-African Congress. He also served as the vice-president of the West African Students Union.

'Over the last 60 years, many Ghanaians have migrated to the United Kingdom to pursue further or higher education and to seek greener pastures for themselves and their families' (Killingray, 1994, p. 7).

Primarily, most Ghanaians were part of the temporary community who were typically sailors living in London's Docklands in the 1960's. Now booming, the Ghanaian community has grown up across England and Wales in areas such as Tottenham, Hackney, Enfield, and Seven Sisters. Most Ghanaians will also be found in the UKs major cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Cardiff, Glasgow, Cardiff and many more (International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 2009).

In recent years, many Ghanaians have continued to follow the trend of furthering their education in the UK and subsequently making the UK their home. Larger numbers of Ghanaians started migrating to the UK in the late 1950s and 1960s because it became very popular amongst the elites in Ghana to travel abroad to gain exposure to western culture and philosophy, including education.

My personal experiences in this instance cannot be overlooked. My father was passionate about giving his family the best in life, and he realised that the only way he could achieve his goals in life was to further his studies and that would help him to secure a good job. He then took the opportunity travel to England to pursue an accounting and management diploma course in the late 1960s at the Pitman College in London. Committed to his family, he made sure my mum was with him. As a factory worker, my mum took advantage of English courses that were available back then to enable her to sharpen up her language skills. My parents left England for Ghana in the mid-1970s after living in England for about ten years.

This parent/child migration cycle is very common amongst a large proportion of the Ghanaian community in England. However, unlike my dad, many Ghanaians do not return home. Instead, they spend most of their productive lives in the UK. As a result, they are more likely to have a family life in the UK and their children would have to access the English educational system. Many Ghanaians desire access to quality education, which forms part of their rights (UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989). Both parents and pupils/students are hopeful that every young person will be empowered to enable him/her to reach the full potential as this is a prerequisite to having better chances in life, and

subsequently to help facilitate a secure future. However, it is noted that minority ethnic pupils/students in England do face many more challenges than their White peers and they tend to live in poorer and unequal circumstances (Tomlinson, 1983, 2014, 2015; Inequality Audit Report, 2017).

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study is analysed through the lenses of two frameworks, synthesising with Critical Race Theory and Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory (SRT). The rationale for synthesising these two frameworks is to argue that Black pupils/students, and specifically Ghanaians, are faced with multiple challenges within the British education system, which may influence their educational experience. I acknowledge the significance of other theories such as Intersectionality, Post-Colonial Theory, Marxist Theory and Cultural Deficit Theory, in examining issues relating to race, class, gender and ethnicity. However, the rationale for not embracing intersectionality as framework is that, this study does not engage in an intersectional analysis of educational experiences, as a comparison of educational experiences from a gender perspective is not the focus. Similarly, Post-Colonial Theory has not been adopted as the preferred framework. Although the challenges that Black pupils/students are faced within schools may be as a direct result of colonialism and imperialism, the focus of this study is not aimed at analysing, explaining or responding to the legacy of colonialism. Even though Marxist theory recognises the issue of race in explaining some forms of oppression within society, this has not been adopted as a framework for this study because Marxist ideology is largely grounded on the working class and the economy. It focuses on issues at the macro-level, social system and the economy. The focus of this current study is however at the micro level, with emphasis on individual educational experiences, the various forms of capitals a family may possess and the impact on educational experience.

On the other hand, Cultural Deficit Theory is not utilised as a framework for this study because it is based on a weak notion that children and young people who face diverse forms of challenge, such as underachievement in school, is as a direct outcome of their

dysfunctional families or cultures. A detailed account of all the theories mentioned will be presented in Chapter Four.

1.9 Addressing gaps in Knowledge

The academic attainment of Black pupils/students in England has been under scrutiny for several decades due to their persistent low attainment at GCSE level. To date, most empirical research in this area has investigated academic achievement of African Caribbean pupils/students and the results have been generalised for all Black pupils/students. The number of empirical studies on the educational experiences and the academic attainment of Black African pupils/students are very limited. For instance, Demi researched on Somalis and Kum's study focused on Cameroonians. The African continent is colossal, nonetheless, African students are barely discussed in achievement reports, and they have been the subject of relatively little research (JRF, 2007; Demie 2013). Attainment reports have always placed Black Africans into one category without establishing which subgroups within that category are underachieving to ensure that they are given the appropriate support. It is important to look more closely at one of the sub groups within the broader category. Ghanaians fall into the category of Black African hence, the rationale for the research study into this group.

I have argued in the preceding section that the amount of literature on Ghanaian education in the UK is scant, as most studies have focused on Black pupils/students in general or African Caribbean. For instance, Gillborn and Gipps (1996), researched into minority ethnic communities in general. Troyna (1987), explored anti-racist policy in education, and work by the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) in the 1980s examined the underachievement of Blacks. The aforementioned studies are evident that the issue of underachievement and discrimination have both been a long-standing problem since the 1980's. These studies made no differentiation between Black African and Black Caribbean pupils/students. In more recent years, many scholars have, likewise, investigated into the achievement of Black pupils/students in general. This is illustrated in the works of Maylor *et al.* (2009), who evaluated the Black Children's Achievement Programme in England. Gosai,

(2009) investigated the achievement of African Caribbean Boys. Tikly *et al* (2006) spearheaded the project: *Evaluation of Aiming High: African Caribbean Achievement Project.* However, a clear distinction in research needs to be made between the different sub-groups that are within the categories of Black African and African Caribbean. Relatively, few studies have explored the education of Ghanaians in England (see for example Williams, 2014; Demie, 2013 and Owusu-Kwarteng 2010).

When this current study started in April 2013, no study had specifically investigated the educational experiences of Ghanaians across England. While two researchers (Williams, 2014; Demie, 2013) have explored the educational achievement of Ghanaians at GCSE level, they focused on end of key stage four attainment, rather than educational experiences. None of them explored from the vantage viewpoint of the perspectives of the young people themselves, and excluded the participants' feelings and thoughts regarding their education. This current study has a wider perspective, considering pupils/students between the ages of 13 to 19 years and further explores perceptions of educational experiences.

The most recent empirical study, that is similar to this current study, highlights Cross-Cultural Educational Experiences and Academic Achievement of Ghanaian Immigrant Youth in Urban Public Schools in the USA (see, Kumi-Yeboah and Smith, 2016). It examines the educational experiences and academic achievement of pupils/students who have migrated from Ghana to the USA, and they were recruited from one metropolitan area in Florida. In contrast, this study explores the educational experiences of young people between the ages of thirteen to nineteen who are of Ghanaian origin and it includes both young people who have migrated to the UK and those born in the UK and who identify themselves as British Ghanaians. Participants in this study range from pupils/students in year 8 of secondary school to students in the first year of university but previous studies have solely focused on pupils/students at GCSE level. The underpinning principle for

including young people who have migrated to the UK and British-born Ghanaians is to take account of the experiences from both perspectives.

1.10 Terminology

In this current study, the term parents are inclusive of carers and guardians. The ethnic group referred to as Black African, are people who have any ancestry from the African continent, including Arabs and North Africans. Regarding the various educational statistics and the British census presented, these refer to a demographic group, a cultural group, and not a race (ONS, 2011). Racism in this thesis denotes the discrimination both within the institutional structures of schooling and interaction between persons based on the negative opinion of presumed racial features (Gillborn, 1990). The term Ghanaian origin refers to young people born in the UK with Ghanaian parents and who identify themselves as British Ghanaians and those who were born in Ghana and have migrated to the UK.

1.11 Outline of thesis

The study is divided into ten Chapters following on from this introductory Chapter (Chapter One). Chapter Two presents a discussion of the different policies set out by various UK governments regarding minority ethnic communities in British schools. It highlights the effectiveness and shortfalls of the previous policies aimed at improving the education of minority ethnic pupils/students. Chapter Three presents a review of research literature in relation to the educational experiences and academic achievement of Black pupils/students in English state-maintained schools. The goal is to examine existing knowledge and experience from the literature in this area. This will facilitate an elaboration of the background of the study and establish the relevance of the investigation. It also provides a rationale for this study. In Chapter Four, I discuss the theoretical lenses for this study, establishing that multiple factors contribute to the issues of the phenomenon under examination. The rationale behind choosing phenomenology as the most suitable research methodology and the data collection methods, my justification for using interviews as a data

collection tool, ethical consideration and a few more are highlighted in Chapter Five. The next Four Chapters report findings from the analysis of data gathered from the young people, parents, teachers and community leaders. Four major themes emerged from data and they are discussed in these Four Chapters. The themes are pupil and school relationships, internal school factors, external school factors and the burden of educational responsibility. The data presented is discussed considering the literature to provide an explanation, summary, and critical evaluation of the data in relation to the research problem under scrutiny. Secondly, analysing the data in the light of the literature shows new insights coming from the study. Chapter Ten presents conclusions, makes recommendations for further research, and offer suggestions for strategies to enhance the educational experiences and academic achievement of Ghanaians and Black Africans, in general.

1.12 Conclusion

This Chapter has introduced and highlighted the aims and rationale behind this study. It has emphasised some of my personal experiences firstly as a teacher, mother, and as a Black African woman living in Britain. In the next Chapter, I present a discussion of the different policies set out by various UK governments regarding minority ethnic communities in British schools to enhance their educational outcomes.

Chapter Two - Policy debates

> *"At the end of the twentieth-century education in England remained a major agent in the reproduction of a social division of labour, and social class, race and gender remained reliable indicators of individual levels of economic poverty or prosperity. Despite the post-war shift towards meritocratic and egalitarian ideals and wider opportunities for previously marginalised groups –women, manual workers, minority ethnic communities, and disabled people – social class continued to influence educational policies and affect outcomes."*
>
> *(Tomlinson, 2005 p. 261)*

2.1 Introduction

Post-World War II witnessed large numbers of people migrating to different parts of the world including UK (ONS, 2010). The number of Caribbeans and Africans who moved into Britain increased considerably between the late 1950s and the 1960s. They had the aspiration of securing jobs, which were advertised throughout the Caribbean to give themselves and their families financial security, improved life styles and increased life chances (Gibson and Barrow, 1986; Gaine and George, 2005). The Education Act of 1944 came into force to enable all children, irrespective of their socioeconomic, cultural or religious background to enjoy good quality education. However, for the past few decades, it has been evident that educational success is strongly tied to the possession of cultural capital, social class, ethnic background and disability (see, for example, Hill and Cole 1999; Cole, Hill, and Waller, 2001; Hill and Cole, 2001, Tomlinson, 2005; 2008, 2014; Dorling, 2014; Cole, 2017). Despite various UK governments' attempts, to alleviate educational inequality (Harold Wilson 1964-70 through 10/66 circular and Tony Blair, 1997-2007 via Sure Start centres and increased expenditure on education), it nonetheless lives on in our society.

Finding a lasting solution of curbing the continuous effect of educational failure and restricted life chances of the disadvantage has remained a critical challenge. Kerr and West, (2010), argue, "*Despite extensive efforts by UK policy makers and practitioners, the weight of evidence suggests that their strategies have not achieved the desired impact*" (p. 7*)*.

There has been a considerable amount of legislation to deal with racial discrimination, especially through human rights and civil law legislation, such as the various Race Relations Acts of 1965, 1976, 2000 and 2010 (see also, Rampton, 1981; Swann, 1985; Macpherson, 1991). However, the education structure over the last 50 years has established within a socio-political framework with an absence of political will to ensure all groups are fairly and equitably treated (see also Tomlinson 2008 p. 2).

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), Institute for Race Relations (IRR) and the Runneymede Trust, have long been examining issues in relation to race, ethnicity, and education for many years. They address local and central policy and practice, schooling in multicultural and White areas, differential educational achievements, and educational inequality between groups, language and curriculum problems, teachers and teacher preparation, pre-school, further and higher education, employment prospects, racism within and outside education, pupil perceptions and personality issues, home-school relations, parental and community activism and many more.

In this Chapter therefore, I present a historical account of the position of Black pupils/students, including Africans in previous government education policies. This is to provide the principal outlooks evident in broader government policy over the years (Troyna and Carrington, 2011).

2.2 Assimilation Policies

Assimilation is a process which involves the adoption of another cultural norms and values and becoming part of an unfamiliar culture (Teske and Nelson, 1974). When the various minority ethnic groups migrated to England, education was not their prime motive, but rather, they were more interested in employment and housing, as that gave them a sense of security in their new 'home'.

As more and more immigrants settled in the UK, their children joined them, and after a few years, this became an issue for the children and the schools they attended. Amongst the issues that raised many concerns included language barriers, cultural problems, and

attendance issues. The children found it difficult to adapt to the culture of the school or mainstream society, leading to conflicts, for example, traditional and cultural differences, language problems and issues relating to dress codes. In addition, pupils/students were faced with stereotyping problems from some of their White peers as well as from some members of the teaching and support staff. In most cases, these problems were not recognised, and they were often viewed as the failure of the immigrants to assimilate. Government intervention however, was inadequate in resolving these issues (Gillborn, 1990).

Assimilation policies outlined the overall education strategies and the key policies approved by government, regarding immigrant children, especially those relating to English language acquisition, funding, statistical collection, curriculum concerns, teachers and teacher training, achievement and Special Educational Needs (SEN). Tomlinson (2008), suggests that the education policy between the 1940s and 1960s was largely based on liberal democratic consensus which was supposed to control and source education to attain more fairness in society and to provide equal opportunities for all (see, also Tomlinson, 2014, 2017)

The 1944 education act, which was a tripartite system of secondary education, benefitted middle-class children, with approximately 80% of those going to secondary modern schools, and the few technical schools being overwhelmingly enrolled by working class children. The middle classes dominated grammar schools, and there were certain amounts of concessions to the 'clever' working class child. The affluent and powerful sent their children into private education (Tomlinson 2002; Lawton 2005). Tomlinson (2008) makes the important point that *the belief that different social or racial groups could be designated as more or less intelligent cast a long and pernicious shadow into the 21st century* (p. 26).

The 1944 Act received much acclaim from the conservatives and historians, who considered it to be a '*triumph for progressive reform*'. It also secured heaps of social and political criticality, simultaneously. Batteson, (1999) comments:

'1944 assumed significance because it commanded cross-party support; enjoyed the patronage and benefaction of the war time coalition; and seemed to overcome the historical leverage of powerful religious interest.' Furthermore, he suggests 'it became entrenched in folklore as benevolent and accommodating – a grand occasion of consensual celebration – as a golden moment of history' (Batteson, pp. 5 -7).

The Plowden report into Primary Education in 1967 referred to the strain of deciding whether an immigrant child *'lacks intelligence or is suffering from culture shock or simply from the inability to communicate'*. (Plowden Report 1967 p. 70).

Tomlinson (2008 p. 27) explains:

'Research from the 1950s also demonstrated that social class had a major impact on educational attainment and that school segregation and school practices of streaming and setting, disadvantaged children of manual, working-class parentage.'

Floud *et al* (1956), notes despite the *concerns raised in Plowden's report, many teachers found it hard to divest themselves of what later came to be known as low expectations of working-class and immigrant children* (see also Mays,1962)*.*

Dunkwu, (2001) explains, the Labour government developed funding initiatives for immigrant children between 1965 and 1969, yet, one ingredient is the bipartisan race relations philosophy, which had been developed in a curious and ad hoc way by both the Labour and Conservative parties throughout the 1960s. It had been criticised for excluding Liverpool's Black community. He further clarifies, the Townsend and Britain investigation into teachers' opinions in the early 1970s recorded how one head teacher declared: '*I believe our duty is to prepare children for citizenship in a free, Christian, democratic society according to British standards and customs*' (Townsend and Britain 1972 p. 13 cited: Dunkwu, 2001 p. 59).

A report by the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council (CIAC) (1964), states: '*a national system cannot be expected to perpetrate the different values of immigrant groups',* and this was interpreted as a burden on schools to try to make immigrant children Anglicans. However, the 1960s was a positive period in education. Conflicts over the selection at 11+

led to a wide political debate that comprehensive schools should be recognised, higher education extended, and the Labour government in 1965, required all local authorities to submit strategies for recognition for their schools in that respect.

A development of racial and ethnic groups around the globe after World War II, prompted an overall contention about the worth of assimilation verses pluralistic policy in simultaneity, especially around education. Both liberals and traditionalists initially upheld the idea that a country state ought to comprise the dominant culture, with minorities deserting their unique cultures, abandoning their home cultures, to become effective citizens; and education was viewed as a noteworthy means to realize this. The Governments' Commonwealth immigrant advisory council envisaged and states:

> *'A national system of education must aim at producing citizens who can take their place in society, properly equipped to exercise rights and perform duties the same as those of other citizens. A national system cannot be expected to perpetuate the values of immigrant groups* '(CIAC 1964 cited: Tomlinson 2008 p. 27).

The outcome of the report led to the challenge of the ideologies of assimilation in that it was an ethnic revitalisation, leading to the emergence of civil rights movements around the world during the 1960s.

In this respect, the first generation of immigrants had solid impetuses to move towards engagement into a society that seemed to offer social and financial mobility for their children, yet, it was soon understood that their physical and social distinctiveness implied a foreswearing of educational opportunities.

This guided the ascent of Black and Asian challenge developments to battle against injustices in education and employment amid the 1960s, especially after Martin Luther King Jr visited England in 1964. A North London West Indian Parents Association was dynamic in voicing worries over the education of Black children and forming a Black People's Alliance in 1968 (Sivanandan,1982). At first, there was no focal approach to address the needs of immigrant children in many British schools and the DES reaction was that the concentration

of immigrant children in a few schools would be unfavourable to the indigenous children and impede the acquisition of the English language for immigrant children. Hence, there was a policy of `Dispersal', dispersing immigrant children around, among different schools so that no one school would have more than a certain percentage of immigrant pupils/students.

For several decades, the education system in England and Wales was governed by the philosophy of the Butler Education Act of 1944. This demonstrates an acknowledgement among driving politicians, administrators and educators of the significance of education to provide financial progress and social welfare, and it soon settled itself as a core value of the post-war Welfare State (Chitty, 2004).

2.3 Integration Policies

Integration involves the absorption of different groups into society. The mid-1960s to the early 1970s witnessed a period referred to as reconciliation or integration. This was largely as an effect of the then Labour Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins' turn to promote equal opportunities and tolerance at the highest point of the political agenda (Troyna, 1992; Gillborn, 1999). The unsaid goal was to motivate Black and minority ethnic groups to adjust to the "host" culture and to promote a greater part of ethnic information of the different histories and conventions of the newcomers. It was felt that this mindfulness would take into consideration the smooth mix of minority students into the *"British way of life"* (see for example Swann, 1985 p. 196).

African Caribbean parents, nevertheless, had different concerns; specifically, the alarming numbers of their children in schools were "*Educationally Subnormal"* (Coard, 1971). This anxiety was sustained by evidence that suggests that once placed in such schools, it was unlikely that these children could ever come back to mainstream schooling. In addition, their future work prospects would likewise be antagonistically influenced (Coard, 1971; Tomlinson, 1983).

Another key concern was that of the worse performance of "*West Indian*" youngsters in contrast with White groups (see, Taylor, 1981; Gibson and Barrow, 1986). The most widely recognised reason referred to for the inconsistencies in performance was classified as low academic self-esteem of these new pupils/students. A few schools tried to cure this apparent attribute of the shortfall, by adjusting the curriculum to address the issues of these pupils/students. For the most part, the repealing center stayed on "modifying" the students from minority ethnic groups to an apparent British standard. For instance, by the expanded instructing of English to those for whom it was an additional language. Insufficient responses were given through policy implementation and language support was very minimal. To find a lasting solution, Local Authorities adopted varying strategies, with some willing and forthcoming to make the desired changes, and others less apprehensive with their approach.

The government, taking measures to address the problem in schools, attempted to actively recruit more teachers in areas which were severely disadvantaged. However, this policy faced serious drawbacks as it was challenging to recruit more abled teachers to these areas. Another difficulty that was faced by the policy was the notion that certain schools required specialist support and they were labelled as Special Needs, leading teachers to consider that the issue of educational inequality was dependent on the pupils/students themselves and their communities.

Changing the emphasis of the issue on minority ethnic communities, eventually, cultural tolerance (Castles, 1995) was introduced, which initiated a policy that recognises cultural variation of minority ethnic communities. The existence of racism and the potential of it permeating through the education system was then recognised.

2.4 Multiculturalism/Antiracist Policies

Multicultural education depended on the principle that Black and minority ethnic pupils/students experienced low self-esteem as a consequence of living in an antagonistic and oppressive environment. In turn, this was thought to affect contrarily on their capacity to perform well academically. Bolstered by the work of Milner (1975), a culture-sensitive educational strategy and curriculum was regarded an ideal way of tackling these negative mental self-views as well as diminishing sentiments of bias (from White peers) thought from obliviousness of different cultural practices, Nixon, (1986). (See also Tomlinson, 1990; Race, 2011, 2017).

The multicultural curriculum, in this manner, accentuated the teaching of the central qualities and traditions of various ethnic groups, with the expectation of encouraging respect, avoiding and eventually eliminating all forms of discrimination and racism. Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association (AMMA) 1987) reports:

> *'A broad multi-cultural curriculum for all pupils/students' independent of their racial, social, and linguistic backgrounds is the prime means by which education can add to the disposal of racial injustices from society. All, not slightest the White majority, should be led to a comprehension of the cultural diversity to be found in Britain today, and to perceive this diversity in a positive light* '(AMMA 1997 p. 9).

The idea of multiculturalism was given considerable support through an independent enquiry into the reasons for underachievement of West Indian pupils/students. The Rampton and Swann reports significantly dismissed the distinctive premise of the awareness, which ascribed poor academic achievement to hereditary elements and, recognized the need to develop great teacher-pupil relationships and to challenge the low expectations that teachers held towards minority pupils/students (Rampton, 1981; Swann, 1985). Significantly, the Swann report likewise, cited racism (both overt and covert) as a critical discriminatory element in the schooling of minority ethnic pupils/students (Swann, 1985).

The role of the (CRE), Commission for Racial Equality, was central, as was the role of the teacher trade unions. The impact of the 1981 and 1985 `youth rebellions' (`black explosions') in cities and areas such as Brixton, Liverpool, Handsworth (Birmingham) and the state responses, (see for example, the Scarman Report 1981), aided in identifying racist policing, institutional behaviour and structural racism as a contributory factor in the Brixton Riots.

Despite the intrinsic worth of multiculturalism set out above, multicultural education has been criticised for its simplistic and treatment of racism and culture. As a matter of first importance, the multicultural curriculum has been viewed as stereotyping or "exoticising" minority ethnic groups in a way that propagated contrast (for minority groups themselves and White majority pupils/students) as opposed to producing social comprehension (Troyna, 1987; Modood, 1993). Furthermore, the idea of racism as recognised by multiculturalists remained to some degree oblivious, regarding the role of power in interpersonal and institutional context.

Anti-Racist Education (ARE) was hailed as the approach that would conquer the weaknesses of multiculturalism by offering an examination of racism that recognized power imbalances all through society. Confirmation of this viewpoint was delineated in wide-ranging promotion campaigns by the Greater London Council (GLC), driven by Ken Livingstone and the Inner London Training Authority (ILEA), which tried to eliminate racism by highlighting the role of overt and covert racism (Gilroy, 1990; Gillborn, 1990).

Anti-racist education, however, was faced with many challenges, most eminently by Gilroy (1987), who notes, "*municipal anti-racism*" however well meaning, offered short sighted thoughts of "race" which, as multicultural education, strengthened the impression and delineation of group differences. Others contended that the shallowness of anti-racist points of view was represented in its dedication to colour and class contrasts, with no affirmation of cultural racism (Modood, 1993; May 1999). Significantly, there was no insistence of social prejudice. Cultural racism was an emerging area of concern, which demonstrated that racism could not distinctly be considered with disparity. However, it should have been

understood in the light of historical and economic atmospheres, which influenced how individuals made sense of their immediate surroundings (Gilroy, 1987; May 1999; Bhavnani *et al.* 2005).

2.5 Thatcherism

1979 saw the election of a Conservative government under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher. Educationally, this flagged up the dismissal of its judgement of the Swann Report of 1985 and its proposal that bigotry was "*endemic in quite a lot of British educational establishments"* (Gaine and George, 1999) and led to the design and introduction of the National Curriculum under the Education Reform Act 1988.

Black and minority ethnic children were condemned in two remarkable ways. Above all else, the Tory government declined to recognize the role and significance of cultural difference maintaining that treating every person the same, was the most appropriate approach (Gillborn, 1999). One outcome of this was teachers progressively utilized disciplinary systems. For example, fixed term and permanent exclusions to remove troublesome children from the classroom to better empower them, as teachers, to meet the objectives and prerequisites imposed by the new curriculum (Bourne, Bridges and Searle, 1994; Searle, 1996). A disproportionate number of these pupils/students were Black (Blyth and Milner, 1994).

Following this period of Conservative government (1979-1997), coupled with its hostility to anti-racism within education policy, New Labour was elected in 1997. They withstood their first term of office under Tony Blair and were re-elected in the 2001/2005 elections, only to be replaced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government of 2010-2015 and the Conservative government in 2015. Consequently, this period will be alluded to as the present-day viewpoint, and it is the repercussion of policies under the labour government that will receive due consideration in the following section.

2.6 Race Education and New Labour

The British Labour Party in 1996 under the leadership of Tony Blair branded itself as "New Labour offering a political and ideological alternative to Capitalism and Socialism. Various education policies were legislated under the New Labour government between 1997 and 2010. As stated in a campaign speech by Toni Blair, "*education, education, education will be the top three priorities of the New Labour government*" (Tony Blair campaign speeches, April 1997 cited: Tomlinson 2008 p. 126). He further notes that '*nations that will succeed will be tolerant, respectful of diversity, multiracial, multicultural societies'*.

One of the proclaimed aims of the government was to promote diversity and to improve the achievement of minority ethnic pupils/students (see for example Tomlinson 2005). However, New Labour inherited an increasingly unequal society from the Conservatives, with the highest proportion of children living in poverty than any country in Western Europe, especially minority children. Conservative policies such as market competition between schools, school choice and school diversity were continued. Hill (2001), explains:

> *'New Labour's policy and plans for more competitiveness and selection are a continuation, indeed, an extension of most of the structural aspects of the 1988 Conservative Education Reforms Act regarding the macro-structure and the organisation of schools; the neo-liberal principle of competition between schools, results in an increasing inequality between schools' (p. 96).*

Conservative education reforms of the 1990s came progressively to be described by a 'de-racialized' dialogue that visibly excluded ethnic diversity from the agenda and overlooked numerous biased and discriminatory practices (see, for example, Gillborn 1995; Troyna 1993). The New Labour government challenged this and thereby introduced a White Paper entitled: *Excellence in Schools (DFEE, 1997)*. The policy outlined Labour's plans for future legislation and policy in education as this was the rhetoric of Blair before the elections. This was on top of his political agenda. The policy indicated significant distancing from certain practices of the Conservative government. However, there was a continuity with certain aspects of the right's analysis of the shortfalls of state sponsored education. This continuation of a state sponsored education was to address the causes and effects of all

forms of racisms in schools and intended to raise the attainment levels of minority ethnic pupils/students and promote racial harmony.

New Labour did not only promise to put equality back on the agenda but with the publication of the enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence by Macpherson in 1999, shows the government also had the intension of combating institutional racism (Shain 2009; Tomlinson 2001; Hill 2001). However, the question that needs to be asked is how far these laws have gone to promote equality, diversity and equal opportunities for minority ethnic children- such as the Ghanaian Black African child whose experiences are the focus of this thesis.

2.7 Education policy 2010 - 2016

In 2010, the UK witnessed the election of a coalition government between the Conservatives led by Cameron, and the Liberal Democrats, led by Clegg. Taking over from the then Labour government that was committed to (even if not successful in) policies aimed at alleviating all types of racism, promoting equality and diversity. The new coalition government introduced a new policy: the education of disadvantaged children, and less was mentioned about Black and Minority ethnic communities (BAME) (see, for example, Morgan, 2013). The government deemed it unacceptable for the educational success of children to be dependent on their social circumstances. The intention of this policy was to raise the attainment levels of all disadvantaged children and close the attainment gap between disadvantage children and their peers (Morgan 2013). The vision of the then government was also to end child poverty by 2020. Amongst the actions taken to implement this policy are the introduction of pupil premiums and the summer school. In April 2011, the government introduced:

> the pupil *premium and the service premium. This gave schools £625 million of extra funding to close attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils/students and to assist with the pastoral needs of children with parents in the armed forces"* (Jarret and Long, 2014 p .8).

In September 2011, Clegg announced the annual summer schools programme. The scheme was meant to support deprived pupils/students as they move from primary to secondary school.

Despite the considerable rhetoric of the government to support disadvantaged pupils/students, Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) were withdrawn, many Sure Start centres closed and tuition fees at the tertiary level were raised from £3000 to £9000, further putting students coming from poor backgrounds at a disadvantage. Inequalities, the growth of poverty and the development of absolute immiseration widened (Hill, 2013). BAME families and workers were disproportionately affected by austerity.

Theresa May succeeded Cameron after his resignation because of the British referendum in 2016. May outlined her plans to build a country, which *"works for all."* The Prime Minister, advocated for quality education for all pupils/students regardless of their race, ethnicity, and social class. In May 2017, the current government unveiled plans to create new grammar schools, which was faced with criticisms. This policy was challenged from many walks of lives as it is argued it will result in the "selection" of the few elite, and adversely impact on the poor and disadvantaged. Fekete (2016), declares that, the lifting of the ban in the creation of grammar schools rather cements social division. This policy, it is argued to entrench and reinstate divisions other than facilitating a ladder for mobility. This proposed plan was however scrapped after failing to secure majority parliamentary support. Another blow to May's government is Milburn's resignation as the chair of the Social Mobility Commission upon realising that the Prime Minister's efforts are not geared towards honouring her campaign promises. He comments that the Prime Minister's pledge to fight the "burning injustices" that holds back Britain's poorest has proved to be "all talk."

2.8 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have provided a discussion of the key polices implemented by various governments to improve the education of minority ethnic groups in the UK.

I established that the 1944 Act had serious shortcomings in that it established the tripartite system and the 'eleven-plus' selection exam and fee-paying schools have remained the schooling for virtually all children of the upper classes (Hill 2001). Although the Acts mentions the provision of equal opportunities for all pupils/students, it was in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and of the different periods for which they may be expected to remain in school. It did not state equal opportunities for all pupils/students regarding race, class, gender and ethnic background. As Britain was increasingly receiving many immigrants, it was imperative on the part of the government that the education policy around that period would accommodate all to enhance the integration of other cultures, races, ability/disability religions, class and ethnicity.

I have argued that Assimilation has been seen to be a monocultural policy, which had an adverse effect on classroom practice. It socially engineered a new generation without a recognition of the distinctiveness of faith, cultural or ethnic identity, encouraging people to subscribe to the then white imperialistic norms. Assimilation suggests that *'when you go to Rome, do what the Romans do'.*

I have revealed that the Rampton report highlighted racism as a factor in the poor educational performance of African Caribbean students (Modood and May 2001). Afterward, an attempt by the Swann report to promote multiculturalism to enable minority ethnic communities to play an integral role in society also had its limitations. This was because the idea of bilingual education was overruled. Minority languages were restricted to the home and the minority ethnic community.

'*Education for all'* was a policy, which was prudent to educate all children for life in a multiracial and multicultural society by the New Labour government. This was essential to help fight against racism and attack inbred myths, stereotypes, and the ways in which they were exemplified in institutional racism.

As various policies of promoting equality have failed, I suggest that there should be a new race and equality strategy that will help to address the issues raised above in other to promote and improve stronger community cohesion (see also The Lammy Report, 2017).

Chapter Three – Ghanaians Education and Society in the UK

> *"Tens of thousands of young people leave school with no or very few qualifications in England. There has been a history of concern about underachievement in England and about its ethnic dimensions."*

> *(Kingdon and Cassen, 2010 p. 17)*

3.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, I present a critical review of the literature surrounding previous emperical studies relating to this study. I draw on both old and current literature such as that of Coard (1971) and Rampton (1981), due to their relevance to this current study. I previously stated, that existing literature specifically emphasizing the educational experiences and achievement of Ghanaians in England is very limited, hence, the rationale behind critiquing existing literature related to the educational experience and achievement of Black pupils/students in general.

Themes which emerged from the literature will include earlier work such as that of Maud Blair (2001), showing that most Blacks, especially, boys found their educational experiences to be negative. The reports by Rampton (1981) and Swann, (1985), which were sponsored by the government, and recognised a degree of racism in the British educational system has been examined. Studies by Coard (1971), the first which evidenced *How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Subnornal in the British School System* is included. The second, *The Scandal of the Black Child in British Schools (1971)* is also empahsized.

Much of the existing literature, both previous and current, have underlined the importance of improving the educational experiences of Blacks specifically or Caribbean boys in schools. For instance, London Development Agency: *The educational experiences 2000-2003* (pp. 11-15), recommended that there should be an increment in the recruitment of Black minority ethnic teachers in schools as they have better relationships with Black boys (see also Maylor, Ross, Rollock and Williams 2004; Francis, Skelton, Carrington, Hutchings, Read and Hall 2006; Clark, 2012).

The existing literature examined relates to the key concepts that I have used to frame my understanding of the educational experiences of Ghanaians in schools, which are Black

underachievement, educational inequality, inclusion and diversity, Black masculinity, the impact of role models, racial stereotyping, peer pressure and parental engagement.

Before presenting a review of the literature, I will firstly report on the outlook of Ghanaians' attainment at GCSE level based on evidence from empirical studies from two specific boroughs in London. At the period when this study started, these two boroughs had published attainments of pupils/students at GCSE by ethnicity. The rationale is to use the data as a basis to establish the facts about Ghanaians' attainment in school in England. I have previously mentioned specific published data on Black Africans and Ghanaians in England are very narrow which will continually remain one of my arguments and justify the need to have a study with a specific focus on Ghanaians. Considering that Black Africans have been in existence in the UK for several decades, I still find it startling that prevous reasearch in this area of study is very scant. As it is evident existing literature on Ghanaians' education is scant, this has led me to draw upon a current study by Lambeth and Camden Local Authorities. These local authorities have published the educational attainment of African heritage pupils/students and specifically looked at the attainment levels of pupils/students from individual African countries. This data will be used as a guide to establish the facts about the education of Ghanaians in England.

3.1.1 Ghanaian Achievement at GCSE Level: evidence from London Borough of Lambeth

 A recent presentation and analysis of data by Lambeth Local Authority, *(2013),* showed that a huge percentage of learners of Black African Heritage are either Ghanaians or Nigerians. Data has been collected and evaluated at the end of year eleven by ethnic background, in the case study schools, (comprising of 6 secondary schools in the borough). The schools have a high number of Black African students and they serve disadvantaged communities. The case study schools have good GCSE results but they cover a wide range of ethnic groups and communities. Issues relating to EAL (English as an Additional Language) and free school meals are common within the schools. It is evidenced that at

GCSE level, the differences in performance amongst these groups are substantial. The ethnic groups in the Local Authority are, largely, Black African, Black Caribbean, White British, White Other and Mixed-Race students with a smaller number of other ethnic groups.

The study shows that of all the largest ethnic groups sitting for the GCSE, Black Africans performed the best which is higher than both the LA's (Local Authority's) expectation and that of the national average for students achieving 5 or more A*- C including Maths and English as the table below illustrates:

Table 1: GCSE performance trends of Black African students in the LA (Lambeth)

5+A*-C incl. English and Maths	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Improvement 2007-2011
Black African Students - Case study schools	52%	64%	72%	72%	83%	31%
Black African Students - Lambeth LA	49%	51%	65%	66%	71%	22%
Black African Students - National	40%	44%	48%	53%	58%	18%
All Lambeth Students	40%	48%	54%	53%	62%	22%
All National Students	46%	46%	48%	53%	59%	13%

(Source: Demie, 2013, p. 6 Raising the Achievement of Black African Pupils/students: Good Practice in Schools)

The attainment levels of the case study schools where strategies for good practice have been implemented, including strong leadership and management team, effective teaching, learning and partnerships with parents and the community, saw a massive improvement of the performances at GCSE level attaining 5 A*-C. Black Africans in these partnership schools raised their attainment levels from 52% in 2007 to 83% in 2011.

In comparison, with the LA's schools, which were not part of the case study schools, the attainment levels at GCSE achieving 5 A*- C of Black Africans, also raised from 49% in 2007 to 71% in 2011. Although there was an improvement in the attainment levels of Black Africans generally within the LA, the pupils/students in the case study schools where good strategies were implemented performed much better (12% more). This difference in

performance proves that putting good and effective strategies in place for all pupils/students will make a huge difference in their educational experiences and thereby their attainment levels. At the national level, the story was completely different. Only 58% of Black Africans who sat for the GCSE were able to attain 5 A*- C.

Placing pupils/students under one all-encompassing category makes it difficult or nearly impossible to identify which groups within that category are particularly struggling so that effective strategies can be implemented to enable these pupils/students to receive the very much-needed support (Demie, 2013). In effect, a key strategy the LA put in place was to identify Black pupils/students by languages spoken, then compared them with the differences in their attainment levels. When languages spoken have disaggregated the achievement data, there are significant differences between the ethnic categories. The analysis below, for example, indicates that some of the Black Africans were amongst the high achievers but others performed very low.

Table 2: Difference in GCSE attainments by languages spoken

Main languages spoken	Ethnic background	2011 5+A* - C English and Maths	2010 5+A* - C English and Maths	2009 5+A* - C English and Maths
Luganda	Black African	83%	33%	75%
Krio	Black African	78%	50%	75%
Igbo	Black African	76%	80%	100%
Yoruba	Black African	75%	68%	39%
Ga	Black African	75%	75%	64%
Tigrinya	Black African	67%	56%	75%
Twi-Fante	Black African	66%	84%	69%
Somali	Black African	61%	50%	48%
Swahili	Black African	50%	60%	40%
Lingala	Black African	45%	50%	0%
LA		61%	53%	54%
National		59%	54%	50%

(Source: Demie, 2013 Raising the Achievement of Black African Pupils/students: Good Practice in Schools).

The analysis reveals that Black Africans who are Lingala speakers (from the Republic of Congo, a Francophone country rather than an Anglophone country), achieved very low GCSE levels, attaining only 45%, which is well below the LA's expectation and the national expectation. Black Africans who spoke Igbo, Yoruba (Nigerians), Ga, Twi-Fante (Ghanaians), Luganda (Uganda's) and Krio (Sierra-Leoneans) achieved better at GCSE level than English- only White British pupils/students. The analysis included the attainment levels of pupils/students from other parts of Africa such as East African and Southern African. English fluency is an important factor that is related to achievement of pupils/students of African heritage.

Although it is essential to understand the relationship between ethnic background and attainment levels, Demie, (2011) suggests that language and ethnicity are largely connected but the importance of language diversity and achievement is rarely reported. The report argues that ethnic categories are often inaccurate as they are constrained by the classification of the official data at the national level (see Von Ahn *et al* 2010). The map below shows African languages and countries of origin who sat for the GSCE exams at Lambeth Local Authority.
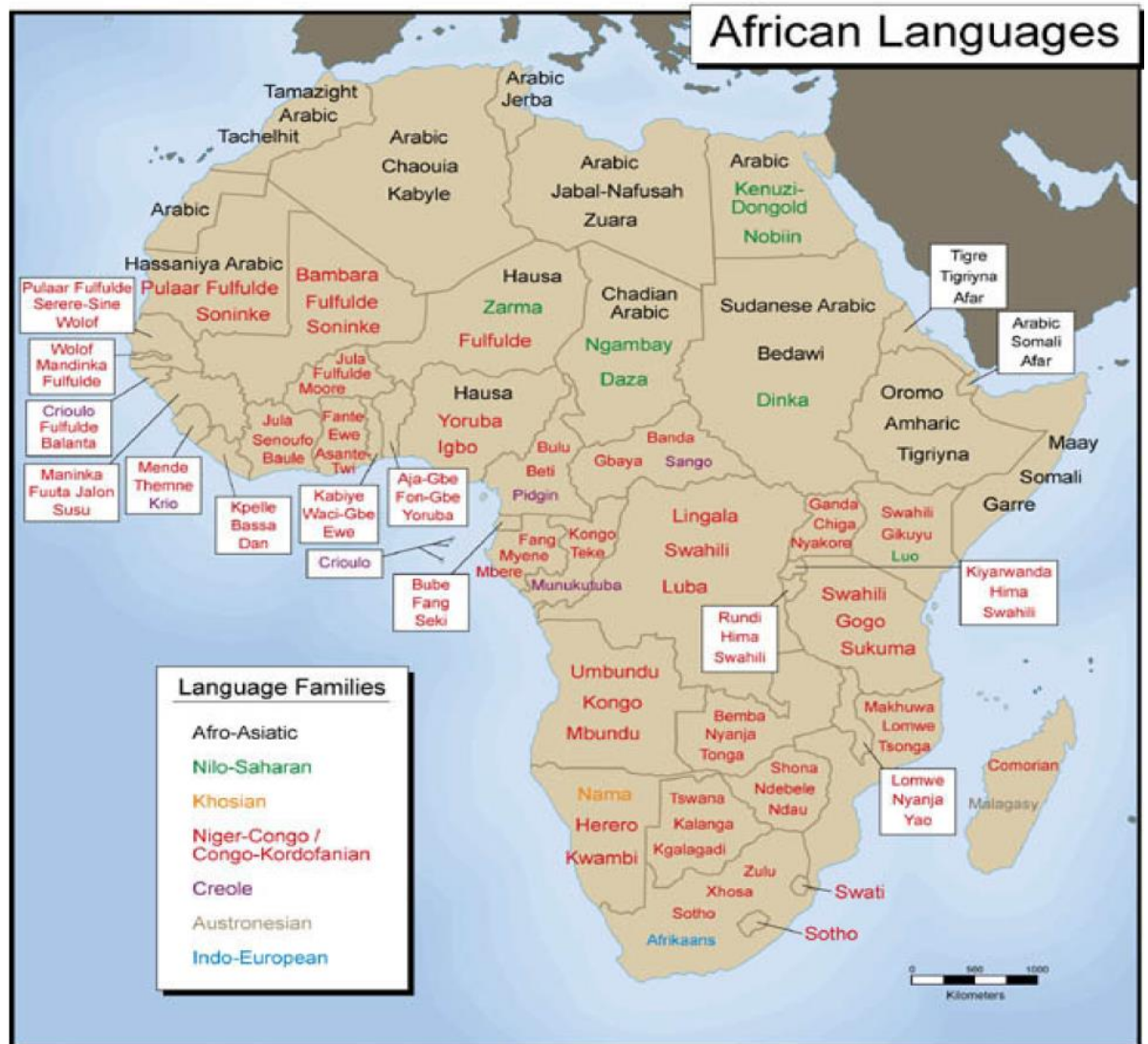
Figure 4: Map of African Languages

(*Source: Demie 2013 Raising the Achievement of Black African Pupils/students: Good Practice in Schools-Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit 2012*)

3.1.2 Ghanaian Achievement at GCSE Level: evidence from London Borough of Camden

This study focuses on the academic achievement of Ghanaian and Nigerian students in comparison with other ethnic groups at GCSE from 2010-2012. 61 Nigerians and 18 Ghanaians sat for GCSE in 2010. 77% of Nigerians scored 5 A*-C which includes Maths and English while 61% of Ghanaians scored 5 A*-C including Maths and English which outweighs the attainment of other ethnic groups. The following two years (2012), Nigerians achieved 72% 5 A*- C including Maths and English and Ghanaians recorded 79% - 5 A* -

C including Maths and English. These two groups outperformed pupils/students of other ethnic groups as evident in the data below.

Table 3: A comparative analysis of ethnic groups at GCSE 2010-2012

Ethnicity/country	No of pupils			5A*-C inc English & Maths (%)			5A* - C (%)		
	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	212	2010	2011	2012
Black African	229	237	246	52	58	54	70	69	75
Congolese	21	28	28	38	39	39	62	50	64
Somali	86	103	104	38	53	59	62	66	70
Nigerian	**61**	48	**48**	**77**	**75**	**72**	**82**	**83**	**94**
Ghanaian	**18**	**17**	**24**	**61**	**71**	**79**	**72**	**71**	**92**
Caribbean & MWBC	117	121	108	48	50	53	65	71	79
White UK	447	404	380	50	61	54	63	71	69
All Camden pupils	1501	1491	1498	53	60	59	69	74	77

(Source: Report on Academic Achievement of Nigerian and Ghanaian students in Camden Schools 2014)

The above table demonstrates that generally, Ghanaians and Nigerians perform better than pupils/students who are Caribbean, White, and other Black Africans. The pattern of achievement has been consistent over the years. This data however, does not reveal the other factors that may influence educational attainment. For instance, the samples do not state the % of the children who just migrated or who were born here. It does not talk about their socio-economic backgrounds and other pertinent issues which may influence educational experience and attainment.

There are similar physiognomies between the two boroughs. Evidence from the two boroughs signifies Ghanaians are performing well and may well be among the high achievers within the category of Black African of the national data. However, it is very significant to mention that evidence from Lambeth and Camden Local Authorities is used as an example only and is not a true reflection of the attainment levels of Ghanaians of all other Local Authorities in England. The case study schools in Lambeth had various

strategies in place to promote the educational attainment of the various minority ethnic groups. The schools in Camden however, did not have specific strategies in place. Therefore, it will be inappropriate to generalise that Ghanaians are doing well in English schools. There is no evidence to suggest that the attainment of Ghanaians in different boroughs across England is consistent with those of Lambeth and Camden.

Other local authorities where Black Africans, including Ghanaians are densely populated, such as Milton Keynes, Birmingham, Luton, Manchester, Haringey and Enfield may have a different outcome of the attainment levels of Black Africans including Ghanaians.

3.2 Black Africans' Underachievement

The surging diversity of UK communities and the increasing consciousness of multiple experiences of inequalities such as those of age, class, ethnicity, race and religion necessitates studies into minority ethnic communities.

For a very long time, the education of Black pupils/students in England has been in the spotlight. They have been featured to be underachieving, with high rates of exclusion, low examination results, higher rates of behavioural and emotional problems and a high rate of Special Educational Needs (Gilborn and Mirza 2000; Maylor *et al* 2009; Tomlinson, 2009, 2015; Rome 2012; Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent and Ball 2015).

Department for Education (DfE) Ethnicity and Education report (2012/2013) brought to light that between 2008/09, Black Africans' attainment at GCSE level was below the national average but this improved in 2012/2013. However, although there was a level of improvement, their attainment levels were still below the national average as compared to many minority ethnic groups including Indians, Irish and the Chinese. The issue here is that at the national level, Black Africans have been categorised into an overarching group, making it difficult to determine which sub-groups within the category of Black African are achieving or underachieving. The chart below explains the attainment trends of minority ethnic communities for the academic years 2007/2008 and 2011/2012.
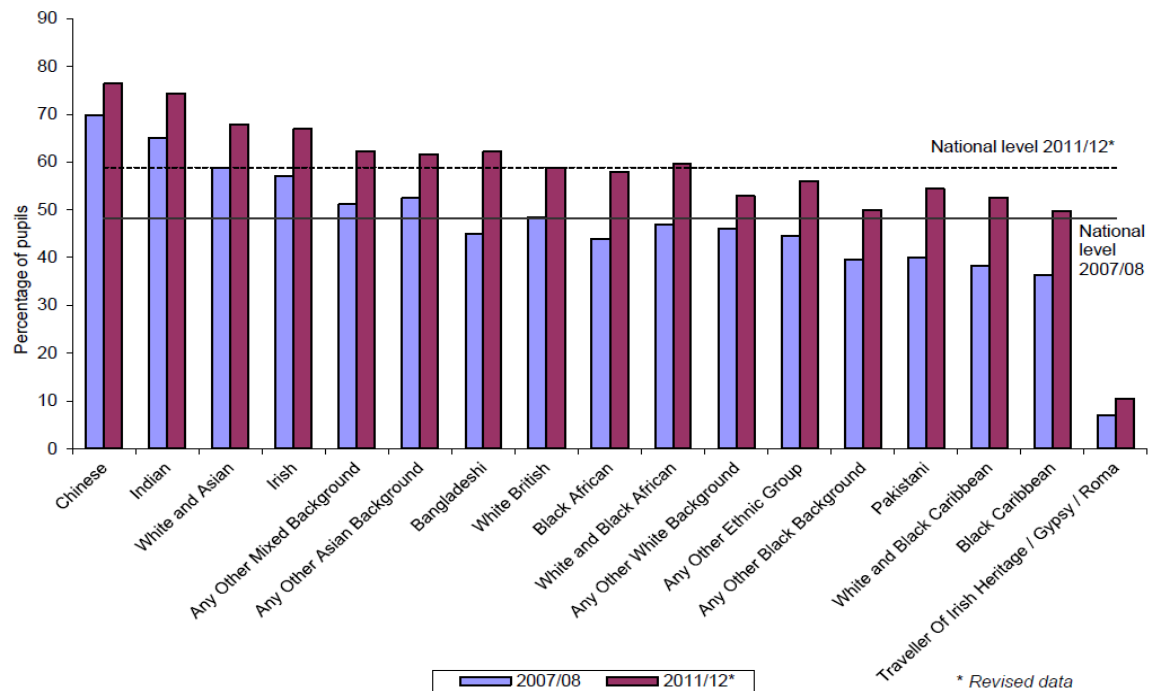
Figure 5: Percentage of pupils/students achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C or equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs or IGCSEs by ethnic group, 2007/08 and 2011/12

(*source: GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics in England, 2011/12 DfE Statistical First Release*)

Figure 5 supports the claim I made in Chapter One that the percentage of Chinese and Indian pupils/students achieving A*-C at GCSE, is over and beyond the national average. Although there was an improvement in the percentage of Black Africans obtaining grades A*-C at GCSE from about 45% in 2007/2008 to 59% in 2011/2012, their performance was still below the national average of 60%. While this data depicts how pupils/students of various ethnic groups are performing at the end of GCSE, one of the arguments forming the basis of this study is that, the group Black African is too broad a category and it is challenging to identify the sub-groups which are performing or underperforming within this category.

44

In Chapter One, I explained the terminology Black. To have a Black identity is to have common characteristics, identifications that can bind another group of people who share the same values together. Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent and Ball (2015 p. 21), suggests

> "*to be Black is to share a specified cultural understanding, reminiscences and practices which are communicated through history, food, a belief in a Black communality or uniqueness and an experience of racism*" (see also Mason 2000 p. 6; Modood, 2013 p. 93).

In examining the literature, it was challenging to find material that specifically focused on Ghanaians and their educational experiences and educational outcomes in schools as existing literature mostly discussed Black Africans or African Caribbeans in general (see, for example, Owusu-Kwarteng 2010).

Regardless of the decline in their exclusions in recent years, Black Caribbean pupils/students are still four times as expected to be permanently excluded from school as White British pupils/students. In comparison, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi children are all less probable to be permanently excluded from school than White British pupils/students are (The Poverty Site UK n.d). The high rate of exclusions of Black Pupils/students have adverse impact on the academic outcomes of Blacks, including Africans.

OFSTED, (2008) indicates that the number of pupils/students permanently excluded from schools has fallen, from 12,461 in 1996/97 to 9,130 in 2005/06. However, throughout this period a larger proportion of Black Caribbean and Black African pupils/students have been excluded than White British pupils/students (*see, also A profile of pupil exclusions in England, 2009/10*). The disproportionate exclusion of Black pupils/students and mixed heritage pupils/students occur irrespective of the socio-economic context of the school, its performance, or its educational effectiveness.

There have been extensive discussions and research surrounding issues relating to how Black pupils/students underachieve in British schools, but the achievement gap continues to be a problem (UNICEF 2008). For instance, Demie (2005 p. 482) states:

> *'Regardless of much academic deliberation and policy makers'*
> *apprehension about underachievement in schools, the needs of Black*
> *Caribbean and African pupils/students have not been confronted in the*
> *education system and have mostly been ignored. In addition, it is an*
> *undervalued problem at the national level, and there are no explicit*
> *effective initiatives to address the state of affairs.'*

Owusu-Kwarteng (2010), clearly specifies: '*previous research repeatedly indicate that Black students are underachieving in comparison to other groups.'* One of the pertinent factors underpinning the improvement of the attainment levels of Caribbean and Black Africans is that the National Curriculum has continued to fail to acknowledge the fact that the society is changing, and it is becoming more diversified as considerable numbers of people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds migrate and become settled in England. This is a difficulty, which has put this group at a disadvantage (Macpherson, 1999; Gillborn, 2002).

The essential and unavoidable distinctions between the diverse groups ought not to be ignored taking into consideration the pupils/students' cultural, socio-economic, historical, linguistic and religious factors (see for example Haque, 2000; Gilborn and Gipps, 1996; Strand, 1999). There has been vigorous research on the achievement of other minority ethnic groups such as Bangladeshis and Indians, but African pupils/students are barely discussed in these reports (Troyna, 1984; Rowntree, 2007).

Gillborn and Mirza, (2000) suggest that "*Black students can achieve high success"* however, at the GCSE level, it is evident that Black pupils/students, including Africans and Caribbeans, are being outperformed by other ethnic groups such as Chinese, Indians and Irish pupils/students.

As noted above, little research has specifically considered the achievement of pupils/students of Ghanaian heritage and backgrounds. However, existing data shows that at GCSE level, the performance of Blacks has improved over the last ten years. Within that wide grouping, there are subcategories that are not doing so well, and there are still impediments to Black children's success (Gillborn, 2009; Rhamie, 2012). For instance, Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean boys are 2.8 times more probable to be consistently excluded than their White peers. White British children, especially boys, on the other hand, are '*outstripped at school by a wide range of Minority ethnic groups,*

including Chinese, Sri Lankan and Nigerian teenagers,' according to a report by think-tank, which forms part of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) integration research programme (Press Association 2013).

It has been claimed by other scholars that since teachers identify Black under-achievement to be a nationwide difficulty outside their control, they might lower their prospects in certain pupils/students, generating an adverse stereotype that successfully closes down opportunities (Amin *et al.* 2007).

Black children are bright, driven and aspire to achieve high for themselves and their families (Gillborn, 2007). However, these qualities do not guarantee success for Black children in schools, hence, the high incidence of low achievers amongst Black minority ethnic pupils/students, but this social issue needs to be dealt with.

Sewell (2007), on the other hand, presents a different outlook about Black underachievement, especially Caribbean boys. He argues that the core problem behind Blacks with emphasis on boys being held back academically is not racism but their "*over-feminised raising.*" He believes from the commencement of childhood; There is no male exemplar to *"lock down the negative instincts that are present in all males and to offer direction on what a man should be."*

Secondly, Sewell argues that in the absence of father figures as role models, Black boys tend to find alternatives, which are dominant male figures who are normally found in gangs. By joining a gang, he maintains that they find a space where there is a kind of hierarchy, ritual, education and a sense of belonging, which they may be lacking in their lives.

Similar to the outlook of Sewell, Ogbu (2008), upholds young Black people do not do well in school because they lack role models, especially, father figures at home and therefore turn to their peers for inspiration.

3.3 Educational Inequality: Socio-economic, Ethnicity and Gender Analysis

Inequalities in educational attainment are mostly associated with ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background. These variables are the most prevailing in England.

Several factors have led to educational inequalities within the society, which have affected the education of pupils/students from diverse groups, including Ghanaians. The achievement gap is one of the topmost and frequent issues in educational enquiry. *"It has worked its way through common parlance and everyday use. The term is used by people along both ends of the political spectrum, and few argue over its significance or its importance"* (Gillborn 2008, p. 44).

In education, the link between social inequality and schools is frequently analysed by looking at the test and examination scores attained by diverse groups of children and young people, and other monitoring tools such as ethnicity and social class. This can disclose long-lasting patterns of uneven results. For instance, as a group, young people from less affluent backgrounds are less likely to make progress than their more advantaged peers in tests athwart a variety of disciplines. (See, for example, Gill, Mayor and Blair 1992; Mason 2000; Gillbon and Mirza, 2000; Hill 2001, DfES 2003; Tomlinson 2008; DfE 2011; 2012 and 2013). '*This is a common global phenomenon, with social difficulty having an undesirable impact on achievement in all the 30 industrialised states belonging to the* OECD (Kerr and West, 2010).

Young people enter the school system with diverse experiences, come from varying backgrounds, and leave with very differing outcomes. Children from deprived and underprivileged families are most probable to attend the poorest performing schools and to attain the lowest academic results (Tomlin, 2006).

Data also shows more specific patterns of inequality. For instance, if we look at attainment in England, we ascertain that: Poverty – as indicated by eligibility for free school meals – is powerfully linked with low attainment.

According to the DFE (2011), there was a significant increase in the number of minority ethnic groups in primary and secondary schools in England. They constituted 24.5%, almost one quarter of the total of school population compared to 14.3% in 2003 (DFES, 2003). The large minority groups are Indians (2.6%), Pakistanis (4.2%), Black Africa (3.2%), Bangladeshi (1.7%) and Black Caribbean (1.4%). Of the minority ethnic groups, Indians and Chinese pupils/students are largely the most likely to succeed and African-Caribbean pupils/students are the least successful (Rhamie, 2012).

The problem of race and inequality is not only prevalent in primary and secondary schools, but it is also evident at the higher levels of education. A report by the National Union of Students on the experiences of Black students in further and higher education demonstrates that Black students are less expected to be delighted with their educational experiences and are less likely to get first-class degrees compared to their White counterparts (NUS, 2009). The report further states that being from a minority ethnic group is still found to have a statistically substantial and adverse influence on grade attainment.' (Equality Challenge Unit: cited in NUS. 2009). Likewise, Boliver, (2016), explains that Black minority ethnic communities are less likely to obtain places at highly selective universities. She suggests that only 2.1% of the entire student population of Russell group universities in the UK are Black Africans compared to 82.8% who are White.

In our current competitive society, this will result in lots of Black students leaving further and higher education without jobs because they will not be able to compete in the global economy, thus further widening the gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged. Previous studies indicate that Black students are more likely to come from a lower socio-economic background and there is the likelihood that they will underperform in schools (see for example Reay, David and Ball, 2006).

The report from the NUS (2009), further states that 9% of Black international students involved in the research described their existing teaching and learning milieu as racist.

It is inevitable that the issue of racism to some extent plays a contributing role in the educational attainment of Black pupils/students. This relationship between race, class,

gender and attainment has been vigorously discussed in the research literature (e.g. Cole, Hill and Waller, 2001; Cole, 2009, 2016, 2017; Gillborn, 2006, 2010; Hill, 2009).

Ghanaians and other children of African origin are aware that they face many challenges such as quality of education, inequalities, racism in the English education system and this view is shared by academic research, (see for example Cole, Hill and Shan 1997; Rhamie, 2012). This tends to affect the achievement of Black pupils/students in schools across England in that they fall behind their classroom work and score poorly on tests compared to their true abilities.

Richardson (2007), explains how Black pupils/students fail due to many factors including, the attitudes of teachers, the British school system and how it works, and the role of immigrants in Britain.

The attitudes of many teachers towards Black pupils/students can have adverse effects on their achievements in schools. The effect on the pupil can be huge and devastating.

There are many teachers who are patronising towards Black children and tend to treat a Black child differently. On the other hand, there are other teachers who will not push the Black child too hard academically, as they believe he/she is not up for it (Richardson, 2007). Some have low expectations of Black pupils/students. The London Development Agency Education Commission (LDAEC) 2003, established that low teacher expectations play an instrumental role in the underachievement of African Caribbean pupils/students. It was evident in the report that Black pupils/students criticised that positive teacher attention were insufficient, behaviour management systems were unfair, they were being watched at break times with suspicions, they were subject to negative stereotyping and they feel they were just disliked simply because they were Blacks (see, also Firth, 2005).

Even though the above assertion has shown that Black pupils/students experience a considerable level of inequalities in schools, the literature continues to generalise it for all Blacks and does not take into consideration a comparison of the experiences and

perceptions of the various ethnic and cultural groups that are included in the broad category of Black African, to identify the varying experiences or opinions about their education (Owusu-Kwarteng 2010). Certainly, some groups within the Black African category may be performing well in school as highlighted earlier.

The relationship between gender and educational attainment is one of the most widely reported areas of educational research in the UK and across many industrialised countries. Previous studies surrounding gender have revealed that girls were formerly underperforming in certain aspects of the curriculum such as maths and science (see for example Archer and McDonald 1991; Beller and Gafni 1996). However, since the late 1990's, it is evident that girls, irrespective of their ethnic origin, are outperforming boys at age 16 and averagely scoring about 9% points more than boys in terms of the percentage of those achieving grade A*- C at GCSE, and this is particularly evidenced in English subjects (see, Demie 2001). According to the DfE (2016), 71.3% of girls (whatever the ethnic origin), achieved grade A*-C compared with 62.4% of their male counterparts, which is the biggest gap opened over boys.

Relating gender to ethnicity, Black African and Caribbean girls have consistently outperformed their male counterparts since 2002. For instance, the DFES, (2002) reported that 47% Black African and Caribbean girls achieved A*-C compared with 33% of the boys (see also Bhattacharyya, Ison and Blair, 2003). Likewise, White British girls outperforms their male counterparts across different areas of the curriculum.

3.4 Inclusion, Diversity, and Equality in Education

Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (1989) requires that governments around the world will protect all children against any form of discrimination. Griffin, (2008 p. 12), explains: "*equal opportunity is when every individual in society experiences opportunities to attain and flourish which are as good as the opportunities experienced by other people*" (see for example Verma, Bagley and Jha 2007, p. 3).

> *'It is crucial to recognise that equal opportunity is a problem faced by our society today, despite many attempts to improve and resolve this social issue. Social inequalities are deeply rooted and it cannot be disputed that some people have fewer or more restricted, opportunities to achieve and flourish than other people do. This is because both children and adults have opportunities restricted to them in our society as a result of discrimination and prejudice, stereotyping and failing to treat people as individuals'* (Griffin, 2008 p. 13).

Healey (2004 p. 437) corroborates the views of Griffin and narrates:

> *'Discrimination and racial inequality are deep-rooted and consequential in our society and therefore we must critically understand the assumptions, structures, and institutions that form the lives and experiences of minority groups.'*

These forms of discrimination can come because of one's class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, race, disability, and one's gender.

Diversity, on the other hand, refers to the differences between individuals and groups within a society because of their gender, ethnic origin, social, cultural, or religious background, family structure, disabilities, sexuality and appearance (Griffin, 2008; Macedo, 2000).

Inclusion, thus is a system that is set out to identify, understand, and narrow down barriers to participation and belonging (see, Tomlinson, 2014, 2017). Diversity is a common element of culture that needs to be respected and acknowledged so that we can live in harmony with each other. In this respect, the UN (2001) declared a universal declaration on cultural diversity, which is aimed at combating stereotyping, to develop an understanding and collaboration amongst persons of other cultures, to build a world community of individuals who are committed to supporting diversity with real and everyday gestures.

Bokova, (2015) Director-general of UNESCO, comments:

> *'Our cultural diversification is a catalyst of inventiveness. Investing in this inventiveness can revolutionise societies. It is our obligation to develop education and intercultural skills in young people to sustain the diversity of our world and to learn to live together with the diversity of our languages, cultures, and religions, to bring about change.'*

Relating diversity to education, it is critical for schools to provide equal opportunities, quality education and respond and adapt to the needs of pupils/students regardless of their race, ethnicity, religious and cultural backgrounds as well as their physical, sensory and cognitive needs (see for example, Udvari-Solner, 1996; Ainscow 1999 ; Mittler, 2000).

Nonetheless, Haque (2000) explains that for many years, studies looking at different ethnic group achievements dwell on achievements while disregarding the vital differences which are cultural, historical, socio-economic, linguistic and religious between various ethnic groups. During GCSE examinations, ethnic groups are typically put into ethnic categories, which are not homogenous. Demie and Hau, (2013) recommend that there is the prospect of language data to help disaggregate ethnic census categories and give larger understanding into the performance of different groups in schools. They highlight:

> *'White other' and the 'Black African' groups have the highest language diversity and achievement patterns and that examining the ethnic groups' performance by languages spoken adds to our understanding of the relationship between language and ethnic background"* (Demie and Hau, 2013 p. 18)

The concerns regarding the challenges faced by Black pupils/students certainly, does have implications on teacher training. Bhopal and Rhamie, (2013) suggest that the understanding of students on initial teacher training courses about race, diversity and inclusion are complex and have multiple facets. They argue that student teachers need greater training so that they can acquire the practical skills that are required, regarding increasing their knowledge and understanding of diversity and dealing with issues about racism in the classroom. As educators are influential within the society, if they are not well resourced in terms of knowledge about the issue of race, diversity and inclusion, it may have a detrimental effect on their delivery of the curriculum as they may not bear in mind these issues that are critical to the society (see, also Lander, 2014).

In recent years, there have been increasing calls to empower the teaching profession through diversification. The assumption is that if more teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds get into the teaching profession, they can act as role models for minority students. They will comprehend pupils/students' cultural practices and beliefs and how they form them as learners and they can contribute diverse cultural perspective to the school curriculum (Santoro and Kennedy 2016). In their interview with the Guardian in 2013, Ajegbo and Obie, elaborated on the significance of recruiting many more head teachers and teachers from Black, Asian and minority backgrounds both in ethnically diverse areas and largely White communities. They argue that schools have an impact on how young people see the world and as we still live in a society where race and stereotyping is a concern, it is important that young people can respectfully relate with Black and minority ethnic head teachers and teachers.

Multicultural Teaching and Uniting Britain Trust (2002), suggest schools should be dedicated to upholding equal opportunity, encouraging good relationships among members of diverse racial, cultural and religious groups and communities and eliminate any forms of unlawful discrimination.

Finally, it is crucial to mention that the rewards of children having an understanding and experiencing an effective, diverse curriculum, such as citizenship, and by maintaining their cultural and ethnic heritage as well as embedding their British identities, cannot be overlooked as they can have a positive impact on educational experiences and thereby attainment levels in schools (see for example Maylor, 2010).

Citizenship in the curriculum can influence and challenge the existence of all forms of discrimination so that people can recognise and respect Britain's cultural diversity. However, Firth, (2005) argues that all references to dealing with racism have been dropped from the curriculum and have been substituted with an obligation to appreciating diversity, which he says is vague. He comments that the government's proposed educational reforms have rather thrived in extending inequalities in education and society by maintaining the

competitions between schools, clutching creative space out of the curriculum and turning away generations of children from learning.

3.5 Black Masculinity

Britain in the 1990's saw a rise in a focus on the gendering of men and masculinity categorised. Various writers have highlighted the particular type of black masculinity as presenting problems of underachievement in schools, especially, for Black boys. Evidence from previous studies suggests that there is a relationship between school achievement and Black masculinity (see for example Sewell, 1997; Wright et al 2000). Mac an Ghaill (1988), and Mirza (1992) comments, Black girls have the tendency to reconcile with a teacher after a misunderstanding and may behave calmly towards a teacher afterwards. In the UK, Black boys are often excluded from schools and it is argued that the process of marginalising Black boys can largely be because of Black masculinities in schools. There is a very close relationship between how masculinity is defined within the educational sector and how schools define academic success and failures as they are in many ways particular to class and race (Gillborn, 1990; Sewell, 1997; Willis, 1997). Consequently, this results in a category of lads who are macho and can be from a working-class background. The perception of White teachers' notion of confident pupils/students results in labelling, they tend to alienate themselves from other students. Similarly, schools tend to perceive that Black boys who engage in masculine behaviours do not conform to the standards of academic success (Mac an Ghaill, 1995).

McFadden, (1998) argues that the attitudes of many teachers may put Black pupils/students at a disadvantage, especially boys. He explains that teachers' focus on pupils/students working hard, and task-related activities may crush down the energy and creativity that Black boys have and can prevent Black boys from "*expressing their blackness* (see also, Wright et al., 2000).

Typically, high status in academic achievement has or has not been associated with masculinity (Aggleton and Mane 2001). Black boys, who have been noted have been

represented to fail academically rather than succeed. Therefore, they have resorted to other forms of masculinity to gain high status in society such as sports and street dancing. However, Aggleton, 1987 comments that these activities do not have the same legitimacy in schools because identical authority is limited to male pupil identities.

Schools are very crucial places that may affect how one can be confident about their gender and can go a long way to influence how well they perform academically (Davis, 2001). For Black boys, it is an important environment for 'masculine identity development'.

Whilst the activities of Black masculinity can be explained to be a supporting and coping tool to help young Black pupils/students to cope with the many challenges they face in their learning environment, their actions are most often misinterpreted by the teaching and support staff, thereby aggravating the negativities surrounding school attainments (Billson and Majors 1993; Davis, 2003; Tatum, 2005).

Sewell, (2003) in contrast, argues one of the reasons why Black pupils/students especially boys, underachieve is due to lack of parental support from home and therefore Black parents ought to be resourced for them to support their own children. Gillborn and Rollock, (2010), perceive that despite the challenges that Black boys face in their school environment such as institutional racism, being over-represented in the lower sets and low expectations of schools, there are a great number of Black boys that perform well in schools with high aspirations in life (see also Byfield, 2008; John, 2008; Wright, Standen and Patel, 2010). Black girls however, are percieved to be untypical and high achievers (see, Fuller 1984).

3.6 Racial Stereotyping

The term racialisation (Cole, 2009, 2016), has frequently appeared in various writings about race, ethnicity and racism. For instance, Banton, (1977), shows in his work from a race-relations viewpoint that the term racialization can be used to denote the various concepts of race that can structure individuals' opinion about the different sets of a population. In his work during the 1980's Reeves, (1983) analyses the term critically within the context of racial discourses in Britain.

Significantly, Miles, (1982), used the term initially to describe the influx of migrants into the UK for the labour market in the mid-1940's which involved many migrants with different ethnicities as he explored the various categories of race within the labour market (see also Tomlinson 1997). He developed the term racialisation and suggested that

"the concept of racialisation refers to the dialectical process through which meaning is ascribed to certain aspects of humans in biological terms and as such persons may be allocated a general kind of individuals which will end up producing itself biologically" (1989 p. 76).

Relating the concept of stereotyping specifically to education, the works of Grosvenor (1997 p. 9), examines the concept of racialisation within the educational policy in the 1940's in Britain, and its significance. He comments: *"racialisation is a method through which mistreatment and marginalisation, physical and verbal abuse, and discrimination, can become manifest."*

Gillborn, (1995) also identifies a change in educational policy during the 1990s, where the policy was deracialised and the term 'race' developed within different cultural references (see also, Sollis, 1996; Blair, 2001).

According to Mirza, (2008), school statistics that are race based develops into racial stereotyping which can themselves become "*self-fulfilling prophecies.*" She argues hierarchies of achievement showing different ethnic groups performing better than others may lead to teachers perceiving children from these backgrounds in certain ways. For instance, she explains that if a Chinese pupil is said to be performing better than a Black pupil, teachers may encourage the Chinese to steer towards the sciences whereas the Black pupil will be encouraged in sports.

Similarly, Cleary and Schweitzer (2015), suggest that refugee children come across diverse experiences, and the hostile attention they receive creates barriers to their educational attainments. This is comparable to the assessments of Wright et al. (2005). They note that many young people feel they are labelled as underachievers (see for example Gillborn and

Youdell, 2000; Strand, 2008). They being labelled goes a long way to have a negative impact on their experiences and thereby their achievement. Early researchers such as Rasekoala, (1997), are of the notion that the media also play a contributory role in worsening the issue of racial stereotyping as they rarely show Black people who have achieved something great in life. Most often, many Blacks shown on Television may be either athletes or footballers. Being the first Black woman to receive an Emmy award in 67 years, Viola Davis in during her speech mentions: "*the only thing that separates women of colour from anyone else is opportunity*" (Graham, 2015). This is an eminent example of how Black people are still faced with many challenges to excel in whatever they do.

Rasekoala argues damaging images by the media can lead to young Blacks having a negative image of themselves. Some teachers may also pick up this damaging publicity about Blacks and can result in a low expectation of the teachers, which can have a detrimental effect on achievement.

Racial stereotyping has over the past two decades also led to many racially motivated deaths. The death of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, Anthony Walker 2005 and Mark Duggan 2011, are instances of lives lost due to racially motivated attacks, which have become an accepted fact that institutional racism is in existence in the UK. The recent 'Brexit' referendum resulted in many racially motivated abuse and attacks resulting in a couple of deaths (see also McPherson, 1999; Maguire; Solomos 2011; Morgan and Reiner 2012).

3.7 Peer pressure

Studies have revealed that Black students do have the self-belief that they can do well in school (Gillborn, 2007; Strand, 2008; Mirza, 2014). Yet, their educational outcomes do not reflect this belief. Many students are living in a culture, which is surrounded by negative peer pressure and can be unique in several ways (Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown, 1992). Many studies have been previously explored on the achievement gap among Black pupils/students, especially boys. Most findings have pointed to how schools have played a contributory role in the underachievement of Black pupils/students (see, for example, Gillborn 2010; Abbot, 2012). Other studies have focused on other social variables such as

peer pressure, including the burden of acting 'White' as the root cause of Black underachievement (Fordham and Ogbu, 1983; Sewell, 2000, 2016). In this section of the thesis, I examine the literature on peer pressure and its influence of the educational outcomes of Black pupils/students. Peer pressure has been identified to be one of the behavioural and attitudinal barriers to the academic achievement of African Caribbeans (Haynes, Tikly and Caballero, 2006). Acting 'White' has been associated with speaking standard English, working hard in class, dressing up appropriately, being intelligent and having White friends (Ford, Grantham and Whiting, 2008). Predominantly, Black pupils/students exhibiting these behavioural traits are usually accused of betraying their racial group or cultural values and have rather given in to the oppressor's values, attitudes, and behaviours.

The burden of acting 'White' has facilitated the hindrance of many Black pupils/students from taking advantage of the opportunities surrounding them academically. The aspiration to belong to a group of friendship circles, as well as avoiding rejection, isolation and alienation plays a significant role in influencing the decision-making process of Black pupils/students' ability to stay academically oriented.

> *Acting Black is frequently viewed by Black students as the opposite of acting White. Acting Black is interpreted as having a poor academic orientation, low intelligence, high aggressiveness, being highly antisocial and anti-authority, liking hip-hop music (rap, specifically), and dressing in urban clothes (that is, clothes that are not considered acceptable or professional by mainstream standards). Students who view acting Black as being the antithesis of achievement are less likely to perform at high levels. We believe that this belief contributes to the achievement gap and underrepresentation of Black students in gifted education* (Ford, Grantham and Whiting, 2008 p. 223*).*

Sewell (1997 p. 27) suggests, '*Black Caribbean boys may experience considerable pressure by their peers to adopt the norms of an 'urban' or 'street' subculture to reject the power of knowledge.*' Warren (2005) contrariwise argues that the challenging behaviours of Black pupils/students cannot be interpreted as a refusal of schooling, but it may be their way of rebelling against the 'inequality of respect' they may experience from their schools and teachers. Acting 'White' is a concept that has been invalidated by other scholars,

challenging the concepts and attributing the achievement of Black pupils/students to other factors (see for example, Cook and Ludwig 1998).

3.8 Parental engagement

Desforges and Abouchaar, (2003), notes it is widely acknowledged that children's ability to maximise their full potential is dependent on the level of support from their parents. Various governments around the world, including UK, have made many attempts to enhance parental participation. In England, the government's approach for promoting parental involvement was first initiated in the 1997 White Paper, '*Excellence in Schools.*' The strategy had three elements: giving parents a voice, promoting parental partnerships in schools and providing parents with information (Despforges and Abouchaar 2003).

Parental expectations have a greater impact on students' academic outcomes. Parental engagement with the education of a child has a positive correlation with educational outcomes (Hill and Craft 2003). Significantly, children whose parents are actively involved in their education are more likely to outperform those whose parents are involved to a lesser degree. The influence of parental engagement and its impact on academic achievement is not only widely acknowledged by academics, but also among policy makers, who have aimed at increasing parental engagement into broader educational policy initiatives. The educational values of parents signify the importance parents place on the educational outcomes of their children (see, for example, Wigfield and Eccles 2000; Bandura, 2006).

For instance, parents might set ambitious goals and aspirations for their children, such as attending the university. They might also share with their children values and the importance of education, with the hope that their children will adopt their values and beliefs. Previous studies have revealed that parental goals, aspirations, and values are influenced by their children's ability to set goals, persistence in school and academic achievement (see, for example Astone and McLanahan, 1991). Austin and Vancouver, 1996 comments:

> *'Parental goals and aspirations are best described as internal representations of desired states or outcomes that parents hold for their children. These, in turn, organize and direct parents' behaviours toward their children.'*

Other studies have identified the extent to which parent's values, goals, and aspirations, influence their children's academic achievement can vary by their parents' ethnicity. For example, studies in the USA found that Hispanic and African American parents place a high value on their children's education, have high educational aspirations, and are interested in educational issues (see, Wentzel, 1998, 2002).

Parental participation may vary from culture to culture and from one society to the other. There are varying types of parental participation, which may influence the educational outcomes of their children in different ways. These may include helping with homework, encouraging children to read, and monitoring their learning activities. The role of parents, in both inside and outside the school environment is crucial.

The degree of parental participation has significant implications on educational outcomes. Social cognitive theory suggests that the youth replicates information about appropriate behaviour and socially accepted norms and values by observation and interacting with important people in their lives (Bandura, 1977). Hence, there is the potential for parents to model positive behaviour and attitudes, thus facilitating good educational outcomes for their children.

3.9 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have identified that there are still gaps in the literature which centre on the studies of Black Africans specifically, which needs to be addressed. I have previously mentioned that government reports on education attainments for instance, have often made generalisations by categorizing Black Africans into one huge group without fragmenting them into sub-groups that would reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the African

continent. This would make it easier to identify which sub-groups are underachieving to enhance the implementation of comprehensive and effective support systems to be designed to support the groups that are underachieving.

Evidence about the impact of the social, economic, cultural, and emotional capital on the educational experiences and consequently attainment levels of Black Africans in general and specifically Ghanaians is very limited in the literature. The reasons behind the achievement or underachievement from the pupils/students' own perspective is also hardly discussed from a Ghanaian perspective.

In the next Chapter, I present an analysis and the rationale behind synthesising CRT and SRT as a premise that multiple oppressions synthesize as an experience to illuminate a social phenomenon. This is the principal justification for my theoretical framework.

Chapter Four - Theoretical Framework

'Different kinds of oppression are interlinked, and one can't liberate only one group without the others' (Eisner, 2013 p. 2).

4.1 Introduction

Theory as defined by Savin-Baden and Major (2013), is an attempt to explain, predict and master a phenomenon which may be a behaviour, an event or a relationship. Reeves *et al*, (2008 p. 132), define theory as *"an organised, coherent, and systematic articulation of a set of issues that are communicated as a meaningful whole"* (see, also Strauss and Corbin, 1994; Hitchcock and Hughes 1995).

Theoretical framework on the other hand, as described by Marshall and Rossman, (1994) is the use of theory in research and it provides a conceptual grounding of a study. Merriam, 1998 (p. 45), defines a theoretical framework as a *"lens through which a researcher views the world."* Within the context of qualitative research, the theoretical framework is therefore a structure that serves as a guide for thinking about the research subject and as an interpretative lens through which to view the data, and it works with the philosophical lens in a complementary way (See also Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent, and Ball 2015).

In this study I use a synthesis of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) as a framework. There are four other theoretical frameworks that could have been utilised in this study, that I considered and found less useful than CRT and SRT. These are Post-Colonial Theory, Cultural Deficit Theory, Marxist Theory and Intersectionality. In this Chapter I set out a brief overview of these theories, summarising each theoretical framework in order to evaluate their usefulness, their advantages and disadvantages in relation to this thesis. I will go on to justify why a synthesis between Critical Race Theory and Social Reproduction Theory of Bourdieu is deemed the most suitable for this current study.

It is in Chapter Ten that I go on to present what I originally considered to be the benefits (and disbenefits) of using and applying, a synthesis between CRT and SRT. A reflective autobiography and a critical reflection on the other four rejected theories, my own analysis of what they added, or, I deemed, could not effectively add, to my understanding, to the analysis and conclusions of this thesis is then presented. For each of these four theoretical lenses rejected, I set out salient criticisms that are made of them, regarding the educational (and wider, life) experiences of Ghanaian (and other) Black African teenagers. So, it is in this chapter that I selectively present what the relevant literature suggest are the strengths and the weaknesses of the theories rejected and those utilised in the light of the research carried out though this thesis.

Different theoretical perspectives have tried to explain the educational inequalities that continue to exist in our schools as well as the low achievement rates of Black Africans and African Caribbeans. In the sections following, I present an overview of the four theories rejected in this study and then justify why synthesising CRT and SRT is seemingly the most suitable framework for this current study.

4.2 Post-Colonial theory

The period from the 15th century to 20th century is described as colonialism, whereby powerful European nations established colonies in different continents. Fundamentally, the majority of life changing decisions affecting the colonised were mainly implemented by the colonial powers. Hence, by attempting to acknowledge the *'psychological inadequacies'*, the colonised tries to adopt the western values, language, religion, clothing and other practices of the coloniser and reject their own culture in order to be as White as possible. Fanon, 1952, (p.1) uses the terminology '*White mask over Black skin'* to describe this phenomenon (see also Bhabha, 2012). European invasion of Asia, the Americas and Africa in the 16th century onwards produced capitalism and modernisation. Modern colonialism entails the domination and oppression of a country's military, economy, culture and race,

through invasion and to varying degrees, settlement. Political domination is the essence of colonialism. Gandhi (1998 p.32) explains:

> *'Colonialism is a historical event whereby the 'West' attempts systematically to cancel or negate the cultural difference and value of the 'non-West'.*

Post-Colonial theory is a framework or lens that analyses life after a foreign rule. This theory comprises a set of critical and theoretical approaches, which are used to examine literature, culture, politics and history of former colonies, and the impacts of colonialism on the colonising, metropolitan countries. Post-Colonial theory examines the effect of a powerful empire focusing on issues of oppression including exploitation and racism.

Post-Colonialism as a critical theory focuses on experiences based on colonial rule from the perspective of the colonised society. Post-Colonialism theory is often concerned about issues relating to the national culture after the departure of the imperial power (Sawant, 2012).

The founding stone of Post-Colonial study, Edward Said's *'Orientalism',* 1978, established the scientific study of Post-Colonial theory. Revolutionising Post-Colonial theory and associated literary literatures, Said (1978), outlines his analysis of the inequalities that exists between the West and East and he concluded that the West depicts the East to be less rational, feminised and weak.

A variety of studies such as feminism and Marxism engage Post-Colonial theories in their critical methodologies however there are a number of reasons why this current study does not employ Post-Colonial theory as a framework.

Firstly, I acknowledge that Ghanaians were colonised by the UK and Ghanaians living in the UK are faced with diverse forms of oppression and challenges. For instance, the concept of hybridity, whereby immigrants attempt to blend the cultural values of the host country with that of the culture of origin, can be an issue for all immigrants living in the UK, including Africans. Additionally, immigrants in the UK generally may be faced with the issue of mimicry. Mimicry exposes the contradictory relationship between the coloniser and the

colonised. Sawant (2012) notes: '*the colonized subject mimics the colonizer by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, language, attire, values etc. In doing so, he mocks and parodies the colonizer'* (p.3). Despite the concerns being linked to Post-Colonialist theorists, I suggest that the diverse forms of oppression or challenges faced by the Ghanaian teenagers in schools presently (although may be interrelated), are not chiefly as a result of colonisation.

Secondly, the rationale for not choosing Post-Colonial theory as a suitable framework is that it is argued that Post-Colonial theories often seek to unveil and discover the effects of colonisation on the colonised as the coloniser develops a sense of superiority, whilst the colonised establishes a sense of self as defined by the colonial master (see for example Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2003; Go, 2013). However, the objectives of this current study are not geared toward highlighting the impact of colonisation on the educational experiences of the teenagers.

Some Post-Colonial Theorists highlight the aftermath of colonialism, such as violence and anarchy among communities, for example, the impact of colonisation on Algerians and Magrebis (See, Fanon, 1952). Post-Colonial literature primarily addresses the impact of colonisation in colonised countries. In terms of literature, it aims to scrutinize and criticise the limitations of literary analysis by highlighting the interest of the colonised and the cataclysmic impact of the dominant colonising culture on the colonised by revealing the colonial ideologies that are concealed within literary texts (see Achebe, 1977).

Another reason for not considering Post-Colonial theory as a suitable framework is that some critics of Post-Colonialism emphasises that its most influential advocators have been and continue to be educated by the West and therefore their mind-sets are not subaltern cultures but rather that of the Western, and as Western minded individuals, they cannot speak for the oppressed (Parry, 1987; Hardiman, 2012).

Last but certainly not the least, although Post-Colonial theory can be useful when analysing educational experiences after colonialism, it has not been considered as useful for this current study because it does not recognise the manner in which the ideologies of the West

have infiltrated society (see, Nandy, 1998). Loomba (2015) suggests that *Post-Colonialsm as a 'concept is too 'easy' a response to social issues and further probing is certainly needed' (*p.42*).*

4.3 Cultural Deficit Theory

Cultural Deficit Theory is the belief that poor attainment and underachievement is generally attributed by the pupils/students' or students' socio-economic background and family status. Principally, Cultural Deficit Theorists focuses on the idea of 'nature verses nurture' and criticises the child's social, cultural and economic background as being deprived of the ingredients needed to succeed academically.

The Cultural Deficit Model perceives that members of a minority group have contrasting attributes because their culture is deficient in comparison with the majority group. It is the assertion that (some) racial and minority ethnic groups underperform academically compared to their White peers due to their dysfunctional family and sub-group culture and the lack of other essential characteristics (see for example Salkind, 2008).

Studies that focuses on Cultural Deficit Theory as their framework blame students themselves - and the home or sub-group cultures that have nurtured them- for their lack of educational success by hooking on and referring to negative stereotypes that are often associated with minority groups such as Black African-Caribbeans and poor White working class students. Schools are therefore rarely held accountable. Irizarry (2009), suggests that '*schools are absolved from their responsibilities to educate appropriately, and this charge is shifted almost entirely to students and families.'* This model therefore asserts that negative stereotypes are precisely linked with the students' inability to endeavour and put in a lot more effort to perform academically.

Cultural Deficit Theory can be embedded in schools through teacher training programmes and educational research (Trueba 1988; Valencia and Sorlozano 1997; González, 2005). Payne's (2001) '*Framework for Understanding Poverty'*, is an extensively disseminated text and widely acclaimed within school districts in the USA and has been criticised for

'*promoting classist, deficit-centered theories to explain the underachievement of youth in poverty*'

Cultural Deficit Theorists argue that students of low socio-economic background do fail in school due to their lack of exposure to resources such as books and therefore enter the school system without the type of cultural capital as defined and valued by schools. Sewell (2005 and 2008) asserts that Afro-Caribbean boys underperform because they are not willing to learn due to their dysfunctional family homes. He argues that most of them have single mothers and they lack Black male role models, and therefore latch onto their peers (gang culture) for guidance. He further argues that racism is not an issue within school, and that Black boys underachieve because they have low self-esteem and aspirations to achieve high in life. Many of them aspire to become footballers or rappers. Sewell disregards the notion that racism is the cause of underachievement as argued by anti-racists activists since the 1970s in Britain, for example, Coard, (1971). Sewell disputes that coming from a disadvantaged background should be the basis for failure.

Cultural Deficit Theory has not been considered as a suitable framework for this current study for the following reasons:

Firstly, Cultural Deficit Theory fails to recognise institutional barriers such as racial stereotyping and low teacher expectations as a barrier to educational success. Cultural Deficit Theory assumes that Black, Minority ethnic groups and pupils/students on low incomes underachieve in schools due to their perceived cultural deprivation, which are not compatible with school success. Consequently, this model perceives that students of colour and students from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds often start school lacking cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997; Izarry, 2009) that is considered valuable and affirmed by the school.

Secondly, there is the assumption that families of minority ethnic groups and those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds do not value education in the same way as those from the middle class and upper-class families do, those groups that are most likely to be more successful in school. As noted by Izarry (2009),'*much of the deficit-centred literature suggests that a lack of involvement among families living in poverty is in part responsible for their educational outcomes' (p.11)*.

Additionally, the Cultural Deficit models fails to notice or recognise the core, loving and supportive values of what might be termed traditional home life within many families in the Black communities and within many families in the more marginalised and impoverished white working-class communities. Such a Cultural Deficit model castigates, demeans and harms pupils/students and communities as a whole. Students are harmed through their culture being deemed `alien' and inferior to school and mainstream culture. Schools and educators should embrace other cultures as a principal space for enquiry rather than blanketly criticising them. Deficit perspective can have a devastating impact on students and can be manifested in different forms, making the school experience 'subtractive' for many youths (see Conchas, 2006).

Finally, Cultural Deficit Theory has not been considered as the most appropriate framework because in my outlook, this model is discriminatory and the negative beliefs surrounding Black and poor pupils/students can and frequently does result in stereotyping (Steele, 1997), which can lead to school drop outs or exclusions and consequently poor educational outcomes. Dealing with the issues experienced by marginalised groups necessitates the removal of the deficit model and replacing it with a structure, based on critical learning practices, promoting culturally and racially sensitive pedagogy. As Troyna and Williams (1986) confirm, '*it is not a child's language that disadvantages it, but the school.'*

4.4 Marxist Theory

During the mid-19th century, Europe witnessed the birth of Marxist theory in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marxist theory is principally positioned on the economic and social theories of Marx and Engels. Class struggle is the core element in the analysis of social change in capitalist society. Marxism opposes capitalism where the means of production and the distribution of goods are privately owned. Capitalism predominantly encourages free competition of markets, which is motivated by and prioritises profits above other social and human considerations. Marxism rather proposes a socialist economic system, whereby the means of production and the distribution of goods are publicly owned. Under a capitalist economic and political system, the working class (proletariat) own only their capacity to work and sell their manpower (labour - power). As Marx and Engel (1848) note:

> *'Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat'* (p. 109).

Even though Marx and Engels' did not write extensively about education, their development of theoretical perspectives on modern economies have been used to decipher the social functions of education. Their approaches have been used as a platform to criticise and theorise education in the *reproduction of capitalist states and to facilitate projects of alternative education (*Kellner, 1992;Hill, 2013)

With respect to education, Marxist theory gives a detailed explanation for the underachievement in schools of the working class. According to certain writers who engage with Marxist perspective, the role of schools in reproducing social, educational, cultural and economic inequality cannot be overemphasized. For instance, Bowles and Gintis (1976), suggest that this can be described as the 'hidden curriculum' of the educational system, to slot students into a class-based, relatively impermeable, social division of labour. Bowles and Gantis perspective has been criticised by various Marxists for their determinism in educational theory whereby the economy *determine*s what happens at other levels of the

society, their over emphasis of the correlation between work and education without considering other factors such as pupils who reject education and therefore do not become employable has been criticised (see for example, Cole, 1983).

Although Marxism is primarily about class, I acknowledge the role of Marxist theory in explaining the different types of oppressions faced by a group of people within schools and by the educational system, for example, racism. Also, several neo-Marxist writings on racism provide a significant insight into rethinking the connection between race, power relations and political apparatus (see for example, Gilroy, 1987; Omi and Winant, 1994). There is also a vast literature on Marxism feminism (see Morton, 1971; Benston, 1989).

Moreover, the theories of cultural and ideological reproduction theory of Bourdieu and Althusser are central to Marxist theory. For Bourdieu, pupils/students (children and teenagers) bring their social class backgrounds into school, which may include language and attitude towards behaviour and learning. These attributes may be deemed suitable or unsuitable by the school depending on the social status of the child. Therefore, children and teenagers attending a comprehensive school within the catchment of a council estate may be stereotyped and labelled with their teachers having low expectations of them compared to children or teenagers who attend selective or prestigious private schools. Teachers' expectations of the latter group will in all probability be overwhelmingly high (see, Anyon, 1980).

I acknowledge the significance of using Marxist theory in framing this study, unquestionably and most especially in aspects relating to cultural capital. However, I do not deem it to be the most suitable framework for this current study due to its limitations.

Firstly, the core premise of Marxist theory is founded on the concept of class. Marxists have always strived to struggle for the interests of the working class. Kelsh and Hill (2006) explain the significance of bringing back the concept of Marxist theory in educational research and practice. The theory has the potency to examine the structure of ownership and power in capitalist social relations. Marxist analysis of education suggests that we live in a capitalist

71

society and economy in which the capitalists' exploits workers - a category that includes women and workers from minority ethnic groups. Kelsh and Hill (2006); Cole (2009), recognise that social class is not only horizontally layered, or stratified (into, for example, different layers or strata within different classes) but that social class is also vertically stratified- that within, for example working class strata or middle-class strata, women and workers/ people of various ethnic groups suffer more from oppression, discrimination.

Hence, different policies, such as those of education impact on the extent to include or empower, exclude and disempower sections of the working class, which includes minority ethnic communities. The scope of this current study however moves beyond a Marxist social class analysis by analysing the educational experiences of Ghanaian teenagers of varying socio-economic backgrounds, of various social class strata, and the emphasis is not primarily focused on what Marxists call `the economic relations of production' and the resulting `social relations of production'.

Secondly, Marxists are criticised for not placing emphasis on the voices of and experiences of people of colour and their understanding into how racism operates within society and providing an insight into how people of colour are racialised (Delgado, 1989). As a matter of precision, Marxist theory is blamed for not giving racially minoritised groups the platform and the semantics to *'speak back about their experiences of racism and facilitate psychic preservation'* (Tate 1997, p.220). This is a means through which psychological and spiritual empowerment are sought in response to the consequences of racism (see Gilborn and Rollock, 2011).

Furthermore, the focus of this study does not warrant a preponderant use of Marxism, rather, I have adopted some Marxist concepts (see, Bhattacharya and Vogel, 2017) via Bourdieu's Marxist inspired Social Reproduction Theory. Marxist approach is oppositional and dialectic. Marxists use the dialectical method in order to illuminate perceptions. They teach the working class to know themselves and be conscious of themselves as a class. Marxism remains a revolutionary philosophy, that challenges capitalism. A common feature of Marxist theory is the focus of its analysis on the macrostructural level. In relation to

racism, the focus is predominantly on the role and function played by racism within and between core institutions, for instance the workplace and the government. Indeed, any adequate analysis of racism must encompass such a macrostructural conception one that highlights the dynamic yet persistent forms of class exploitation and the political suppression of people of colour. However, a comprehensive analysis of racism necessitates an examination into the genealogy and ideology of racism and an exhaustive micro-institutional analysis (West, 2000).

Primarily, some Marxist studies of the dynamics of race and class do not provide a systemic analysis of race and oppression (see Cole, 2016, 2017). For example, it has been argued that even though Marx and Engel's work does contain many references to the persistence of racial and ethnic relations in aspects of social formations, such references relate to race as an economic element, for example, in slavery in the USA.

In addition, another school of thought argue that some Marxist over dependence on the concept of class has excluded them from examining racial and ethnic issues, limiting them into the wider social relations (see, Parkin, 1979; Banton, 1983).

In reality, a Black person coming from a middle class or an upper-class family may experience racial discrimination due to his/her colour or racial background because the first thing the victimizer identifies with is the skin colour of the victim and not the social class.

Although neo-Marxists (see for example Cole and Maisuria, 2007; Cole, 2009; Hill, 2009, 2013) in recent years have conceptualised racialisation, previous Marxist work on racial and ethnic segregation have particularly concentrated on race and class as modes of exploitation. Oliver Cox's *Caste, Class and Race* is a classic example. Cox (1948), for instance highlighted the historical economic interests that created racist oppression and ideologies. He interpreted racial discrimination as an outcome of the interest of the bourgeoisie in exploiting sections of the working class heavily. Since he conceptualised that the fundamental source of exploitation in society is class division, the development of his work emanated from conceptualising *'racial exploitation as a special form of class exploitation'* (Solomos, 2003). This model eventually was to have a broad influence on the

work of Marxist writers on race in the USA and to a limited extent in European and other countries.

Similarly, the significant influence of Miles' (1982) early work in the field of race and ethnic studies cannot be ignored. His early work drew upon structuralist Marxist theorizations of capitalism, offering a historically informed study of racism and migrant labour. Miles was renowned for critiquing the race relations paradigm and his emphasis on the need for sociologists to employ the concept of racialisation rather than race (Miles, 1993). This standpoint positioned political economy at the core of the study of racism.

Accordingly, focusing on micro experience rather than the macro, the use of Marxism for this thesis is via Social Reproduction Theory.

4.5 Intersectionality

Brah and Phoenix (2004 p. 76), suggest that intersectionality *"emphasises fluidity. It is also important for the understanding of particular identities and interactions through time, subjectivities, and dispositions."*

Kimberley Crenshaw coined the term Intersectionality in 1989. However, before then, many feminists in their work to explain how women have concurrently been positioned within the society as women, such as lesbian, working class or as Black (see for example Brah and Phoenix, 2004) had adopted this concept. Intersectionality enables people to analyse and express multiple viewpoints about the world. "*It is thus, useful as a handy catchall phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it"* (Pattynama and Phoenix (2006, p. 187).

Intersectionality has been used to explain how multiple factors can affect a social phenomenon. For instance, Crenshaw, (1991) used this concept to indicate the different means in which *'race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of the employment experiences of Black women.'* Her aim was to demonstrate that many of the experiences that Black women go through could not be only captured wholly by looking at the race, class or gender dimensions of those experiences separately. However, the

intersection of racism, class and sexism can factor into Black women's lives and those experiences should be wholly considered.

Critical Race and feminist theories have used Intersectionality to explain approaches that are analytical in nature and that concurrently deliberate the meaning and significance of several categories of identity, difference, and disadvantage. However, in recent years, the concept has been adopted by other disciplines.

Knapp, (2005) has a different viewpoint. He suggests that the categories of, gender, class, and race are a triad that is regularly mentioned without having a meaningful system of ensuring the concerns for which the phrase serves are appropriately addressed. He explains that this may be unavoidable until psychologists use the concept of Intersectionality to posit how social classifications jointly construct experiences and upshots, to establish new ways of analysing issues relating to race, class and gender.

Crenshaw clearly distinguishes between two types of Intersectionality, political and structural. She comments:

> *'Structural inequality focuses on the direct impact of inequalities and their intersections as experienced by individuals in society. Political Intersectionality on the other hand focuses on the relevance of the impact of inequalities and their intersections to political strategies'* (Crenshaw, 1989 p. 18).

In applying Intersectionality to lived experiences, some researchers have used content analysis (Hancock, 2004), others have been influenced by survey data, (Simien, 2007; Fraga, *et al.* 2008), whereas some have also engaged in auto biographical and biographical approach (Lewis and Weigert 1985; Hooks, 1994; Brah and Phoenix, 2004). In exploring Intersectionality, in-depth interviews have also been used (Hum and Simpson, 2003; Smooth 2006).

In spite of the advantages of Intersectionality, it could not be considered as the most suitable theory for analysing the educational experiences of the teenage Ghanaians. The rationale for rejecting intersectionality is by virtue of the fact that the analysis of this study fails to fall

within the precepts of an intersectional analysis. In this study, I do not focus on gender. Fundamentally, the gender and class analysis element of this thesis were not strong enough for the study to be ascribed as intersectional.

There is also an issue with where and how, within Intersectional Theory and analysis to place the emphasis (see for example Acker, 2006).

By contrast, Preston and Bhopal (2012 cited in Rollock, Gilborn, Vincent and Ball, 2015) comment on their commitments to Intersectionality by stating that intersectional analysis does not mean that we cannot 'speak' to 'race' alone, and we should address its primacy when necessary.

Having considered and rejected Post-Colonial Theory, Cultural Deficit Theory, Marxist Theory and Intersectionality as particularly fruitful theoretical lenses through which to analyse and evaluate the educational experiences of the Ghanaian teenagers, this study instead draws on a synthesis between Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Pierre Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) as an analytical framework. These theoretical frameworks will be analysed in terms of their ability in relation to analysing the experiences, achievement, and performance in schools of Black Africans, including Ghanaians.

4.6 Critical Race Theory

In the preceding sections of this chapter, I have given a general overview of the frameworks that could have been utilised for this study and the rationale for not considering them to be most suitable.

In this current research study, a framework of analysis, synthesising Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Social Reproduction Theory (SRT), are considered to explore the educational experiences of Ghanaians. In this and the section following, I give a general overview of CRT and SRT and why I deem them to be most suitable.

Early anti-racism advocates have influenced the exploration of race relations in schools, including anti-racist initiatives to inform education policy, both at the local and national levels

(see, for example, Hessari and Hill, 1989; Troyna and Hatcher, 1992; Tomlinson, Roberts and Menter 1992),

CRT is a body of scholarship steeped in radical activism that seeks to explore and challenge the prevalence of racial inequality within society. While there have been anti-racist analyses over many decades, major CRT proponents in the UK, example, Gillborn and Rollock, introduced CRT in the UK in 2006. It is based on the understanding that race and racism are the products of social thought and power relations; CRT theorists endeavour to expose the way in which racial inequality is maintained through the operation of structures and assumptions that appear normal and unremarkable (Ladson-Billings. 2005; Gillborn and Rollock 2011, 2014).

They also suggest that Critical Race Theory is "*an approach that offers a radical lens through which to make sense of, to deconstruct, and challenge racial inequality in society*" (2014, p. 2). It offers a genuinely fundamental and logical set of approaches that could revitalize critical research in education across a range of enquiries not only in self-consciously multicultural studies. Critical Race Theory (CRT) became popular in the USA in the mid-1970s as some activists, lawyers and legal scholars realised the gains of the civil rights era of the 1960s had slowed down and in many respects, were rolling back. Early writers such as Derick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado in realising that there was the need for new theories and strategies to combat the subtle forms of racism that were gaining ground, had to conceptualise to form a new movement. Delgado and Stenfacic, (2006 p. 2), explains that "*CRT builds on the insights of two previous movements Critical Legal Studies and Radical Feminism.*"

CRT also identifies that liberalism and meritocracy are frequently stories perceived from those with affluence, authority, and opportunity. These stories paint an incorrect and misleading depiction of meritocracy; everybody who works hard can achieve prosperity, influence and honour while disregarding the systemic discriminations that institutional racism offers (UCLA School of Public Affairs 2009).

> "*Critical race theorists thus try to combine pragmatist and utopian visions; they draw upon a variety of critical strategies to expose how law constructs race to disadvantage persons of color while joining larger struggles for social transformation and counter-mobilization against right-wing retrenchment in struggles for racial justice.*"

(See also, Parker, Deyhle, and Villenas 1999; Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Taylor, Gillborn and Ladson-Billings 2011; Cole, 2017).

CRT is characterised by the following central ideas: First, CRT approves of approaches to social transformation, which are aggressive in manner and rather criticises liberalism, which approaches social transformation cautiously. Precisely, CRT scholars are in favour of a race-conscious approach to transformations as opposed to the colour blindness approach embraced by liberals. They also tend to support ideas that are more reliant on political organising.

CRT's uses storytelling and counter storytelling in its approach. Through the use of narratives, they are able to illuminate and explore experiences regarding racial oppression. Furthermore, CRT believes in essentialist philosophy, whereby the experiences of a category for instance, race or gender are reduced to the experience for one sub-group, for example, African-Americans. Fundamentally for Critical Race Theorists, people who are oppressed share similar experiences of oppression. That oppression however, varies by gender, class and race, therefore, the approaches and the aims will be different for each of these groups (see, Delgado, 1995).

White privilege or supremacy is a concept that is widely used by Critical Race Theorists. It refers to the countless social benefits that are awarded to the dominant race, 'White'. This terminology is used to describe the superiority of White people in many different ways. For instance, not being stopped and searched by the police is a privilege for many White people compared to Blacks who have high rates of stop and search (see for example, Inequality Audit Report, 2017; The Lammy Report 2017). Using the terminology White supremacy to describe everyday racism has been criticised by Marxists as inappropriate because it

homogenizes all White people as being in powerful positions and privileges (see for example, Cole and Maisuria 2007; Cole 2017).

Microaggression as another fundamental characteristic of CRT refers to activities or actions that are harmful to oppressed individuals. These may comprise small acts of overt and covert racism, which penetrate slowly through oppressed groups or societies, which have devastating outcomes. Hence, microaggressions are grounded on the assumptions regarding racial issues that are engrossed in cultural heritage.

4.7 Critical Race Theory and Education

In this thesis, aspects of anti-racist initiatives and CRT inform my knowledge and inquiry of the impact of race, racism and power relations on the educational experiences of Ghanaians. Adopting the principles of CRT, it is important to start with the premise that race is socially constructed.

Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent and Ball, (2015) comment that in using this framework, racism is described to be understated and flexible and it shows differently in different circumstances. Critical Race Theorists have argued that the common acts that are described as racist are hidden and seen to be normal, while the crudest and obvious forms are recognised to be problematic by the majority of people.

I am aware that being Black usually occupies a position that is relatively disadvantaged in key areas of social policy and lived experience in the UK (see for example Inequality Audit Report, 2017). The data shown in Chapter Three highlighted that, at the compulsory level of education, Black Africans and Caribbeans are most likely to underperform. The trend is similar in post-compulsory education.

Ledesma and Calderon (2015), suggest that CRT has increasingly become a toolkit for education researchers seeking to explore the areas such as pedagogy, school climate and educational opportunities.

However, Ladson-Billings (2005) presents a view, which rather goes on to urge aspiring CRT scholars to be wary of the dangers of being lured into CRT. For instance, she notes of the *"uncritical"* use of narratives or storytelling which excludes the central ideas of CRT, and she called for stories to be told that can place the stories in powerful contexts (see for example, Tate, 1997; Darder and Torres 2004; Dixon and Rousseau 2005; Crenshaw 2011).

CRT has been used by most educational scholars, to highlight how race and racism can manifest themselves within the educational system and allow for the engagement of these issues within the classroom, in the framework of policy and within the society. CRT in education exposes the existence of racism through education from issues such as leadership, curriculum, pedagogy and school policy. See also (Ladson-Billings 2003; Dixon and Rousseau 2006; Taylor, Gillborn, Ladson-Billings 2009).

There has been a tremendous amount of work by different scholars using CRT as a framework. However, there is limited work by Critical Race Theorists exposing any form of discrimination that a White person may face due to a disability, ethnicity or coming from a working-class background. Marxist critique of CRT emphasises that there may be, indeed, many White people who are experiencing different forms of discrimination that can have a detrimental effect, just as the consequences of race and racism on an individual of colour. Sivanandan, 2001, cited: Fekete, (2001 p. 26) explains:

> *'Xeno-racism is a racism that is not just directed at those with darker skins, from the former colonial territories, but at the newer categories of the displaced, the dispossessed and the uprooted, who are beating at Western Europe's doors, the Europe that helped to displace them in the first place. It is a racism that cannot be colour-coded, directed at poor Whites as well, and is therefore passed off as xenophobia, a "natural" fear of strangers. However, in the way it denigrates and reifies people before segregating and expelling them, it is a xenophobia that bears all the marks of the old racism. It is racism in substance, but "Xeno" in form. It is a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are Whites.'*

Some criticisms have been levelled by Marxist theorists against CRT, and as such, they have different perspectives that oppose the ideas of CRT. These critiques include Miles, 1993; Cole and Hill 2001; Cole and Maisuria, 2007, 2009; Hill, 2008; Cole, 2009. "*These critiques and their concepts draw attention to CRT's empirical, theoretical and political findings*" (Hill, 2008).

Hill, (2008), asserts that CRT is a theory that sees race as the most "*significant form of oppression rather than social class.*" He argues that CRT disregard the class aspect of the causes of underachievement such as pupils/students who may be entitled to free school meals, thus ignoring the economic background of pupils/students. He points out that class is not exclusively the focus of analysis and critique but rather adheres to the concept of "raced and gendered class, in which some minority ethnic groups are racialized and suffer a race penalty." Hill concludes that the significant forms of oppression, discrimination and inequality in the classroom as in the economy or society, in any part of the world are those related to ('raced' and gendered and caste) social class.

Miles, (1993); Cole and Maisuria, 2007 are of the same opinion, and they propose the concept of racialization. Racialization is a concept that recognises that being racialized is not only limited to skin colour, but an individual can be racialized due to the language he or she speaks and the cultural background of that person. They reiterate that an individual can experience racialization due to the type of clothes been worn and experiences of racialization are due to invisible biological features. Racialisation therefore is the way that the society characterises some ethnic groups as having particular characteristics.

Cole extended the concept of racialization further and introduced the idea of Xeno racialization. Emanating from Sivanandan's discussion on Xenoracism, he explains that Xeno racialization is the process whereby asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants who may often be White, become racialized, that is, stigmatised as being inferior. This concept of racialization does not focus on skin colour but rather on other socio-cultural and economic factors of an individual who can be a victim of racism.

White Supremacy, which is one of the main aspects of CRT, has also come under critical examination. According to Cole and Maisuria, (2007, 2009), the notion that White Supremacy is a better way of expressing oppression in contemporary societies based on race rather than racism is not acceptable. They argue:

> *'CRT homogenises all White people together in positions of class power and privilege, which, of course, is factually incorrect, both on social class inequality in general and concerningXeno racialization. Cole and Maisuria continues, it is certainly not White people as a whole who are in this hegemonic position, nor white people as a whole who benefit from current education policy, or any other legislation. Indeed, the White working class, as part of the working class in general, consistently fares badly in the education system'* (2009, p.36)

Cole (2009, 2017) notes that, in focusing on issues of colour and being divorced from matters related to capitalist requirements on the labour market, CRT is ill–equipped to analyse the discourse of xenoracism and processes of Xeno racialization

Furthermore, Cole maintains that categorising racism, emphasising on issues relating to colour and disassociating from problems related to capitalist requirements on the labour market, CRT is then not suitable to examine or lead the discussion on xenoracism and processes of Xeno racialization.

4.8 Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory

Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory, and its broad concepts of capitals and habitus are directly relevant to this study.

Sullivan, (2001), explains that there has been considerable empirical and theoretical literature generated around Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory. These debates have centred on inequalities in educational attainment among different classes within the society. According to Bourdieu, (1977 p. 492):

> *'The education systems of industrialised societies function in such a way to legitimise class inequalities. Success in the education system is facilitated by the possession of cultural capital and higher-class habitus. Lower-class pupils/students, in general, do not possess these traits, so the failure of the majority of these pupils/students is inevitable. This explains class inequalities in educational attainment.'*

A pupil's abillity or inability to succeed in school, has commonly been attributed socially, to their abilities and talents. Hence, for Bourdieu, the outcome of one's education or the educational status is a contributory factor of reproducing and legitimising social inequalities, as individuals within the higher-class strata are acknowledged to merit or 'deserve' their status in the social structure.

In common with Marxists, Bourdieu asserts that the force behind culture, that is what in society is deemed high status or low status/ irrelevant, is power and power relations. Thus, culture provides the basis for humans to communicate and interact; the media, education, religion, and the ruling group determines what is 'valued culture' and what is not. Therefore, with the 'right' type of culture (knowledge, experience, habitus), one can dominate our society. As well as being the foundations for humans to communicate, it helps us to form how we understand reality, and it also helps to establish and maintain hierarchies socially (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Swartz 1997).

Yosso (2005, p. 75), defines culture as "*behaviours and values that are learned, shared and exhibited by a group of people and it is evidenced in material and non-material productions of people.*" Similarly, (Delgado-Gaitan 200; Delgado Bernal 2002) suggest that the culture that students possess can '*nurture and empower them.*'

Capital on the other hand can be defined as the ability or inability, to have control over one's future. Capital simply means power (Tabb, 2012). For Bourdieu, there are three main forms of capital which are, cultural, economic (money and wealth), and social (social relationships and networks). Cultural capital can take three forms: embodied 'in the form of long lasting dispositions of the mind and body, objectified in goods such as books, and institutionalised, in the form of qualifications (Bourdieu, 1997; Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent and Ball, 2015,). Since this capital is unevenly distributed, it is what structures individuals within society to

"*strive to optimise their level of capital.*" The accumulation of capital will determine an individual's '*social trajectory*' and opportunities in life. Cultural capital is the basis of social reproduction which is something that one accrues in life through social circumstances (see also Yosso, 2005; Barone, 2006; Anderson and Hansen, 2012; Edgerton and Roberts 2014).

4.9 Social Reproduction Theory and Education

Part of this study will explore the effects of the possession of social, cultural, economic and emotional capitals on the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin in England. As stated by Tzanarkis, (2011 p. 76), "*social reproductive theory offers a paradigm of class analysis argued to be capable of explaining persistent inequalities in educational stratifications despite state efforts at educational expansion cross-nationally, including Britain.*"

Education has been one of the essential societal institutions for Bourdieu. He realised that education institutions helped to promote and widen social inequalities instead of eradicating them. His main concern about the education systems in industrialised societies was the selection process, curriculum content, language and academic qualifications been equated to social classifications and social reproduction (Tabb, 2005).

According to Bourdieu, certain cultural heritages are favoured while others are disregarded by the preservation of uneven social systems through school in and higher education systems. Moreover, for Bourdieu, higher education is self-selective, and because lower classes have internalised their dispositions, they are more likely to drop out of school because they have a limited belief that they can be successful as a result of previous members of the same class having inadequate cultural capital, the belief that `that's not for us'. The higher the status of one's cultural capital, the more the likelihood for that individual to succeed (see for example Swartz 1997; Sullivan 2001).

There have been many previous empirical studies in countries such as the UK and the USA that have suggested that there is a link between parental economic status and children's early and later educational attainment. (DiMaggio 1982, DiMaggio; Mohr, 1985; UK Inequality Audit Report, 2017). It is also evidenced that children from higher socio-economic status perform higher than children from lower socio-economic status.

Irwin, (2009), suggests that the educational expectations of young people in England are more related to the young people's perceptions of parental emotional support which Coleman, (1988 p. 98) argues, is a measure of *'parental social capital rather than economic capital.*

Coleman's study, however, failed to recognise the educational experiences of young Black African minority ethnic communities by not taking into account what they think and perceive about their educational experiences within and outside the school context. The study generalised outcomes for all minority ethnic communities in the USA.

Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell, (1999) argue that Black students are unlikely to gain a return on their education due to school's perception about them, especially, that of racial stratification and injustice and therefore, they hardly display any profit in their education. They described this process to be self-elimination, and it shows that indirectly, social reproduction is being played out. They enumerate that the education mobility and attainment levels of Black pupils/students are often stifled by their socio-economic backgrounds.

4.11 Conclusion

Finding the appropriate theoretical framework to position, examine and discuss the outcome of this study has been quite a cumbersome task. I have considered different theoretical perspectives that have provided a framework for previous empirical studies. Despite the criticisms levelled against CRT and SRT, I am certain that they are suitable for analysing, theorising and making sense of the educational experiences of Ghanaians in England.

Moreover, in analysing the framework that underpins this study, as well as exploring the literature surrounding Blacks and their educational experiences, I have made a number of observations.

First, evidence about the impact of the social, economic, cultural, and emotional capital on the educational experiences and consequently attainment levels of this group (Ghanaians) is limited.

Similarly, synthesising CRT and SRT to analyse the educational experiences of a singular Black African group in England is rarely highlighted in previous empirical studies.

In the next Chapter of this thesis, I present the methodology, methods of data collection processes and analysis procedures embraced in this study.

Chapter Five – Methodology

> "*I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?"* (Spradley, 1979 p.3)

5.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses the research paradigm and my ontological and epistemological view points for the study. The research design, data collection tools and their pros and cons are discussed in this chapter. Also, the sampling and sampling method used, the difficulties associated with this study, ethical considerations and ensuring the trustworthiness and credibility of the study are explored. The chapter describes the philosophical and the theoretical frameworks that have informed the methods of collecting data for this study. The common difficulties of adopting a qualitative research design is thereby raised.

Last and certainly not the least, a description of how the data was analysed and interpreted is outlined.

5.2   The Research Process
5.2.1   The Research Design

The aims of this research design are to uncover the issues that underpins Ghanaians' educational experiences by engaging with the participants through interaction. It is also to ensure that the participants will not be asked leading questions but rather, be encouraged to share their experiences, feelings and thoughts from their point of view and first-hand experience. As a Ghanaian with 12 years' experience working in UK schools, I have been very passionate about the underachievement of ethnic Black minorities, as they usually fall behind other ethnic groups such as the Indians and Chinese. This has been a contributing factor to me being zealous about this project, investigating this generalised notion of Black underachievement as it impacts on my community. Initially, I considered using school settings for my data collection. However, I came to an important realisation that schools are not the only social institution set up to provide education for Ghanaian teenagers and

impacting on their perceptions of and reactions to formal schooling and education more widely. In addition, most previous research related to this area of study has been undertaken in schools. Wanting to give the current study a unique status, I resorted to other recognised institutions, which provide a form of education, the church, family, and community. These are social institutions, which provided me with important contextual data to frame the narratives gleaned from the young people. The rationale for choosing Ghanaian community Churches was to use them as my initial contact base (not on religious grounds) then gradually, I was able to build upon my contacts and extended it to the wider Ghanaian community through convenience and snowball sampling. Thereby, having the opportunity to recruit non-Christian participants.

Another reason for not using schools is that there has been a wealth of work on schools been carried out over the years in schools, although not on Ghanaians specifically but rather on African Caribbeans or Black pupils/students in general. Since previous studies have focused on the achievement of Black pupils/students, I then thought this study has to be different, original and innovative, focussing on the participants' point of view and experiences, sharing what they perceive about how the quality of education has influenced their educational experiences and outcomes.

It is worthwhile stating that this project is not geared towards understanding how young people learn, achieve and behave within a school setting but to discover their perceptions and views about their educational experiences and how they, and others in the Ghanaian community consider whether and how these may or may not facilitate their learning and thereby their attainment. It would have been advantageous for the study to be carried out within a school environment to retrieve this type of information but not essential. This is because the information required for this research study was to be obtained by engaging with pupils/students, teachers, community leaders and parents outside the school environment.

Indeed, working outside a school environment may well have facilitated more open and less anxious responses. Participants' concerns about loyalty to a school if interviews are to be

taken place in school settings were minimised. The settings chosen enabled participants to feel comfortable in their natural environment or helped to reduce any forms of anxiety. This strategy has been argued to be an important tool in motivating the participants (Strauss and Corbin, 1994; Gregg and Taylor 2007). As an active member of the Ghanaian community, I have various networks and associations such as the Church of Pentecost. My associations with the Church as well as other networks including individuals have formed a stimulating feature of this research study because understanding the cultural values, having the added advantage of speaking a Ghanaian language and having an understanding of the power structures, helps to facilitate the research process (see, Tedlock, 2000; Coghlan, 2003; Rooney, 2005).

My associations within the Ghanaian community gave me an added advantage of creating and expanding any networks that facilitated in the recruitment of potential participants for this study. This gave me the opportunity and the experience of negotiating to gain access through gatekeepers who are described by Hek *et al.* (1996) as people who try to safeguard the interest of others. One of the fundamental feature of this study is my success in gaining access to gatekeepers, (church pastor and parents). Primarily, my understanding of how the power structures work within the Ghanaian community and my knowledge of how to deal with any accompanying issues that are frequently faced by qualitative researchers facilitated my access.

As an inside researcher, there are other considerable advantages in my indigenous capacity as a Ghanaian. Being a member of the Ghanaian community, I have a unique position as an 'insider', which assumes a level of 'taken- for- granted knowledge' (Kelly *et al.*, 2012, p. 6). In addition, as a member of the community, I can act as a cultural broker by drawing upon my knowledge and lived experiences. My role as a researcher is understood as a necessary and important aspect of a successful research project (Kelly *et al.*, 2012, p. 7) and it provides me with an empowering tool for this research as I can interact naturally with the group and its members.

There are related disadvantages that may be associated with me being an inside researcher. DeLyser (2001) for example, suggests that greater familiarity can lead to a loss of 'objectivity' particularly regarding inadvertently making erroneous assumptions based on the researcher's prior knowledge and experience. In addressing this issue of objectivity, I have sought to enter the research field acknowledging my bias, which may influence any preconceived ideas/knowledge I had. Being reflexive at every step of the study, enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the data collected, the analysis and subsequently the results/conclusions, as well as the recommendations for further research.

For the purposes of this current study, I have been interested in four groups of participants: young people, parents, teachers, and community leaders. My strategy is to explore areas about their perceptions of educational experiences of the young people. In order to achieve this, the areas for the youngsters I have explored include, their attitudes towards their education, relationships in schools and their parental involvement. Their views about what may be attributed to their academic success or failures and what they perceive can be done to improve their educational expereinces and outcomes, and that of the education of Black Africans in general have been explored (see Appendices A and B pp 280-283). The information elicited from the parents include their thoughts about their children's educational experiences, the extent to which they consider they support their children and how their support as parents affect the education of their children (see Appendix C pp. 284-285).

Questions for the teachers who have participated in this study relate to their general perception and attitudes of the Black children in general and their views about the relatively low achievement of Black pupils/students in schools in comparison to pupils/students of Indian, Chinese, and Pakistani heritage backgrounds (see Appendix D p. 286). Finally, the opinions of the community leaders regarding their dealings with the young people have been valuable to this study, as they occupy a place of honour within the Ghanaian community (see Appendix E p. 287).

To facilitate a successful research study, it was imperative for me to identify the most appropriate methods of collecting data for this study that would be credible, relevant, and

trustworthy. The next section of this Chapter explains the piloting stage of this study and the various hurdles I had to overcome at the initial stages of the study.

5.2.2 The Pilot study

To set the discussion into context, there is the need to provide adequate background information to ascertain the credibility of the study. This study went through a series of phases to validate credibility of the research procedure. Firstly, to develop the credibility of the research design, I conducted a pilot study to ensure the questions to be asked during the data collection process for the intended data collection were adequate and appropriate. This enabled me to reflect on my decisions and subsequently helped to inform the designing of the data collection tools. It helped me to narrow down the focus of the research, and as a result, I made the necessary adjustments by reducing the sample size, structure of questions, and the style of interviewing.

The pilot study aided to *"refine the data collection plans and develop relevant lines of questions"* (Yin, 2009 cited: Creswell 2013 p. 165). One of the main issues that I gave a careful consideration and thought, is the combination of the use of tape recording and taking notes during interviews. I did not take any notes during the piloting stage because I thought I could capture everything on the tape recorder. The learning curve for me as a researcher therefore was to understand the value of taking notes and how this can influence the quality of the data collected. I realised that, tape recording alone did not provide other relevant details of the interview process such as a description of the physical setting, the body language of the participants, and behaviours, which can influence the analysis of the interview, and hence the research outcome.

During the pilot study, three individuals, (pupil, teacher and parent) were interviewed on one to one basis and one mini group discussion involving two pupils/students took place. As all interviews do, throughout the interview process, I interacted with the participants through a structure of questions and responses. The type of information I elicited from the participants was about their outlook regarding their own education, the factors they thought attributed to

their attainment levels, their responsibility as pupils/students, and their involvement in the decision making of their education.

To facilitate the interview process, it was essential to define and establish power relations between the interviewees and myself as a researcher to encouraged disclosure and trust between myself and the participants. Another aspect was to establish trustworthy relationship between the participants and myself. More so, it was vital to make them feel comfortable during the interview process. This helped to set the scene for an open discussion, and I was then able to retrieve the relevant information needed for the study. At that stage, it became obvious that it was essential for me to be reflexive of my actions in order for this research to be credible and trustworthy. To carry out the pilot study successfully, I chose a sampling method that was suitable for this study. For this purpose and subsequently for the advantage of the actual study, purposive and convenience sampling was adopted. It was convenient because, I am part of the wider Ghanaian community and therefore, gaining access was easy and convenient. The rationale behind the choice of this method is to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data as this method is widely acceptable (Yin, 2011).

However, before the commencement of the pilot study, I had to satisfy the Research Ethics Panel of Anglia Ruskin University that I had taken into consideration all the ethical issues that might arise during the research process. This was a frustrating but valuable process as I have detailed below.

5.2.3 Ethical Considerations

In every study, the researcher is inevitably responsible for ensuring the entire research process is conducted with integrity (O'Leary, 2004). A successful qualitative research must be credible and trustworthy. To facilitate this, it is imperative on the part of the researcher to try to consider all the ethical issues that might arise during the research process right from the planning and designing of the study, and strategise to minimise any issues, which might arise as much as possibe (see, Creswell 2013). Weis and Fine (2000 cited Creswell

2013), suggest that one of the important ethical issues to consider as researchers, is our role as an insider or outsider researcher to the participant. They further state that:

> "*Assessing issues that we may be fearful of disclosing, establishing supportive, respective relationships without stereotyping, and using labels that participants do not embrace acknowledging whose voices will be represented in our final study and writing ourselves into the study by reflecting on who we are and the people we study.*"

Additionally, (Hatch 2002) explains that researchers ought to be sensitive to the population who are vulnerable, avoiding the dangers of putting participants at risk and any imbalanced power relations that may exist. One of the major ethical dilemmas I faced was trying to firstly strike a balance between my role as a researcher, wanting to find out about the subjective truth as seen by the participants, and secondly how this might potentially affect the rights and values of the participants involved in the study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). The methods used, which can yield valid and trustworthy data are key. For this reason, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011 p.75) suggest, *"Procedural ethics are not sufficient. One has to reflect how the research purposes, contents, methods, reporting and outcomes abide by ethical principles and practices".* To guarantee that this study was not badly designed or harmful to participants (see Harcourt, Perry, and Waller 2011), I sought for ethical approval from the Anglia Ruskin's Research Ethics Committee before commencing on the data collection.

The ethics committee had an important role of critically assessing my methodology, data collection tools, recruitment of participants, research aims and objectives, risks to participants and how I intended to minimise the risks. Darlington and Scott acknowledge the essential role of research committees, and they state:

> "*An important gatekeeping role in all research involving human subjects and are likely to be extra vigilant in their consideration of proposals for research concerning any potentially vulnerable groups of people. Ethics committees have a duty to consider all possible sources of harm and safety themselves that the researcher has thought through all the relevant issues before granting permission to proceed.*" (Darlington and Scott 2002 p. 22 -23).

Gaining ethical approval (see Appendix F pp 288 -289) from the research committee was quite challenging. My responsibility was to fulfil the ethical approval requirement and demonstrate to the ethics committee beyond any reasonable doubt that, this study was trustworthy, credible and above all, ethically sound as it involves human participants. In fact, this process has been very useful. At the same time, I must admit gaining ethical approval was a frustrating experience for me I had to leave no stone unturned. As a result, my ethics application went backwards and forwards to the ethics panel several times.

Apart from seeking formal ethical approval from the University, it was important to show that this research conforms to the ethical guidelines for educational research as outlined by the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2011). As part of the guideline, the primary responsibility of the researcher is towards the participants. Using the guidelines and how this applied to the actual study, I then sought consent from all the participants. Howe and Moses (1999), notes, "*informed consent is a cornerstone of ethical behaviour, as it respects the rights of individuals to exert control over their lives and to take decisions for themselves.*" (See for example Bell 2005; Punch 2009; Creswell 2012).

In seeking informed consent, participants were informed that taking part in this study was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time without obligation (see for example Rudestam and Newton 2001; Flick, Kardoff and Steinke 2004; Denzin and Lincoln 2008). Before participants consented to take part in the study, I have explained and discussed the purposes of the study, why they were chosen to participate in the study, the benefits of their involvement to this study, any foreseeable risks and the rights to confidentiality and non-disclosure of any information. In seeking consent from the young people, consent was firstly sought from their parents and carers then assent was requested from the young people themselves. Levine, (2008 p. 6) suggests that *"research involving children are permissible provided that the level of risk is strictly limited, and the assent of the child is supplemented by the permission of the parents or guardians."*

Likewise, it is important to recognise the role of gatekeepers as they are in a very responsible position and they should not be overlooked. Oliver, (2003 p. 39) comments:

> '*They have much more at stake – to lose – than researchers, since whereas researchers can move on from one participant or research field to another, gatekeepers live with the daily consequences of the research and its effect on participants.*'

I gained access to the church through the pastor as the main gatekeeper. He mentioned to the church the purpose of my study and the church members acknowledged with delight knowing someone was researching into their community. As mentioned earlier, it is significant to highlight again that through snowball sampling, three of the young participants recruited for this study were non-Christians.

Despite the merits that are attributed to voluntary consent, critics, argue that *'seeking formal informed consent might lead to a limited variation in data and a neglect of the richest, most authentic data, as participants might become protective of what they disclose'* (Oliver, 2003 p. 103).

Wax (1982 p. 44) also comments that '*informed consent reinforces asymmetries of power between researchers and participants rather than equalising them.*' Another principle that I have considered to protect the rights of the participants was privacy. To achieve this, participants were assured that this study was not intended to probe into their private lives and that their right to privacy would be respected and valued by me. The right to privacy meant that participants were given the right to opt out from the research, refuse any interviews, not respond to telephone calls or emails, and decide not to have their homes intruded without obligation (Strauss and Corbin, 1994; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

Related to their right of privacy is the principle of confidentiality. Participants were reassured that their right to confidentiality would be protected and that information from participants would not be disclosed in any way that may disclose their identity without their knowledge and full consent. Keeping participant's identity anonymous was key to this study. The information they gave me did not disclose their identity. In ensuring privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used. However, previous researchers taking a

consequentialist approach to ethics, base their moral evaluation of acts, exclusively on the goodness of their consequence, may suggest that privacy could be avoided if it serves the best interest of the public. For example, as argued by Lincoln (1994), "*privacy protects the powerful and reproduces inequalities of power.*" (See for example Howe and Moses 1999; Wiles *et al.*, 2008).

As an insider researcher, researching into my community, there are ethical issues that I am faced with. As I previously mentioned, it was essential for me to demonstrate in my research methodology and design that people would be free to take part or withdraw from the interview without any consequences or obligations. Participants were briefed about how potential participants would be recruited, sufficient information about what the study is about and how the findings could benefit the Ghanaian community have also been provided. It was crucial for me to explain to the participants how their identities were to be protected. Inevitably I acknowledge that at this stage, I was in a difficult position and I had to decide how I would deal with any emerging issues that are sensitive in nature, such as issues relating to child protection, (see Bell, 2005 and Mercer, 2007) which fortunately, did not emerge during the research process. The section following highlights my ontological and epistemological stance, which guided my choice of the appropriate research methodology and methods of data collection in this study.

5.3   Choosing an Appropriate Research Strategy

5.3.1   Ontological and Epistemological Stance

The concept of ontology relates to the form of reality and the characteristics it bears. *"It is interested in the very nature of the core of the social phenomena being explored"* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, p. 5). As a qualitative researcher, I acknowledge the idea of multiple realities, which are socially constructed (Creswell, 2013). The intention of this study is to report this reality of individuals from their own narrations and perspectives and to address how individuals partaking in this study perceive their experiences (Moustakas,

96

1994). In explaining the methodological standpoint of this current research study, it is essential for me to firstly recognise the existing epistemological approaches. There are two main schools of thought that describe the epistemology of any research study: positivism or objectivity and interpretivism or subjectivity.

> "*The epistemological basis of most social science investigation during the 20th century was positivism. This school of thought believes that all knowledge is acquired through direct observation and rational reasoning based on direct observation*" (Creswell, 2008).

Scholars of positivism perceive the truth to be objective, universal, and quantifiable. From this perspective, reality is argued to be the same for everybody. That shared reality can be identified through the application of science.

In accepting the idea that a single universal realism is in existence for all of us and that this reality can be discovered through scientifically guarded enquiry, science fails to identify the potential of a human being to interpret and make sense of his or her world (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). The research approach normally adopted for positivism is quantitative design.

Considering the research aims, objectives and research questions for this current study, it was relevant for the participants to share their lived experiences without limitations or boundaries which were specific to the individual experiencing it. Although this study acknowledges the relevance of the positivist paradigm for instance, quantitative data in relation to the achievement of a particular ethnic group, I did not deem it to be most suitable for this current study.

Providing a different perspective with which to view the world, social constructionists/interpretativists suggest that individuals have exclusive distinctions that permit them to emphasise and at the same time permitting the essential sameness that unites human beings to be identified (Ashworth 2003 cited: Darlaston- Jones 2007). Gergen (1999 p. 67) mentions that '*in this manner, each reality applies to the person because he or she experiences it but it is independent of that person due to his or her inability to alter it".*

Gergen further reiterates that the fundamental argument of the constructionist/interpretivists is that reality is socially constructed by and between the persons who experience it.

> '*It is a consequence of the context in which the action occurs and is shaped by the cultural, historical, political, and social norms that operate within that context and time: moreover, that reality can be different for each of us based on our unique understandings of the world and our experience of it*' (Berger and Luckman, p. 19).

Reality cannot be shared by anyone else, but at the same time, it is independent of the person living it. Thus, it is subjective. This reality can be influenced by social norms, political, historical, and cultural values that exist at that moment. Depending on who is experiencing it and how one understands the world, that reality can be different for each one of us (Berger and Luckman, 1966).

Hence, considering the research objectives and questions as well as my ontological and epistemological view points, this paradigm was adopted throughout the study. This enabled me to explore the participant's views about their experiences within the English educational system. This study is thus, a qualitative inquiry, taking a subjective perspective.

5.4   Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research has a long, distinguished, and sometimes anguished history in the humanities disciplines. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 8) explain that:

> '*Qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is given meaning.*'

Qualitative research is also a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Creswell (2009) explains that qualitative research is a way of discovering and accepting the means persons or groups attribute to a social or human phenomenon. The process of research involves developing questions and procedures, data typically collected in participant's settings, data analysis and inductively building from broad to specific themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

> "*Those who engage in this form of enquiry support a way of looking at research that honours an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation*" (Creswell 2013 p. 47).

Denzin and Lincoln (2000,) suggests that qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus. Unlike quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers seek to explore realities that are multiple. However, others have argued that qualitative research approach can be complex (Savin-Major and Howell, 2013). Bryman (1998, p. 77) expresses that:

> *'There is a tendency towards an anecdotal approach to the use of data in relation to conclusions or explanations in qualitative research. Brief conversations, snippets from unstructured interviews are used to provide evidence of a contention. There are grounds for disquiet in that the representativeness or generality of these fragments are rarely addressed.'*

Bell (2007, p. 1), explains that '*different styles, approaches or traditions use different methods of collecting data, but no approach prescribes nor automatically rejects any particular method.*' As I mentioned earlier, this research study is developed from the viewpoint of an interpretative paradigm and this is adopted throughout this research study. As I was deliberating on which methodological approach was the most appropriate for this type of research paradigm, I became entangled with the philosophical and the theoretical framework that would be the most appropriate for this study. It took me a while to decide on the one that I considered would be most suitable for this study.

Having knowledge of the different research methodologies (Creswell, 2009) in qualitative study such as the Case Study, Ethnography, Narrative Research and Phenomenology, which could have been adopted for this study, one of the biggest challenges was identifying which of the qualitative approaches to use. The methodology that I deemed to be most appropriate for this study was chosen. This stage of the research process is considered significant as this goes a long way to affect the quality of the data collected and subsequently the findings and analysis (see for example Patton 2002; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Silverman 2005; Creswell 2009).

In the next section, I elaborate on phenomenology as a methodological approach embraced for this study.

5.5 Research methodology and methods adopted in the current study

5.5.1   Phenomenological Research Approach

As highlighted in Chapter Four, a synthesis of CRT and SRT are the theoretical lenses underpinning this study. Traditionally, counter- stories, which is an aspect of the Narrative approach allows for CRT's to *pursue the goal of studying the human experience* (Yosso and Solorzano, 2002; Love, 2004; Savin- Baden and Major, 2013). It is defined as a process of illuminating the stories of people whose experiences are often untold, especially those who are marginalised. It is an analytical tool for exposing and challenging the majoritarian accounts of racial privilege. Counter stories as a method, facilitates untold lived life experiences to be unravelled. Unlike fictional storytelling, counter-storytelling does not engage in imagined characters. Rather the merging characters are developed and are *grounded in real life experiences and actual empirical data* (Yosso and Solorzano, 2002). According to Fernandez (2002), epistemologically, race and racism is the centre of analysis for CRT.

However, the rationale for using a synthesis between CRT and SRT as a framework for this study is to justify that race and racism are not the key fundamental explanations for the phenomenon under study. Therefore, the onus is placed on me as a researcher to choose

the most appropriate research approach. Faced with the other suitable approaches, such as the narrative approach, which focuses on the individual's experience, (Creswell, 2007) nonetheless, reflecting on the aims of this study and not wholly placing CRT at the core of this study, I deemed phenomenology to be the most suitable approach. The rationale behind this choice was that, phenomenology is an approach that bears elements of both CRT and SRT. CRT and SRT as frameworks pursue *the goal of studying the human experience* (Yosso and Solorzano, 2002; Love, 2004; Savin- Baden and Major, 2013). CRT scholars have used phenomenology as a methodological approach to relate to the lived educational experiences of young people of colour (See, for example, Morgan, 2013). Likewise, Bourdieu has previously drawn on phenomenological literature to develop the concept of habitus (see, for example, Crossley, 2001; Throop and Murphy, 2002; Manen, 2007). For instance, giving an account of Heidegger's non-cognitive and corporeal nature of everyday practices, Bourdieu (1977 p. 94) notes:

> *"Principles embodied are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit; nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and, therefore, more precious, than the values given body, made body by the transubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy, through injunctions as insignificant as "stand up straight" or "don't hold your knife in your left hand"*

In engaging with a phenomenological approach, it is essential to recap the aims of this study before rationalising the appropriateness of phenomenology in examining the experiences of teenage Ghanaians, and other stakeholders within the Ghanaian community such as parents, teachers, and community leaders. There is relevant literature to suggest that schools have played a contributing role, (although not solely), to the underachievement of Black pupils/students (see for example, Coard, 1971; Troyna 1993; Gillborn, 1995; Abbot, 2003; Gus 2003; Richardson, 2007; Inequality Audit Report, 2017).

Phenomenological approach has been deemed the most appropriate to this study because it takes into consideration how individuals within a society make meanings of the situations they may experience in their daily lives. "*It emphasises on the way people understand and*

interpret the actions of others, how they make sense of events, and how they build worlds of meaning" (BOMA, 2004, p. 180). Patton (2002), comments that to appreciate the way individuals behave is to interact with them for academics to recognise their consciousness. Since consciousness is not directly transferable, it is important to interact with people in order to ascertain their perceptions.

The way individuals experience a phenomenon, how they identify it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, recall it, make logic of it, and have dialogue about it with others, can only be achieved through interaction. To gather such data, one must undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest; '*lived experience'* as opposed to second-hand experience (Patton 2002).

Phenomenology, which delves into conscious experience, can be traced back to the early 20th-century philosophers such as Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. Many of the ideas imbedded in the works of these early phenomenologists have been adopted in the behavioural and social sciences by notable scholars such as psychologist Amedeo Giorgi (1970) and social scientist Alfred Schütz, (1967). In contemporary social science, the term is used more broadly to denote the study of individuals' perceptions, feelings, and lived experiences. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009, p. 11), for example, terms phenomenology as:

> *'A philosophical approach to the study of experience, shares an interest in thinking about what the experience of being human is like, in all its various aspects, but especially regarding the things that matter to us, and which constitute our lived world.'*

Many of the ideas within the phenomenological field are embedded within qualitative inquiry in general; qualitative research is phenomenological in nature, in that it attempts to understand individuals' lived experiences and the behavioural, emotive, and the social meanings that these experiences have for them. For instance, the notion of open-ended questions and conversational inquiry, so typical in qualitative research, allows research participants to talk about an issue in their words, free of the constraints imposed by fixed-response questions that are seen in quantitative studies. Similarly, market researchers do

not test products; they test peoples' experiences of products (see for example Guest, Namey and Mitchell 2013).

Of course, not all qualitative research has phenomenological underpinnings. In some cases, the topic of study might be social structures or cultural processes that transcend individual experience, such as what we might find in ethnographic research. However, even so, data on such topics are often collected through interviews with individuals and hence, through their experiential lens. Moustakas (1994, p. 84) notes:

> *'Evidence from phenomenological research is derived from first-person reports of life experiences.' He reiterated 'the empirical phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective analysis that portrays the essences of the experience.'*

By adopting a descriptive approach, the phenomenon speaks for itself, and the aim is to establish what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and they can provide a comprehensive description of it.

In Phenomenology, perception is regarded as the primary source of knowledge and each experience contains openings for further experience (see for example Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

With several approaches to phenomenology available, the challenge I was faced with was to decide which style would be best suited for the current study. All the approaches are based on a German philosophy, and they seek to understand the lived life experience of humans (Laverty 2003 cited: Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004). Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is based on a philosophy of experience and ways to organise and analyse phenomenological data. As Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell 2004, (p. 2) notes: *"meaning is the core of transcendental phenomenology of science, a design for acquiring and collecting data that explicates the essences of human experience."* In examining transcendental phenomenology, the following principles, processes, and methods summarise the core facets of human science research. Focusing on the appearance of things, phenomenology returns to things just as they are given, free from everyday biases and routines. It is

concerned with wholeness, examining entities from many angles and perspectives. It also seeks to denote appearances and arrives at essences through awareness and reflection on conscience acts of experience leading to notions, concepts, judgements, and understanding. Moustakas (1994) suggests, phenomenology is committed to experiences, not explanations or analyses.

My philosophical stance has been the major driving force behind my choice of methodology and my position in relation to my philosophy, has fundamentally determined how to undertake this study. Guba and Lincoln, (1994), comment that "*a paradigm is a belief system or worldview that guides the researcher and the research process.*" This concept has informed the location of my research perspective. The current study is phenomenological, and it acknowledges that reality and knowledge are located in the mind, as the individual perceives and experiences it. Knowledge may consequently be unearthed through the exploration of human experience. My position regarding this study is based on two principles: a) that the data is held in the perspectives of the young people and adults within the community; b) for this reason, I can engage with the participants to collect data.

An additional rationale for choosing phenomenology is that, it is an approach that allows for individual human experiences to be investigated as they are lived. It is an approach that "*attempts to uncover what several participants who experience a phenomenon have in common*" (Creswell, 2007). Carrying out a phenomenological study, enables me to understand the world of human experience from a first-person point of view (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Stemming from the fact that no two experiences are the same because every individual's experience is unique. *"Meaning will thus be shaped through individual experiences of the world"* (Savin – Baden and major, 2013, p. 6). This will then give the study a valued opportunity to explore what the Ghanaian youths and the stakeholders have in common regarding their experiences.

How the participants experienced the phenomenon can also be explored when using this approach through rigorous and accurate description. As a qualitative researcher, I value the

human experience, and I acknowledge an important aspect of my role is that, I must be transparent, and I must pursue the knowledge that is sought in a natural environment. Hence, organising interviews in an uncontrolled environments, mostly in the homes of participants. A quantitative approach could have been adopted by using only questionnaires to seek the information required, but this would not have been explorative enough as participants may be restricted in their responses. Regardless the relationship individuals may have with each other; their experiences about a phenomenon will always be different in their descriptions. These descriptions are exclusive to the individuals as enshrined in the principles of phenomenology, which suggests that the truth is subjective.

Phenomenology, however, has come under several criticisms. Firstly, it is criticised to occupy a middle position between realism and idealism. It does not believe in the precise existence of objects. It claims to be a science of reality. From the Marxist point of view, Phenomenology is not concerned with ultimate reality, and it is not worth being called Philosophy (Sarker 1994).

Another criticism levelled against phenomenology is by Savin-Baden and Major, (2013 p. 223). They remark:

> *There can be a tendency to ignore the context of the research and circumstances in which data are collected. They allege that the approach tends to objectify and structure data, which in turn, takes data away from the perspectives of participants and the value of experience as it is lived and spoken about.*

Despite the criticisms levelled against phenomenology, I am of the strong belief that it is a seemly methodology for this study. The next section gives a brief account of my role as an insider researcher.

5.6 The Researcher's Role

In every research study, the role of the researcher plays an instrumental role in determining the validity and credibility of the study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). In qualitative studies, "*the researcher is considered as an instrument of data collection. This means that data are mediated through this human instrument rather than through inventories such as questionnaires*" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003 p. 54).

To fulfil my role effectively and efficiently, it was essential for me to understand that each participant is different, and I must respect their views, whichever form they took without allowing my personal biases to take precedence over the participants views. It is relevant for me to understand that the truth about humans is subjective and that there is no single truth out there, which is also acknowledged by the interpretivist paradigm. This necessitates the need to negotiate participation with participants' right from the beginning, and I was sensitive towards their decisions as to how far they would want to be involved in the study (Birch and Miller, 2012).

My role as an 'insider' researcher cannot be overlooked. I must be critical of myself as a researcher because I form an integral part of the research procedure. As a teacher, I must look at the broader picture from an educational perspective, having previous knowledge of the causes of achievement and underachievement. Secondly, being part of the Ghanaian community means I have built associations and networks that could influence the research outcome, (the issue of familiarity and credibility). Birch and Miller (2012, p. 104) comment:

> *'Although the 'insider' knowledge places the information gathered in the interviews in a richer context, it also necessitates the need for a clearer guide for ethical responsibility by being more ethically reflexive.'*

Being ethically reflexive, I played this role by constantly judging the ethical implications of any relationships I have and my actions during the entire study.

Hammersley and Traianou (2012) argue that researchers have a responsibility to pursue value-relevant knowledge as effectively as possible to (or "intending to") producing findings that meet the obligatory threshold of credibility.

Additionally, an aspect that has been very useful for this study is my role in keeping field notes by explaining personal reactions and insights (see for example Simon, 1990). As I have commented above, my role as an 'insider' researcher and the pros and cons that come with it, has not been overruled. To ensure that the research outcomes are of good quality, I asked probing questions, listened, and have further probed the questions to move the discussions to an in-depth level. Afterwards, a detailed and vivid description of the phenomenon in question was created.

Finally, a crucial part of my role has been to reflect on the manner other people have looked at similar issues and their approaches, their limitations, and my outlook regarding what could have been done to unravel the problem. I have identified the gaps in previous studies and how my approach can add value to existing knowledge. These have formed a critical aspect of my role.

For instance, in previous studies, Rollock, (2006) investigated the education of successful Black boys in a London school, which is an ethnographic study. This has been an important study, building on existing knowledge and has been well embraced by the academic world. However, in examining this study, a few weaknesses have been highlighted:

Firstly, the focus of the study is limited, as only successful Black boys have been included in the study. In my estimation, it was essential also to include the voices of girls and those of boys who were failures so that the differences in the attainment levels can be highlighted to allow for the stakeholders involved in their education to put strategies in place to help raise their attainment. My current study addresses the issue of Rollock's limitation of focus, by including boys, girls, and those who are achieving and underachieving.

Secondly, the focus is quite repetitive, as previous studies about Blacks, have mostly concentrated on African Caribbean, excluding Black Africans (see for example Coard 1971; Gillborn, 1997, and Rhamie 2003). Most often, the outcomes of the studies are generalised for all Caribbeans as well as Black Africans. However, many countries come together to form the Caribbean, making it difficult to ascertain which specific African Caribbean groups are performing and underperforming. Hence, necessitating the need to study a group from Africa and the Caribbean without generalising for all Black groups. One of the strengths of this study is to the exploration of a specific group from the African continent, young people of Ghanaian origin.

Another aspect of Rollock's study that I have examined, is the chosen methodology. The study was ethnographic, and the pupils/students were interviewed within a school environment. In my judgement, they may feel they have to be loyal to the school and this might have influenced their responses. Consequently, this may have affected the authenticity of participants' responses as they knowing they are being observed may put up a 'show' and what is observed may not be a true reflection of what happens. On the contrary, in this study, the settings I chose are natural to the participants, mostly, in the comfort of their own homes.

Finally, as noted by Savin-Baden and Major, (2013): "*Ethnography explores one culture, setting, or organisation.*" This assertion is evident in Rollock's study, as a school in London has been used as the research site. Considering my data collection approaches for this study, the sample involved is wider. The participants involved in this study include parents and community leaders, whose experiences are vital and adds value to this study. My study covers a larger geographical area. It includes cities and towns across the Southeast and the Midlands of England. The majority of the participants, who are students, attend different schools (comprehensive and grammar) and they come from varying backgrounds.

Examining other similar issues by previous researchers, an additional study that has been under scrutiny is that of Rhamie, (2003). She investigated the educational experiences of African Caribbeans in London. In this study, Rhamie acknowledges the factors that may

contribute to achievement and underachievement in schools of African Caribbeans, and she remarks, the factors do not exclusively depend on the school. The community has a facilitating role to play.

Similar to Rollock's work, the focus and outcome of Rhamie's study has been generalised for all African Caribbean and Black Africans. Conversely, there are some similarities between my study and that of Rhamie's. Both studies acknowledge the role of the community in the education of students. An additional similarity is that, part of Rhamie's study is phenomenological. However, Rhamie's use of questionnaires might have limited participant's responses. In contrast, I chose not to use questionnaires in this current study due to its explorative nature.

Finally, the participants involved in Rhamie's study are 24 in total, and only 7 are students. The rest are working professionals. 62% of the participants had an age bracket of 31-40 years. Only 15% were youngsters between the ages of 16-19. Hence, the need for a study to include more teenagers. The focus of this study has revealed, I am very much interested in the views of the young people whose voices are hardly heard, including other stakeholders (parents, teachers, and community leaders) who are involved in the education of these youngsters. Parents and teachers who play vital roles in the education of the young people was also omitted from Rhamie's study.

5.7 A summary of methods and data collected
5.7 .1 Participants

The participants involved in this study were recruited from the Ghanaian community, to get first-hand information from the perspectives of pupils/students, teachers, parents, and community leaders. Firstly, eight out of the twenty-nine participants were originally recruited from the church, then through snowball sampling, I had several referrals and recommendations. As mentioned earlier, to guarantee the anonymity of the participants, and due to ethical consideration, aliases (pseudonyms) were used for all the participants.

To facilitate a simpler process of identifying participants, I used names that rhymed or sounded like that of the participant's real name, for example, Hilary and Hailey. Overall, 29 people were involved in this current study, living in seven towns and cities across England, which are London, Chelmsford, Northampton, Croydon, Grays, Stevenage and Southend on Sea. The young people that have participated in this study are 18. Five parents have participated in this study. Three of them are professionals, one cleaner, and one housewife. Four teachers and two community leaders have been included in this study. The following provides detailed description of the participants:

5.7.2 Characteristics of the young people involved in this study

5.7.2.1 Gender:
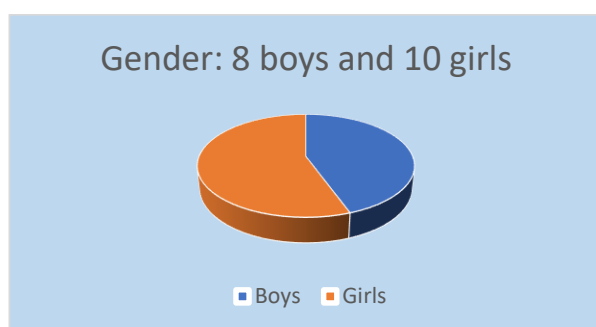
Figure 6: Characteristics by gender

Figure 6 depicts the characteristics of the young people by gender. Through the process of natural selection, a total of eighteen teenagers have participated in this study comprising eight boys and ten girls. Two out of the ten girls (20%) were registered for the intermediate level at GCSE and the remaining eight (80%) were registered at higher level.

However, the performance of the boys gave a different picture. Only three (37.5%) out of the eight boys were registered to take the higher paper. The remaining 5 (62.5%) were registered to sit the exams at an intermediate level. The differences in performance is in accordance with governments' reports which have consistently highlighted that girls outperforms boys at GCSE level (see for example, DfE, 2015).

As highlighted earlier, the recruitment process was fair, the invitation to participate in this study was opened to any teenager of Ghanaian origin who was willing to take part without prejudice and obligation. Some of the teenagers were siblings. The ages of the young people range between 14 and 19 years, which is shown below.

5.7.2.2 Characteristics by Age:
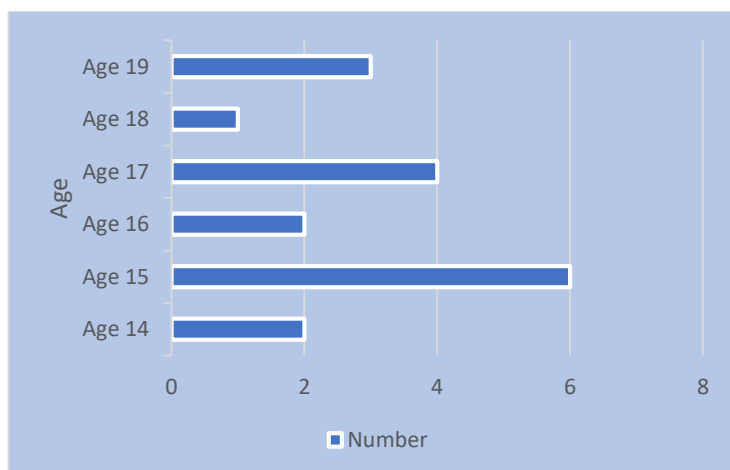
Figure 7: Characteristics by age group

Figure 7 illustrates the age attributes of the young people involved in this current study. The ages of the teenagers range between 14 and 19 years. Nine of them attend or attended comprehensive schools, five in grammar schools and the remaining four are first year university students. Following on is data representing the socio-economic status of the young people.

5.7.2.3 Characteristics by socio-economic status
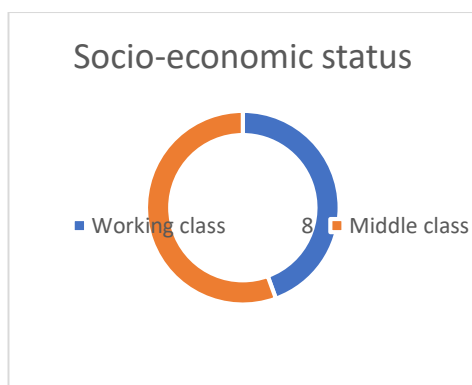
Figure 8: Characteristics by socio economic status

Figure 8 displays the characteristics of the young people by their socio-economic backgrounds. The young people involved in this current study come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Their parents were in different kinds of occupations ranging from cleaners and medical doctors. Eight (44%) of the young people had parents working as cleaners or care assistants and living on council estates. All the eight teenagers attended comprehensive schools and none of them had extra tuition as their parents could not afford. They described themselves as coming from working class families and they are marked blue on the doughnut chart above.

The remaining ten (56%) however had parents who were professionals. Examples of the parents' occupations includes chartered accountant, lawyer, pharmacist and nurse. This group of children attended grammar schools. Their parents deployed the cultural, social and financial resources accessible to them as professionals in support of their children's well-being and educational success, such as engaging the services of a private tutor to support them at home. They describe their families to be middle class. Five of the teenagers involved in the study had their parents volunteering to participate in this study. For instance, Kami's mum is Lynn, Beka's dad is Bobo, Paula's parents are Ed and Ella, whereas Kuku's mum is Lacey. A detailed description of the parents involved in the study is presented below

Table 4: Background characteristics of parents

Name	Age	Occupation
Lynn	49 yrs.	Chartered Accountant
Bobo	43 yrs.	Nurse
Lacey	42 yrs.	House wife
Ed	52 yrs.	Cleaner
Ella	50 yrs.	Nursery nurse

Table 5: Background characteristics of teachers

Name	Teacher type
Rob	Secondary
Sienna	Primary
Sammy	Secondary
Twum	Secondary

5.8 Research Instruments

5.8.1 Individual Interviews and mini-group discussions

This study aims at having an in-depths understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny, gaining meaning that the participants attach to their subjective standpoints (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). It also aims at ensuring this study is of high quality and findings are credible.

The data collection stage was an opportunity to interact with participants in order to make known, the voices of this group. This facilitated the exploration of the issues raised from their perspectives. They have shared their feelings, and attitudes around their educational experiences. At this stage of the study, taking control and assuming my role as the facilitator during the interview process formed an integral part of the interview process. I have maintained this process has been conducted with integrity by allowing the conversation processes to be held in an open but controlled manner. The participants' responses however, were not under my control. They were free to give any response they deemed suitable, and they were supported to feel comfortable during the interview process. The interview schedule developed for this study was semi-structured.

Five mini group interviews, involving three or four participants were used for this study. However, some scholars argue that phenomenology and group discussions are incompatible. The dispute levelled against using group discussions in phenomenological studies is that phenomenology involves seeking information from individuals in an "uncontaminated" manner. Webb and Kervern, (2001) argue that:

> *'The goal of the phenomenological research is to seek the essential characteristics, or 'essence' of phenomena and a phenomenological approach requires that an individual describe their experiences in an uncontaminated" way. Group methods of data collection that involve interaction between several participants, such as focus groups, are not compatible with phenomenological research'.* (p. 800)

I am mindful of the fact that traditionally, most phenomenological interviews only involve the interviewer and the interviewee (one to one). However, other researchers, such as nurses, have combined group discussions and phenomenology. For example, Kooken et al., (2007), in their study of African American women's cancer survivorship, used interpretative phenomenology to inform their analysis of focus group interviews. They have been critical of their own approach, and they have accepted that group data are not conventionally examined using phenomenological methods but justified that *"research methods should fit the questions asked and in that particular study, a group approach was congruent with the research question"* (p. 27).

Jasper (1996), commenting on using focus group discussions within a phenomenological approach, explains that using "*focus groups allow for interviewees to elaborate on and share issues raised.'*

On the other hand, group discussions have been used by others to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of their research by ensuring that the atmosphere under which interviews are being held encouraged interaction and explanation of discourse among the participants. Furthermore, others have argued that using phenomenological groups can serve as a tool in cross-checking and clarifying information (see for example, Halling et al, 1994; Morrison-Beedy and Cote-Arsenault 2001; Spence, 2005). Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2009), have combined these approaches and they suggest that *"Group interviews and phenomenology are beneficial because they stimulate discussion and open up new perspectives, encourages exchange and enriches and compliments responses."* (p 663).

It has been reported that another advantage of using phenomenological group interviews is that, it is a valuable source of collecting rich data through the interaction of the participants, which is not usually possible in individual interviews. "*A group allows participants to hear each other's stories and add their perspectives and insights as the story unfolds*" (Sorrell and Redmond, 1995 p. 35).

I consider that it is extremely significant in the phenomenological group, the voice of each participant cannot be overlooked and I ensured participants have a fair chance for their views to be heard. I interacted with two types of participants: those reluctant for their voices to be heard and those who try to dominate the discussion (Barbour 2007). My role has been to facilitate the interview process successfully. Consequently, there was the need to encourage those whose voices were a bit quiet or shy, while I tactfully managed the dominant participants (Krueger 1998).

Finally, it is crucial to reiterate that the group discussions for this study have been very small, with a maximum of three participants. This has facilitated the involvement of individual descriptions, which has been part of the natural interaction of the group.

 Similarly, I have highlighted the philosophical underpinnings of using a phenomenological study to justify and defended my choice of method and I have adopted a critical approach towards my chosen methodology. I have argued that the experiences of individuals can be preserved within a group because it is individual experiences that are shared.

5.8.2 The Interview Schedule

Considering the existing data collection tools for qualitative research, individual interviews and mini group discussions have been considered to be the most suitable.

Interviews are one of the commonly used data collection tools, which are universally accepted. Punch (2009, 2014) identifies that an interview is the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research. He comments:

> *It is a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality and it is also one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others (p. 144).*

(see also Seidman 1998; Kvale, 2007; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2009; Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

Van Manen (1990, p. 66) notes, "*The interview may be used as a vehicle to develop a conversational relationship with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of an experience.*"

The descriptions given above elicit what interviews are about; this gave me the green light that using interviews for the current study are appropriate. I have absolute confident this method of collecting data is very much suitable for this current study. Therefore, without hesitation, as soon as an individual expressed an interest in taking part in the current study, he/she was given copies of the participant consent form (see Appendices G, H, I,J pp. 290-293), summary of what the research is about, information for participants (see Appendices K,L,M,N pp.294-301) and the University's ethics approval were shown to them and a schedule was made for the actual interview.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2009, p. 123), explains that a research interview is relational between two people who have a common interest in a common theme. They comment, "*The semi-structured life world interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee on interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena.*"

To facilitate participants will comfortably share their experiences, each interview was introduced with a briefing of what the interview would be about. Participants were informed about the use of a recorder during the interview process and the rationale behind that. I then reiterated to participants that they were not under any obligation and they could still withdraw from the research at any time. They were given the opportunity to ask questions if any, before the interview started and during the interview process.

For the exploration of the phenomenon under study, a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was deemed most appropriate and was administered. In making this choice, the following has been considered: it has been suggested that semi-structured approach consents for participants to be given sufficient time to express their views, which are diverse and permits the researcher to respond to and follow up on unfolding events and emerging ideas (Nohl, 2009). Since all participants are expected to express their views regarding the same general themes, the results from semi-structured interview can be compared with each other (Nohl, 2009).

Open ended questions allow for participants to freely express their views about their experiences and minimise the influence of the researcher's attitudes and the outcome of previous findings (Creswell 2014). An interview guide has helped to structure the course of the interview process and participant's anonymity has been guaranteed.

5.8.3 Recording of the interview

The outcome and quality of an interview are to a large degree dependent on how the interview process is recorded. To ensure accuracy and precision, it was vital to choose an appropriate method to record the interview. In the current study, I used audio tape recording and note taking as a technique of recording the interviews. Using an audio tape recorder is the most common way of recording interviews as this helps to free the interviewer to concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of the interview (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2009, 2015).

5.8.4   Transcribing interviews

After each interview, the data recorded were transcribed to explore the emerging themes. Kvale and Brinkman, (2009, p. 180), note,

> "*transcribing interviews from an oral to a written mode, structure the interview conversations in a form amendable to closer analysis and is in itself an initial analytic process.*"

Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2011), suggest that transcriptions bring detail and accuracy of the data collected as the interview is recorded in a verbatim manner.

Transcribing the interviews, myself gave me the opportunity to perform the task of initial data analysis. The emerging themes were colour coded and each theme was given a description. This inevitably went a long way to inform the detailed analysis of the data.

5.9 Data analysis

This section explores the various key steps taking to analyse the data collected from several sources in this current study and the key findings. Savin-Baden and Major (2013), comment that data analysis is one of the most demanding stages of the qualitative research process. Therefore, due attention ought to be paid at this stage to '*ensure sound results.*'

Merriam (2003), explains that qualitative data analysis is a continuing process which entails data being broken apart into meaningful segments with the intent of making meaning from the data collected and with the rationale of answering the research questions. Hatch (2002) confirms this view and he argues that:

> *Data analysis is an organised perusal for meaning. It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been studied can be communicated to others. This involves organising and examining the data in ways, which will aid in identifying patterns, themes, discovering relationships, make interpretations, develop relationships and develop theories or mount critiques (p. 148).*

During this stage of the research, I was reflective of the existing literature on the topic under study and became aware of the work of other scholars (Yin, 2009). It is imperative that by analysing the data, the following research questions were

answered. The broad question guided by this study is: What are Ghanains perception regarding their experiences of the British education system? The following are the sub questions:

1. What are pupils/students', parents' and teachers' views regarding the extent to which the principle of non-discrimination as part of their rights as young people is promoted in schools?

2. What factors may affect their educational experiences and thereby, academic achievement in school?

3. To what extent are pupils/students and parents involved in the decision-making regarding their education and the degree to which their views are taken into account?

4. What are pupils/students' parents', community leaders and teachers' views regarding how they and schools can enhance Ghanaians' educational experiences and subsequently attainment levels?

Each key question was split into subsections and the data has been scrutinised using individual questions. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) remark that, after data has been collected, the subsequent stage involves data analysis, normally using some form of coding. The data collection method for this study is principally qualitative, using interviews and it is fundamentally based on the principles of Idealism. Suggesting that reality is subjective as it is mentally constructed in the minds of individual participants and groups (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013). Coming from multiple sources, the data can then be described as rich as emphasized by (Denzin, 1989; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

My philosophical stance has been critical and could not be overlooked during the data analysis stage of this study. As previously stated, phenomenology as a philosophical approach, has been embraced. This stems from the fact that reality and knowledge dwells

in the mind of individuals, as the individual perceives it, in effect, by engaging with the participants, knowledge is thereby discovered.

Twenty-nine respondents were interviewed. Transcribing the interviews was the first step of analysis as this gave me an increased advantage of knowing the data and a preliminary analysis of colour coding and highlighting issues that were recurrent was performed. By initiating the transcribing process, a reasonable idea of the emerging themes was mentally generated, which were later explored. The frequencies and the occurrence of patterns were then categorised into themes.

5.9.1 Data analysis and interpretation
The analysis of the interview data followed the general steps of thematic analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) described by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

5.9.2 Thematic and Phenomenological Analysis
Qualitatively analysing data encompasses making logic of the data in terms of the definitions of the situations given by the participants, identifying themes, patterns, categories, and consistencies. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), suggests

> "*there is no one particular or right way to analyse and present qualitative data; one ought to examine the process in order to ensure it fits for purpose.*"

To aid in the analysis, I drew inspiration from various sources to bring to light the several aspects and meanings within the data, which to a certain extent led to the advancement of my own analytical approach. I gained a lot from reading classic textbooks on how to analyse qualitative and phenomenological data such as Creswell (2013) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches;* Moustakas (1994) *Phenomenological Research Methods,* Van Manen's (1990) *Researching Lived Experience* and Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2009) *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.* In addition, I found the

readings surrounding the use of contemporary phenomenology from diverse disciplines very valuable, especially, their theoretical approaches, and foci. For instance, *studies of 'Elite Identity and Status Anxiety'* by Gill, (2015); '*Occupational Therapy and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis'* (Cronin-Davis, Butler and Mayers 2009); '*Giving Voice and Making Sense in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*' (Larkin, Watts and Clifton 2008).

In order for this study to qualify to be phenomenological within an empirical, philosophical framework, it is critical to cite some of the unique aspect of phenomenological analysis that relates to this work.

Firstly, in its most extensive sense, phenomenology thematises the phenomenon of consciousness referring wholly to live life experiences of individuals. The role of participants' consciousness could not be overlooked in this study as it plays a privileged status and could not be averted. This view is shared by Giorgi, who narrates:

> '*A phenomenological analysis should acknowledge the role of consciousness and demonstrate consciousness is not simply a neutral presenter of objects, but rather, contributes to the very meaning of such objects by its varying modes, forms, styles and much more'* (Giorgi, 1997 p. 2).

Secondly, the prominent characteristics of phenomenology is the term "*experience"* and it has been given a precise meaning - the intuition of objects and refers to a limited dimension of "*existence"* that may not have pragmatic references and hitherto, are fundamental for an appropriate understanding of any human phenomenon. In this scenario, the diverse, rich lived experiences of individual participants involved in this study form the key strength in this context.

Another requirement is that, in phenomenological analysis, no particular phenomenon is given precedence over the other unless in an extreme circumstance such as a subject offers a subjective evaluation that does prioritise, give precedence to an item, event, or experience. It is only the "*presence*" which the individual perceives it and how it has been experienced is what that counts. "*An accurate description of the presence is the phenomenon, and it normally incorporates numerous phenomenal connotations*" (Giorgi,

1997). In this study, every participant's account of how they have perceived the phenomenon by their own description and interpretation of the account is very valuable.

Finally, intentionality is a very useful term that cannot be put aside when undertaking a phenomenological study. It is a philosophical term widely used to depict the "philosophy of the mind." Husserl (2012), enlightening intentionality denotes "it is *the fundamental property of consciousness and it is the principal theme of phenomenology.*" It means an action of consciousness is repeatedly aimed towards objects, which outstrip it. As previously shown, in this context, the focus of this study is geared towards exploring the minds of respondents by discovering their thoughts and perceptions about the phenomenon under scrutiny.

Engaging in thematic and phenomenological analysis has been deemed fit for this current study. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue, thematic analysis as a technique involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns in the data. This is confirmed by Van Manen, (1990) who claims thematic analysis at the central stage is the method of capturing the themes that are incorporated and dramatized in the developing meanings and imagery of the work. This approach is embedded in phenomenological analysis, which requires the discovery of how individuals in a particular context make sense of a given phenomenon. It recognizes the researcher's close engagement with the respondent's texts by immersing oneself in the data and the initial bracketing of ideas.

Essentially, how the data has been analysed and the coding system embraced, are informed by my initial readings of Adams' phenomenological work (2005) which emphasised teachers' decision to leave the classroom after five years into their profession. For every individual or group, the data was organised in a manner that would enhance analysis comparatively in the following ways:

First, an emphasis on experiences and/or accounts and participant's perspectives regarding the type of schools, role of schools, teacher/pupil relationships, equal opportunities within schools and how they impact on their attainments was placed. Another aspect has focused on the views, perceptions, and experiences of external systems outside

the school community. Thirdly, attention was paid to the accounts, experiences, and perceptions on issues surrounding parental support and involvement. Last but certainly not the least, aspects of the onus of educational responsibility was also addressed.

In analysing the data, it was primarily essential to engage with the participant's account in a reflective manner (Larkin, Flowers and Smith 2009). Unavoidably, the participants and I jointly created the analysis of the data. As a researcher, I went through a period of double hermeneutic (two-way relationship), as such a two-stage interpretation (checking back with the participants) was implemented, which facilitated an intellectual connection between the participants and me. Accordingly, the participants were trying to make sense of their world and I was trying to make sense of the participants' world.

In order to establish the lived experience of the participants, and the meaning, which they make of that experience lived, it was essential that the account I presented was precisely what the participants are thinking and not what, I thought they were thinking. Hence, it was crucial to ensure I engaged in a systematic and rigorous dialogue with the participants in a manner that the transcribed interviews were readily available for them to subsequently crosscheck for accuracy. The reality of me being flexible in my thinking and opening up to change could not be overlooked.

5.9.3 Stages of data analysis

As stated previously, the analysis of the interview data followed the general steps of thematic analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) described by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). The procedure of analysis is illustrated in figure 9.

```
┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│ Transcribing │ ──▶  │ Reading and  │ ──▶  │ Cutting up of│
│  interviews  │      │ re-reading   │      │ wealthier and│
│              │      │              │      │  meticulus   │
│              │      │              │      │   sections   │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────┬───────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────────────────┘
        ▼
┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│Data reduced  │ ──▶  │Emergent      │ ──▶  │Connections   │
│to capture    │      │themes        │      │and patterns  │
│crucial texts │      │generated     │      │across        │
│              │      │              │      │emergent      │
│              │      │              │      │themes        │
│              │      │              │      │established   │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────┬───────┘
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│Interpretation│
│of themes     │
└──────────────┘
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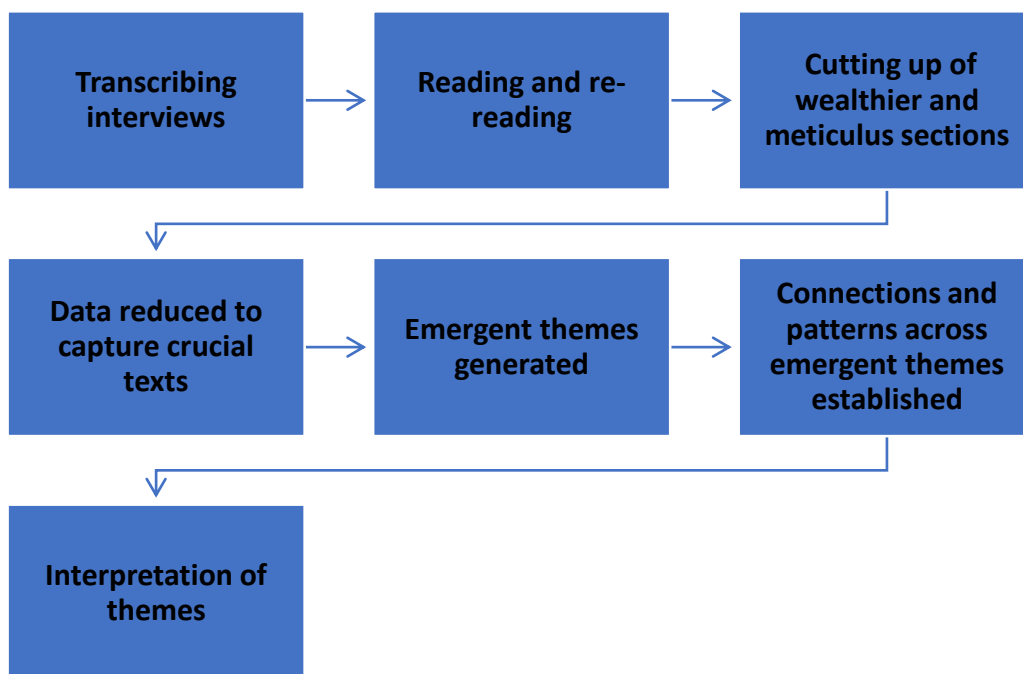
Figure 9: Stages of data analysis chart

The chart above outlines the various stages of data analysis procedures adopted for this study and this has been described below.

The first stage of analysis was a verbatim transcription of the interviews. Immersing myself and engaging in the original data by reading and re-reading to facilitate familiarisation with the accounts was the second phase. This process involved the playback of audio recordings, and the transcripts were constantly checked to establish that I made the participants the focus of analysis. Reading the data numerous times granted me the opportunity to develop the overall interview structure in my mind which enabled me to gain an understanding of how the accounts have binded several aspects of an interview together. Reading facilitated a gratitude of rapport and trust between the narratives and hence supported and highlighted the location of wealthier and specific sections, and even inconsistencies. Although I have experience of using modern forms of technology such as NVIVO, my preference was to engage with my data physically. This technique involved me cutting apart the actual data with scissors. Relevant chunks of the data were initially

highlighted using a word processor to lessen the amount of information for closer investigation (see for example Sandelowski, 1995).

The third phase involved a detailed analysis of my descriptive comments by focusing on and unfolding the contents of what the respondents have enumerated relating to the subject under examination. During this phase, I noted down the linguistic comments by exploring the specific languages that the respondents used.

Fourthly, to reduce the amount of data to a manageable task, I examined the connections, interrelationships and patterns between the transcripts (see Braun and Clarke, 2006). It was crucial to develop statements, which were concise and brief. The emphasis was to capture what was crucial in the text. The themes reflected the respondents' unique narrations and views, and my description of their accounts.

Next, using the method of 'abstraction', I was able to establish the patterns between emergent themes. In exploring the connections between emergent themes, similar points of view were put together, and that bunch was given a title. Finally, an interpretation of the themes were generated, comparing the findings "*with information gleaned from the literature and theories*" (Creswell 2009 p. 189).

The analysis of the data I must admit was sometimes frustrating, banal and it involved an extensive task of reading and re-reading of the transcripts, playbacks of the audio recordings and several amendments to the coding system. The analysis of the data was nonetheless developed by the wealth of existing literature. An illustration of emergent themes and their description (Luff, 2010) is detailed below.

Table 6: An example of list of themes with related descriptions and examples

Themes	Description	Example from data
School/teacher perceptions	prejudice influences school experiences and outcomes	*Some of my teachers think Black students are troublesome, we make noise in lessons, and that we are not serious. They always keep an eye on us, and if we are in a particular room, they always make sure someone is in there to watch us because they think we are going to steal something (Maria)*
Equal opportunities	Discrimination inhibits the rights of young people	*No, because I think as a Black person, you must work twice as hard as your other peers must in class so that you can be noticed (*Davey*)*
Eurocentric curriculum	Diversity of British cultures not evident within the curriculum	*No, not that much because I don't think the curriculum is written in a way that it will promote a lot of cultural awareness of other cultures. That is not taken into consideration because the curriculum is written with European settings and standards so really I don't think it really considers other cultures. Therefore, from that point of view, I would say Black Africans and other minority ethnic communities would suffer in that regard. This particularly brings pressure on the children because they are usually torn between being Africans or Europeans* (Maria)
Role models	An effective source of motivation	*We need more inspirational leaders and role models to motivate us. I only had one teacher throughout my education who was Black. The Black teachers take more interest in the welfare of Black students, and they tend to nurture us*(Kuku)
Burden of educational responsibility	Various stakeholders involved in the educational success of a young person.	*I think it's me, my parents and the teachers because I have to work harder but my teachers and parents have to encourage me to do well (Hannock).*

5.10   Conclusion

This Chapter has presented the various research paradigms, methodology and data collection methods that have been embraced in this study, and the justifications for choosing them. It also outlines the research design and the different methods used to collect data and their merits and demerits.

Furthermore, the key characteristics of the participants - gender, age, socio-economic status has been highlighted. The strength and the credibility of this study, therefore, are hearing the voices of the young people and the adults within the community, which will not have been possible without this study.

My role as a researcher in steering this study and how my beliefs and experiences might have influenced the study and the measures taken to reduce the impact of my beliefs on the outcome and findings of the current study have also been clarified.

Finally, how I analysed the data collected, and my human limitations have also been illuminated. In the next Chapter, I present findings on one of the emergent themes, which is the impact of school and teacher/pupil relationships.

Chapter Six- Findings: The impact of school and teacher/pupil relationships

'Black children are bright, driven and aspire to achieve high for themselves and their families. However, these qualities do not guarantee success for Black children in schools, hence, the high incidence of low achievers amongst Black minority ethnic pupils/students, but this social issue needs to be dealt with.' *(*Gillborn, 2007, 47*)*

6.1: Introduction

In this Chapter, I explicate the various anecdotes in the form of data collected from the fieldwork, which is from several sources and the key findings, to explore the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin. To guarantee the anonymity of the participants, data obtained from the fieldwork has been presented in the form of quotes using pseudonyms to represent the participants involved in the study. There has also been an in-depth discussion of the data in relation to the literature and the theoretical framework underpinning this study. As clarified in the methodology Chapter, the initial pilot study went a long way to inform the focal point of this fieldwork. The pilot study helped to "*refine the data collection plans and developed relevant lines of questions"* (Yin, 2009).

Placing the account of the respondents within a wider theoretical framework, relevant allusions have been made to any evidence found in the research literature to ascertain areas of conformity regarding the understanding of the school experiences of these teenagers. The transcriptions have been sourced through semi-structured interviews. Various themes emerged from the data analysis, which are parental involvement, peer influence, role models, the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum, pupil participation, teacher/school relationships and perceptions, low teacher expectations and equal opportunities. In this section however, the following broad themes will be discussed: teacher/school relationships and perceptions, low teacher expectations and equal opportunities in order to answer the first and second research questions: What are pupils/students', parents' and teachers' views regarding the extent to which the principle of non-discrimination as part of their rights as young people is promoted in schools? What

factors affect your educational experiences and thereby, academic achievement in school? The section following elaborates on the responses to these questions.

6.2 Teacher/school relationships and perceptions

Schools are ideally, powerful institutions set up to provide rich and diverse curriculum to enhance the fulfilment of full potential by its pupils/students. However, the relationship pupils/students have with the school or teachers, can largely affect their academic outcomes. The school environment is perceived to be crucial to the development of an individual's self-confidence, and achievement as a whole (see, for example, Davis, 2001). However as mentioned in Chapter Three, previous studies such as that of (Hill, 2007; Rollock, 2007; Gillborn, 2008, and Strand 2008) indicate the persistence of lower academic achievement of Black pupils/students, which is usually below the national average compared to their White peers is quite prevalent within schools. More so, SRT, CRT and Marxist Theorists argue that schools are set up to fail minority groups, including working class pupils/students (see, for example Sullivan, 2002).

Therefore, to gain a quick insight into their educational experiences in school, I asked the youth participants to give a general overview of their academic achievement in school. The section following reveal the perceptions of the young people vis-à-vis their notions of their academic achievement and the kind of relationships and support they have received from teachers/school. They had varying but fascinating opinions, which I have termed as a positive and negative teacher/school relationships, and teacher/ school perceptions.

6.2.1 Positive teacher/school relationships

This section presents findings drawn from the data collected, which substantiates the view that some of the young people have positive relationships with their school/teachers. As previously discussed in Chapter Five, the narrations of the participants have been analysed in the light of the literature and through the lenses of CRT and SRT.

To gain a general overview of their academic performance, I enquired how the young people perceived themselves as students and the progress they felt they were making in school. I posed this question to them: How do you think you are doing in school?

> Danny (pupil): *Well I thought I could have gotten better GCSE grades at the end of year 11 because I have been in the UK system for a longer period. I started all the way from year two, my grades at the primary school were ok, but I did not perform at the end of my GCSE as I was expecting, but it is ok.*
>
> Manuela (pupil): *I am doing ok, but I think I can still improve.*
>
> Hailey (pupil): *I feel that I am more motivated in school and I am doing well.*
>
> Anna (pupil): *I am doing OK because, in grammar school, they push us more than my friends in other schools. In comprehensive schools, they only help those who are good, and they do not care about the education of other people whom they think don't care about their education and they just leave them.*

The young people highlighted in their opinion, good academic progress can be influenced by the type of school, either comprehensive or grammar. There has also been a consensus that the length of time a young person has lived in the UK influenced how well he/she will perform academically. After commenting on their general performance in school, I probed further and asked the respondents to remark on the kind of relationship they have or have had with their teachers and how in their view, this might have affected their educational experiences. Dick (pupil): explains the nature of the relationship between him and his teachers by narrating, *I think the relationship between my teachers and I is good because I always hand my work in on time and this helps me to do well.* Beka (pupil): also echoes the view of Dick and she responds *I think the relationship between my teachers and me, is very good. I am closer to my form tutor, and I have a good relationship with my other teachers*

as well so I can go to them whenever I have a problem. I think they are very warm. They have a personality that is good for children of our age. If you don't like your teacher then you are not going to pay attention to them in class, but if you do like them then the teaching will be more interesting, and you will pay attention. I like my teachers because they are nice and that is why I have good grades. Louise and Kobi are of a similar outlook as they reiterate the views of Dick and Beka.

> Louise: *Some teachers were not approachable or easy to talk to. However, I had a good relationship with a few teachers, and that helped me to discuss some of my weaknesses with them, and they would intend to advise me as to what to do. The kind of relationship we had showed they wanted me to do well genuinely.*
>
> Kobi (pupil): *Erm, most definitely I think I had a good relationship with my teachers because I was in the top set for everything, so they tried to push me harder and this has helped me to achieve in school.*

The above comments from the young people demonstrate that some of the young people have a positive relationship with their teachers/schools. Several factors have been attributed to the positive relationship they have with their schools/teachers, and these are based on their level of intelligence, the time frame in handing in homework and the personality of the teachers, whether they are approachable, and friendly or not. However, other young people had a different viewpoint. They comment they found the relationship between them and their teachers/school to be rather undesirable. Rimm-Kaufman and Sandilos (2011), have noted the benefits of positive pupil/teacher relationship in previous studies. They advocate improving pupil/teacher relationship is significant because it can have positive and long-lasting implications for both pupils/students and teachers.

6.2.2 Negative teacher/school relationships

This section of the thesis unveils the perspectives of another group of young people, who unlike the evidence previously presented, have had adverse experiences with their teachers/schools regarding relationships. They comment on how the negative relationship they have with their schools and teachers impact on their educational experiences and attainment. Davey (pupil): says, *I feel I did not get much support from my school. My school registered me for 8 GCSE's, and I wasn't happy with my results because I think my English was a bit weak. It was not as good as my White friends. Written English in England is different from what I was taught in Ghana. My school could have done more to help me. We had support staff, but they were mainly for behaviour issues.* Manuela (pupil): expresses a similar view and she reveals: the *relationship between my teachers and me is not that great. They decided to register me for the foundation paper. Sometimes I want to go to my tutors and ask questions about things that I don't understand, but it is hard because some of them seem not to be approachable. Therefore, I do my own research after school, and I learn with my friends too. This helps me a lot, and it makes me feel a bit confident.* The adverse relationship Danny and Hailey have with their schools is consistent with that of Davey and Manuela as they remark:

> Danny (pupil): *My school gave help to foreign pupils/students' who had just arrived. Therefore, if you have language issues, you can have tutorials every morning with someone to ensure you sound out the words properly. However, those of us who are foreigners and have been in the system for a long time did not get any help. Sometimes they made us feel they didn't like us. So, I would say the relationship was just average.*

> Hailey (pupil): *My teachers didn't have a good relationship with me. Because I think if my teachers were a lot more helpful, I could have done a lot better in school. I feel my teachers were not helpful sometimes.*

These young people explicitly recount and describe their perceptions of the relationship with their teachers/school. They demonstrate in some cases, they did feel that their teachers did not take peculiar interests in their school experiences and attainment. Sutherland and Goldsmich (1984), similarly, comment on negative pupil/teacher relationships. Negative teacher/school and pupil relationship has been exhibited in the level of EAL support

received in school as it has been described as inadequate. It has also been revealed that the lack of participation by young people in decisions involving them has also thought to be a strain on teacher/pupil relationships. Self–help and motivation have resulted in good academic progress.

In the next section, I present another sub-theme that emerged from the data, which follows on from teacher/school and relationships, which is teacher/school perceptions.

6.2.3 Teacher/school perceptions

A teacher and school's perception towards its pupils/students can influence the educational experience and academic attainment of a pupil tremendously. However, a unique feature that has been recurrent in the evidence gathered is the issue of teacher and schools' negative perception of Black pupils/students. The issue of racial stereotyping by teachers and schools has been highlighted to be a cause for concern in this current study. Racial stereotyping in schools has been in the spotlight for many years. In responding to the question posed regarding their relationships with teachers and schools, the following unveiled:

> Mary (pupil): *Some of my teachers think Black students are troublesome, we make noise in lessons, and that we are not serious. They always keep an eye on us, and if we are in a particular room, they always make sure someone is in there to watch us because they think we are going to steal something. I think it's because of what happens on TV especially, in the aftermath of the riots in Croydon. I think people are still upset, so they take it on the Black students.*

> Davey (student): *Most teachers were good, but some also didn't like us Blacks because some of the boys sometimes behaved badly. I don't really know why the teachers don't like them because they aren't that bad, to be honest, they are a bit talkative sometimes. Sometimes the White boys would get involved, but they are not labelled. They are treated differently, they normally get more behavioural support. Whereas with the Blacks, it's detention or go outside. I have an example whereby two of my friends had similar incidents. The White person was given anger management support and other forms of support, and the Black person was disciplined.*

> Isaac (pupil): *Some teachers are stereotypical, and when they see a group of Black students together, they think they are going to cause trouble. This is because of their mind set. However, they may be discussing their schoolwork.*

Although Davey convey the view that the relationship between some of his teachers and him is positive, a consensus of adversarial relationships and the existence of racial stereotyping in schools have been reached. Amongst the concerns raised regarding factors, affecting teacher/relationships include discrimination, favouritism and differential treatment, insufficient support by teachers/schools and media reports exaggerating issues regarding minority ethnic communities. Matters related to stereotyping of Black pupils/students by schools and teachers, its impact on academic achievement have been highlighted in previous study (see, for example, Amin *et al.*, 1997). McCadden, 1998 argues that the attitude of many teachers may put Black pupils/students at a disadvantage, especially boys. He explains that teachers' focus on pupils/students working hard and task-related activities may crush down the energy and creativity that Black boys have and can prevent Black boys from "*expressing their blackness.*"

The underlining factors have been mentioned and presented by most of the teenagers in this study. Most of them have expressed their views regarding how schools and teachers perceive them as Blacks, having preconceived mind-sets about them, through labelling because of their racial backgrounds. In most cases, their experiences have been described to be undesirable and detrimental to their self-confidence. Unmistakably, the pupils/students have demonstrated that when teachers accord them the due respect and when the pupil/teacher relationship is right, it serves as a motivational tool in supporting pupils/students to achieve high in school. These comments from the young people suggest that the issues of stereotyping of Blacks are still prevalent in some schools, which, in the end, can affect educational experience and academic achievement. From this viewpoint, the young people deliberated, they have been let down by some of their schools and teachers.

To explore the impact of the teacher/pupil relationship on them and specifically their academic experiences further, I enquired how they think the type of relationship they have with their teachers affect or has affected their performance in school. The findings exhibited further evidence of racial stereotyping. Davey and Anna expressed themselves passionately about this:

Davey (student): *I think because my teachers didn't like me, they put me in the bottom set for maths. I was telling the teacher; I need to move up because I was working very well but he ignored me. Eventually, I went to see the head of maths, and he said:* "oh we made a mistake you were not supposed to be in the bottom set." *By this time, they had already put me through the foundation exam and it meant the highest I could get was a C. So I did get a C in maths. Afterwards, I paid and registered privately to do my maths again, and I had an A.*

Anna (pupil): *Yes, my relationship with my teacher affects my work in school. Although grammar schools are good, currently, I don't really like my biology teacher, and consequently, I stopped liking biology as much as I used to. It is the way she marks my work. For example, if I make a mistake, she would say poor effort. I sit next to my White friend and we work together, but she doesn't get similar comments.*

The respondents clearly highlight their dismay regarding the issue of discrimination, which is an element, which consistently manifests in their anecdotes. Clearly, the respondents have expressed views, which are evidenced in the literature discussed in Chapter Three. For instance, Richardson, (2007) explains how Black pupils/students fail due to many factors including, the attitudes of teachers, discrimination and the British school system and how it works.

The attitudes of many teachers towards Black pupils/students, he asserts can have adverse effects on their achievement in schools. The effect on the pupil can be huge and devastating.

There are many teachers who are patronising towards Black children and tend to treat a Black child differently, particularly, when they are bright, and this is an issue that has been raised by a few of the respondents.

Haque, (2000), shares a similar perspective and he argues, for many years, studies looking at different ethnic group attainments discuss achievements while ignoring the important distinctions, which are cultural, historical, socio-economic, linguistic, and religious between various ethnic groups. Sewell, (2007), on the other hand, presents a different view about Black underachievement especially, Caribbean boys. His notion is that in the absence of father figures, Blacks, especially boys tend to find alternatives, which are normally dominant male figures who are generally found in gangs. By joining a gang, he argues that they find a space where there is a kind of hierarchy, ritual, education and a sense of belonging, which they may be lacking in their lives.

Most of the respondents narrate and describe their experiences in a manner to depict what has been discussed in previous Chapters. Their views also epitomise the issue that, in discussing achievement tables, Black Africans are barely discussed in detail (Rowntree, 2007), and they are normally placed in the same 'box' without considering their unique characteristics of ethnicity and culture.

Considering the reactions from the respondents, I felt it was well intentioned to ask a sensitive but an inevitable, straightforward question: *What are your views regarding stereotyping in schools?* The rationale behind this enquiry was to illuminate the respondents' views regarding racial stereotyping. These are how Ed, Wisdom, Dick, Kuku, Hailey, Lynn, and Danny described their experiences: Ed (parent): comments that *stereotyping does exist in schools because when you are Black, they perceive you to have a limitation and that you can't aspire to the top. Sometimes teachers are very quick to make you fit into a certain category, which is wrong. The situation is changing, but it is still there. If you are Black, you are perceived to be good at sports. Most teachers do not see you aspiring to become a doctor or an engineer, for that sake even if you are bright and talented; they believe you can fail at a point. Therefore, the encouragement is always not there. However, I think that culture is changing anyway because the more we have Black role models; the more the Black community see that they can also aspire to work very hard and not to listen to negative comments. Wisdom (community leader): also* mentions s*ome*

teachers label Black pupils/students to be poor academically, and they don't waste their time on them. So if you are friends with such people and you sit at the same table with them, you may be ignored as well.

In the same manner, *Kuku (student):* have the same outlook and she explains that: *In some cases, I would say racial stereotyping exist in schools because when it comes to subjects like PE, the teachers tend to focus more on the Blacks but when it comes to the core subjects, they tend to focus on the fair or White people. Also throughout my high school, I've learnt to be independent and more focused because they thought I wouldn't be capable of what I am achieving now. Therefore, I don't depend on my teachers, but I do my own learning at home. Because of their perception about me that I cannot achieve because I am an African and I speak another language, I put in more effort, and I make sure I learn a lot of things on my own. One of my Ghanaian friends who is a boy and does drama complains, he has never been given a good role to play, it is always the negative ones such as a drug addict or robber.* Danny, and Lynn described their experiences below:

> Lynn (parent): *Yes, stereotyping does exist in the sense that many people see Black kids or Black boys in general to be troublemakers and they are not in school to study, and they turn up to school because they have to be there. So stereotyping exists, and I think that was what motivated us to push our children and give them all the support they need because I have two kids and I don't want them to be part of a bad Black statistics, I want them to be part of the good black statistics. Therefore, when they say some Black children are achieving, I want them to be part of that category.*
>
> Danny (pupil): Yes, *I think the teachers are prejudiced because my friends and I are not badly-behaved kids, whereas the few Black people were, so they didn't like all of us. Sometimes when the Black boys come to class, they will all sit in one area, so the teachers assume when Black kids sit together, it equals trouble, so they stand the Black kids out, and the smallest or least noise, they will point you out because you are Black. Eventually, I was noticed because, I was performing better than the stereotypical Black guys and I wasn't always around them, so the teachers didn't see me with them often otherwise, I would have had problems.*

Certainly, this is a demonstration that the young people consider that some of their teachers have preconceived, stereotypical mind sets about Black pupils/students, especially boys, which are mostly negative perceptions, and can result in low teacher aspirations and expectations. In most cases, the young people have expressed views to describe how they feel they have been discriminated against due to their racial background. To secure a guaranteed successful outcome, is to dissociate themselves from their fellow peers who may share similar values and cultures as them. The differential treatments are also portrayed in the type of comments they receive from teachers and the sets/tiers they are typically put into for the core subjects. In this context, it is worthwhile to consider evidence from previous study by Gillborn (1990), which states:

> *'A study of two schools over a couple of years in 2003 indicates that Black pupils/students are under-represented in higher tiers and over-represented in lower tiers: two-thirds of the Black pupils/students are listed for maths in the foundation tier. This means that two-thirds of Black pupils/students cannot possibly achieve a C grade due to the exam that their teachers have enrolled them for. The decision exclusively lies in the hands of teachers. Parents and pupils/students have no say'* (p. 62).

This view is similar to that of Wright *et al.* (2006), who notes that many young people feel they are labelled as underachievers. Scholars of CRT also shares the same view, (see, for example, Gillborn and Youdell, 2000), and this labelling goes a long way to have an adverse influence on their school experience and thereby their attainment. To echo what has already been highlighted in Chapter one, being the first Black woman to receive an Emmy award in 67 years, Viola Davis during her speech mentions: "*the only thing that separates women of colour from anyone else is opportunity*" (Graham, 2015). This is a prominent example of how Black people are still faced with many challenges to excel in life.

Blair, (2001) narrates that the most common forms of stereotyping within British society are that Black men are seen to be loud, fierce, thugs, sexual predators and are very much interested in crime related activities such as drug dealing. The effect of this she said, is detrimental because as they grow up, Black boys tend to see themselves as what society perceives them and this affects their self-image and self-esteem (see also Sollis,1996).

According to Mirza (2008), school statistics that are race based develops into racial stereotyping which can themselves become "*self-fulfilling prophecies.*" She argues that hierarchies of achievement showing different ethnic groups performing better than others may lead to teachers perceiving children from these backgrounds in certain ways. For instance, she explains that if a Chinese pupil is said to be performing better than a Black pupil is, teachers may encourage the Chinese to steer towards the sciences whereas the Black pupil will be encouraged in sports.

However, other researchers are of a contrasting opinion about the negative stereotyping of Black pupils/students. For instance, Sewell, (2008), is of the standpoint that Black students are unable to break away from their peer groups who find the streets to be much fun than the classroom. He comments, they find careers such as football more attractive and they have low aspirations and expectations of themselves. Therefore, schools are not to be blamed for dwindling their aspirations. He suggests:

> *'What we now see in schools is, children undermined by poor parenting, peer-group pressure and an inability to be responsible for their own behaviour. They are not subjects of institutional racism. They have failed their GCSEs because they did not do their homework, did not pay attention, and were disrespectful to their teachers' (Sewell, n.d. cited: Whitehead, 2010).*

Ogbu, (1986), argues that Blacks underperform in schools due to their identities. He believes Blacks have built antagonistic cultural characteristics and have shaped their culture because they have internalised discrimination. In his view, Black Americans reveal this antagonistic culture in their music, dress codes, and speech. However, one area the concept of antagonistic culture becomes most significant is through educational attainment.

Undoubtedly, teacher/pupil relationship and the manner in which teachers perceive pupils/students can either motivate them to work harder or have an adverse effect of demoralising them into not working to their utmost best. The respondents acknowledged, whereas a few of the teachers played a positive role in their education, most of the teachers' attitude towards them, however, had a discouraging effect on their school experiences and

thereby academic attainment. They collectively blamed racial stereotyping of some of their teachers, which are deep - rooted in schools is detrimental to their educational experiences. It is evident that schools are very crucial places that may affect how one can be confident about their gender and can go a long way to influence how well they perform academically (Davis, 2001). For Black boys, it is an important environment for '*masculine identity development'*.

The current study draws on previous studies on antiracist education and CRT to analyse the role of racial stereotyping and discrimination in influencing the educational experience and achievement of the young people. Anti-racism advocates, have influenced the exploration of race relations in schools, including anti-racist initiatives, to inform education policy, both at the local and national levels (see, for example, Hessari and Hill, 1989; Troyna and Hatcher, 1992; Tomlinson, Roberts and Menter 1992). They highlight the processes and consequences of racism within society, alongside other forms of discrimination and their implications for minority ethnic students. Similarly, CRTs (Critical Race Theorists) recognise the argument about racial stereotyping, and how this may affect teacher-pupil relationship and subsequently attainment levels. CRT objects to arguments that support racism. As it affiliates education, it probes into how educational theory and practices are used to dominate a specific ethnic and minority groups (see, for example, Bell 1995; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller and Thomas, 1995; Delgado 1996). CRT acknowledges the principal role of racism in structuring the practices of schools (see, for example Solorzano and Yosso, 2001).

CRT in teacher education seeks to ascertain, analyse and alter understated and '*overt forms of racism in education to transform society'* (Solorzano and Yosso, 2001 p. 2). According to scholars of CRT, schools function in a contradictory manner, and they have the potential to oppress and marginalise minority groups. The narrations of the respondents are evident that it is inevitable that the issue of racism to some extent plays a contributing role in the educational experiences and outcome of Black pupils/students and for that

matter, Ghanaians. This relationship between race, class, gender and attainment has been vigorously discussed in the research literature (e.g. Gillborn, 2006; Cole, 2009, 2017; Hill, 2009 and Gillborn, 2010).

Mirza (2008), comments although monitoring achievement data by ethnicity is very essential, race-based statistics feed into racial stereotypes. Healey (2004 p. 437), narrates:

> *'Discrimination and racial inequality are deep-rooted in our society and therefore we must critically understand the assumptions, structures, and institutions that form the lives and experiences of minority groups.'*

These forms of discrimination can come about because of one's class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, race, disability, and one's gender. Ghanaians and other children of African origin are aware that they face many challenges such as quality of education, inequalities, and racism in the English education system because of racial stereotyping in schools. Academic research shares this view, (see for example Cole, Hill and Shan, 1997; Rhamie, 2012) and this tends to affect the educational experience and thereby, the academic attainment of Black pupils/students in schools across England in that they fall behind their classroom work and score poorly in tests, compared to their true abilities. The issue of racial stereotyping evidenced in the accounts of the respondents in this section leads on to an interrelated difficulty faced by Black pupils/students, which is a low teacher expectation in schools. The section following therefore presents findings on the experiences of the participants regarding Teacher Expectations.

6.3 Low Teacher Expectations

One Tuesday morning, 10[th] February 2015 precisely, a friend of mine called and asked me to read the online newspaper, the '*Voice'*. I was stunned with the headline, which read: "*People Still Have Low Expectations of Black Boys in the UK.*" After reading the article, the question I asked myself was, is this truly happening? I thought then, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to seek the opinion of the respondents regarding the issue of teacher expectation as it was well incorporated into the topic under scrutiny.

Teacher expectations play an influential role in the educational outcome of a young person. The expectations of teachers tend to determine how differently they treat the young persons in their care. Several factors including the physical features of a young person, socio-economic status, race, and the type of teacher-pupil relationship may affect the expectations of the teacher, either high or low. As expressed previously, negative stereotyping by teachers is unquestionably, one of the contributing factors of Black underachievement in the UK.

Rosen, (2016 p.1) comments "*A teacher telling a student they are not smart will weigh heavily on how that student feels about their future and perhaps the effort they put into doing well in school.*"

This section of the thesis presents the accounts of the participants from their first-hand experiences and their perceptions of the impact of teacher expectations and its impact on their educational experience and subsequently, their academic attainment. I asked the participants what in their opinion are the expectations of their teachers of them and if the expectations in any way have influenced their school experiences? The following were their thoughts regarding this subject. *Manuela (pupil)* admits that her teachers do not have high expectations of her as a result, she has been registered to take a lower tier paper. She narrates: *Not really, I don't think my teachers believe in me or have high expectations of me because I feel I can do a higher paper and get a better grade, but they registered me for the foundation paper. Probably, they want me to show them more of what I can do.* When asked the same question, Beka *(pupil) responds: I think many teachers look down upon us because we are Blacks and they think we can't do that well in our subjects may be because of our ethnic background or because we were not born here. The expectations of teachers concerning us Black children are very low.*

Likewise, *Danny (pupil)* responds by maintaining: *As I mentioned earlier, when it comes to we the Blacks, the praise, and motivation we get from our teachers is minimal. Probably our*

teachers don't have much confidence in us because we come from Africa and our continent is very poor.

More so*,* the opinions of the young people resonated with the adults. *Lynn (parent)* claims*: When my children were in primary school, I think I remember, when my son was in reception, the teachers said he couldn't do this or that because he had English as an additional language. I think in a way this was a negative comment, this negative comment helped us to sit him down, and eventually he became one of the high achievers in the class. My children grew up in Hornchurch, and when we were preparing the oldest for the 11+, the teachers did not support him in any way, and they were shocked he had done and passed it. The teachers had no belief whatsoever that our children can move up the academic ladder because of their ethnic backgrounds. Sammy (teacher)* also shares his experience and notes*: In some schools, as soon as they realise you are EAL or Black, straight away, they will put you in the bottom set, and you have to work your way up, which means it will be difficult to get up to the top set. This is because they sometimes have low expectations of EAL students.*

Alex (community leader), comments: *the teachers are very observant. If they see that a parent is keen on the interests of their child or children, they also push him /her in school and vice versa. So, it is very important for parents to understand how the system works so that the teachers will have high expectations of their children.*

Highlighting to having a different experience, which has a positive element, *K.B (pupil)* explains*: me particularly, my teachers had high expectations of me because they knew I had the abilities, so they tried to push me hard. I think they would not have pushed me towards exam results if I wasn't that clever. Rather they would have pushed me towards something less suitable such as an apprenticeship and stuff. This happened to many of my Black friends.*

Some of the respondents identified teacher expectations to be somewhat, positively correlated with parental involvement. Teachers are thought to have high expectations of a pupil when the parents are more engaging. On the other hand, some teachers do not seem to have high expectations generally, and it negatively affects their expectations of Black pupils/students as Mani recalls. Low teacher expectation is predictable in cases involving

EAL pupils/students. Thus, re-enforcing the issue of negative stereotyping and discrimination previously highlighted.

The only respondent (K.B.) who argued that his teachers had high expectations of him mentioned, this was because of his high academic performance. In fact, he commented that he feels the attention he had from the teachers was because he achieved better than his peers did. Certainly, the expectations of his teachers and the attention he received would have drifted if he was performing contrarily.

The remaining young respondents, however, demonstrated in their experience and opinion, they feel their teachers have low expectations of them and Blacks in general. They attributed this attitude by teachers towards them to their racial and ethnic backgrounds. Unexpectedly, the teachers also affirmed the comments of the young people and they revealed that some schools and teachers do have low expectations of Black pupils/students. Alex also suggested teachers took keen interests in pupils/students who have supportive parents and vice-versa, which can be associated with the pupils/students' possession of cultural capital as scholars of SRT advocates.

For a very long time, the education of Black pupils/students in England has been in the spotlight, featuring them to be underachieving, with high rates of exclusion, low examination results, higher rates of behavioural and emotional problems, with a high rate of Special Educational Needs (Tomlinson, 2014). Coard (1971), for instance, exposes in his argument, *How the West Indian Child has been made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System*. He campaigned against the ongoing discrimination faced by Black children in British schools, particularly, Caribbeans.

The views of the respondents affirm the evidence by the LDAEC (2003), which establishes that low teacher expectations play an instrumental role in the underachievement of African Caribbean pupils/students. The report exposed Black pupils/students criticised positive teacher attention is insufficient, behaviour management systems are unfair, being watched at break times with suspicions continue to exist, and they feel they are just disliked simply

because they are Blacks (see also Firth, 2005). Some teachers simply have low expectations of Black students/pupils/students and this issue is persistent in most schools as revealed by the participants.

Similarly, Richardson (2007) notes, Black pupils/students fail due to many factors including the attitudes of teachers. The attitudes of many teachers towards Black pupil he argues can have adverse effects on their achievements in schools, which can have an adverse impact on their academic achievement. Many teachers, he advocates are patronising towards Black children and tend to treat a Black child in a different manner, particularly, when they are bright and vice versa.

A study by the John Hopkins University (2016) reveals that the expectations of teachers reflect racial biases. It discovers that when examining the same Black students, Black teachers have high expectations compared to their White colleagues who have fewer expectations significantly particularly, if it involves Black boys. The White teacher is about 30% less probable to predict a Black student will complete a four-year degree programme and they are practically 40% less likely to anticipate their Black students will graduate from high school.

This suggests that the modest expectations of teachers could become self-fulfilling prophecies (Mirza, 2008). The low expectations by teachers could affect the educational outcome of pupils/students, especially, those from disadvantaged backgrounds who have no access to role models to look up to, to offset the negative attitudes of teachers. Black pupils/students, especially boys, are often perceived by their teachers to be lazy and not gifted academically, which serve as a deterrent for these groups of pupils/students into motivating themselves.

Asthana and McVeigh (2016), notes teachers who have low expectations of Black pupils/students and are unconsciously stereotyping them routinely mark down Black pupils/students. The report concludes, Blacks pupils/students perform better in external

exams than internal exams. However, the Indians and Chinese are said to be *"over-assessed"* by their teachers. White children from poorer backgrounds are also under-assessed compared to their peers who are better off.

Low expectations by teachers can have a damaging outcome for young people as they may not see the need to try very hard as their teachers do not appreciate them.
Schools and teachers having preconceived minds about pupils/students are not healthy as it can affect a young person's school experiences and academic progress. The respondents universally maintained they feel their teachers have low expectations of them due to their racial/ethnic backgrounds and they are not pushed and motivated to the degree that can enable them to reach their fullest potential.

According to Bourdieu and Passeron, (1977), children who have exposure to an elite culture at home, are always recognised and advantaged in schools by their teachers. Children who lack the elite type of capital are excluded. This instructional action subjects minority pupils/students to a form of '*symbolic violence'* compelling them into a *'competitive mechanism that only rewards the dominant culture.'* In my opinion, the experiences of the young people are concurrence to the stance of Bourdieu and Passeron. The testimonies of the young people have shown in most cases, their schools and teachers have not given them the due recognition due to their ethnic and cultural background, which is not the elite type. This is impacted on the level of expectations teachers do have of them, and in most cases, it is very low.

Scholars of CRT (see, for example, Gillborn 2016) argue Black pupils/students are in most cases, likely to be placed in lower sets or teaching groups, and regardless of their achievement, social class and gender, they are denied the most prestigious subjects. Teachers have the sole prerogative to decide who should be entered for the top exams, thus, consistently putting Black pupils/students at a disadvantage. From a CRT perspective, this argument suggests institutional racism is still prevalent in some English schools, which

is adversely affecting the educational experience and attainment of Black ethnic groups, including Ghanaians.

Evidently, the opinions of the respondents have explicitly shown that after many years of early studies identifying the problem of low teacher expectations of Black pupils/students in schools, this social menace is still predominant in some schools and needs to be addressed with urgency.

The next part of the discussion explores another factor, which can be influenced by teacher/school relationships - the impact of equal opportunities practices, on school experiences and academic achievement.

6.4 Equal Opportunities

Promoting equal opportunities and encouraging diversity in our classrooms has been on the National agenda for several years. The Race Relations Acts 1965 and 1976 were the first legislation in the UK to challenge racial discrimination on the grounds of ethnic background, race, or colour. Until its abolition in the 1990's, the ILEA was also committed to institute anti-discrimination policies in the mid 1980's. Subsequently, the Race Relations Amendment Act, (2000), was aimed at condemning any forms of discrimination. The Equality Act (2010), set out by the Department for Education (DfE) aims at creating a society, which is highly educated whereby opportunities are equal for all children and young people irrespective of their family backgrounds or circumstances. The Act highlights the significance of schools not discriminating against pupils/students in any manner in their provision of education. The five major objectives of the Act:

> '*Raising standards of educational achievement to ensure that all children gain the knowledge required to prepare them for the challenges of adult life. Secondly, closing the gap between the rich and the poor by ensuring increased opportunities and improved outcomes. Then finally, reforming the school system, supporting all children and young people, particularly those who are disadvantaged and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the department'* (Hepple, 2010 p. 4).

UNESCO (2010), comments, "*All children should work together, regardless of their differences, giving every child the opportunity and the right to access quality education.*" With this view in mind, I wanted to enquire from both the adults and the young people, their stance in respect to the principle of equal opportunities, how it is embraced in English schools, and how this may affect their experience in schools and thus, attainment levels. The remarks of the participants illustrate opinions were divided on this matter as they either assented, dissented or were on the neutral ground that equal opportunities exist in schools.

The question I posed was: *What is your opinion about the principle of equal opportunity practices in schools? Do you think it exists in schools*? The responses have been split into affirmative, unequal and imperfect equal opportunity.

6.4.1 Affirmative to equal opportunity practices

This group of young children were in an agreement that in their experiences, equal opportunity practices do exist in schools. Hailey (pupil) comments: *yes, it does exist because at my college, there were posters showing everyone is equal regardless of their race, sexuality and gender, etc. Dick (pupil)* also supports Hailey and explains: *I think equal opportunities exist in schools because for example, during assignments, they give everyone a time frame to hand in their work, so they treat everyone the same.* K.B. and Kami also confirms in their experiences, equal opportunity practices are common in their school.

> *K.B (student): I think they create the opportunity for everyone to perform at his or her best because they divide people into different groups to give us the opportunity to shine.*
>
> *Kami (pupil): Yes, in my school, they do exist because they help everyone that is struggling, and they encourage everyone not to drop a subject.*

6.4.2 Unequal opportunity practices

Although the above participants comment their experiences of equal opportunity practices are positive, their narration is however different from another set of participants. For instance, Isaac (pupil) states: *No, I feel some people have more chances than other people. For instance, people with different coloured skin have different opportunities, and it has happened to lots of my friends in other schools and me too*. Similarly, Sammy (teacher) also remarks: *No. Equal opportunities are not perfect. There is so much that needs to be done. In all fairness, it depends on the school. It is true some schools give lots of opportunities, but others don't. I think irrespective of your ethnicity or background; you should be given the same opportunity to compete with other kids. Each person should be placed according to their ability and not based on their ethnicity. Sometimes when you are an EAL, and you arrive, they put you straight in the bottom set without testing the child. So it will depend on the leadership of the school and their policies. If the leadership is poor, it will affect the minority ethnic students, but if the leadership is good, they will give everyone equal opportunity, and it wouldn't be a problem.*

Sienna (teacher), in an agreement with Sammy and Isaac, remarks: No. *I think this is rather written than being applied. On the face value, you might think it exists, but of that face value, there are things that people can influence. The leadership of the school can decide on how to promote equal opportunities. For instance, in employing the teaching workforce, it takes leadership who has the ideology of including people from diverse backgrounds.* The experiences of Ella are comparable

> *Ella (parent): No, because I think as a Black person, you must work twice as hard as your other peers must in class so that you can be noticed.*

6.4.3 Imperfect equal opportunity practices

Interestingly, two of the young people argue in their experiences, equal opportunity exists in schools however, this is limited or imperfect. Their recount is as follows:

> Maria (pupil): *I would say it's 50/50 because when I was going for the house captain in my school, I was against two White people, but I was chosen over them. But in another form, there was a Black boy who applied for sports captain, and he didn't have a PowerPoint, but he had a speech on paper, and there was this White girl who did not apply for the sports captainship, she applied for community captain, and she didn't get it because someone else did better than her. The sports position was rather offered to this White girl, although she didn't apply for it. The Black boy lost it because he didn't use a PowerPoint. He was the only one who applied for the position, and our sports master said there weren't enough strong candidates to apply for the sports captain. Everyone was disappointed, and they said that was unfair.*

> Davey (student): *If you want it, it's there, but to be honest, if you want the top grades, you have to separate yourself from the other Black guys otherwise, they will just put you in the same box. If you hang around them and the teacher finds out, they will conclude and say, "You see, he is not working hard or putting in any effort. I always see him around, and they are always causing trouble." Therefore, it helps if the teachers do not see you in a group.*

Several factors have been illuminated to influence equal opportunities in schools. These include leadership style and policies regarding EALs (English as an Additional Language). The respondents have come to a common exhibition that in some cases, there is evidence of equal opportunity. However, it is not perfect. The majority of the respondents declared in practical terms that, in their perception and experiences in school, they feel that sometimes they are not given the same chances as their White peers. Associating oneself with a group can also endanger a young person's opportunities. Griffin, (2008 p. 12), explains *"equal opportunity is when every individual in society experiences opportunities to attain and flourish which are as good as the opportunities experienced by other people"* (see also Verma, Bagley and Jha 2007).

However, it is crucial to recognise that equality of opportunity is a problem faced by our society today despite many attempts to improve and resolve this issue. Social inequalities are deeply rooted, and it cannot be disputed that some people have fewer or more restricted, opportunities to achieve and flourish than other people do. This is because both

children and adults have opportunities limited to them in our society because of discrimination and prejudice, stereotyping and failing to treat people as individuals (Griffin 2008). It is critical for schools to provide equal opportunities, quality education and respond and adapt to the needs of pupils/students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religious and cultural backgrounds as well as their physical, sensory and cognitive needs, social class and gender as revealed in Chapter Three (see for example Mittler 2012; Ainscow 2005 and Udvari-sonar 1996).

It is critical therefore to consider the report by Race Equality policies (2002), which recommend that schools should be committed to promoting equal opportunity, promoting good relations between members of different racial, cultural, and religious groups and communities and eliminate any forms of unlawful discrimination.

Nonetheless, Haque (2000) explains that for many years, studies looking at different ethnic group attainments discussed achievements while ignoring the important distinctions which are cultural, historical, socio-economic, linguistic and religious between various ethnic groups.

Drawing on law, ethnic studies, and other fields, scholars of CRT intend to combat against the consequences of racism and other forms of discrimination on people of colour. They contend Black people face many challenges due to their race or ethnic background. The majority of the respondents have also shared this outlook. Gillborn, (2011) argues:

> *'This is not a matter that Black pupils/students lacks drive or ambition; this is a case of opportunity being denied by teachers who simply do not see Black children as likely academic successes. In fact, these stereotypes are exactly the opposite of the beliefs that surround Chinese pupils/students, for whom teachers routinely expect the very highest grades. Not surprisingly, Chinese pupils/students are the most likely of all groups to achieve grades A*-C.'*

6.5 Conclusion

This Chapter has presented an analysis of a selection of respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding the nature of relationship they have with their schools and teachers and how in their observation, these may influence their school experiences and in the end their academic achievement. The accounts of the respondents indicate that they have varied experiences and opinions about their schools and teachers. Although a few of them recollect their relationship with their teachers and schools is positive, the majority of them, however, narrated similar experiences which in most cases, are negative. They described how issues such as discrimination and the stereotypical attitudes of teachers and schools influenced the way they are perceived due to their racial backgrounds. Many of their teachers they recalled have very low expectations of them, and they are intended registered to sit for lower tiers exams at GCSE levels. A significant number of the participants reported they would not want to be seen to be in groups with their peers who are Blacks by their teachers as this can result in a devastating consequence on their academic achievement. On the issue of equal opportunity, Kami, Hailey, KB and Dick agree equal opportunity is largely promoted in their school. Nevertheless, the rest of the respondents recount they feel other people from different backgrounds are given more opportunities than them.

Several factors have led to educational inequalities within our society, which have affected the education of pupils/students from diverse groups, including Ghanaians. The LDAEC (2003) found out that low teacher expectations play a contributory role in the underachievement of African Caribbean pupils/students. Evidence from the report shows that Black pupils/students complained of positive teacher attention were inadequate, behaviour management systems were unfair, they were being watched at break times with suspicions, they are subject to negative stereotyping, and they feel they were just disliked simply because they are Blacks (see Firth 2005).

The respondents recognise the importance of improving the relationship between them and their schools/teachers. They have come to an understanding negative stereotyping by schools/teachers is an issue that ought to be dealt with at the national level. All the 18

pupils/students in this current study state their desire of doing well academically, and they express having their schools and teachers believing in them, and supporting them, will go a long way to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem, which has a positive correlation with academic achievement. The concerns raised by the respondents is not different from that of the recent argument by Cameron (2016), who mentions, '*in Britain, there are more young Black men in our prisons than there are studying at a Russell Group university.*' Given this, the Chapter succeeding will examine the other elements that are internal to the school system and its influence on the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin.

Chapter Seven- Findings: Other Internal School Factors

> *'Young people enter the school system with diverse experiences, come from varying backgrounds, and leave with very differing outcomes. Children from deprived and underprivileged families are most probable to attend the nethermost performing schools and to attain the lowest academic results.'*
>
> *(Kerr and West 2010)*

7.1 Introduction

Many factors may affect the educational outcome of a young person either negatively or positively. These factors may be internal or external to the school system. As disclosed in previous Chapters, the focus of this study is to investigate the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin and how their experiences may affect their academic achievement. This emanates from the fact that achievement records have always depicted Blacks, including Africans, such as Ghanaians and Caribbean, to attain below the national average compared to other pupils/students, such as those of Chinese, Indian, and Bangladeshi origins (although recent data have shown a slight improvement in attainment for Black Africans).

It has been criticised in previous Chapters that achievement tables have always put Black Africans into one huge category without taking into consideration their ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which may affect the way they access the curriculum. In the previous Chapter, it was evident that teacher/pupil relationship is crucial in determining the type of experience a young person may have in school, which has a positive correlation with academic achievements.

Healthy relationships do have a positive impact on academic achievement. Respondents enumerated how a good and cordial relationship between them and their school or teachers affected their attitude towards their academic work in a positive manner and vice versa. This

Chapter, therefore, leads on from the previous, to explore other factors, other than school/teacher and pupil relationships, which are internal to the school system, and their influence on the educational experience of a young person and thereby academic achievement.

The factors that will be deliberated upon are, Eurocentric Curriculum, Peer Pressure and Pupil involvement in decision making.

Clearly, when a young person study in a school environment that is welcoming, respectful and accommodating to his or her culture, the rewards are normally prodigious and cannot be emphasised enough. These include feelings of acceptance, confidence building, increased motivation, and positive attitude towards schoolwork. However, it must be acknowledged that some schools do not incorporate these in their core values, which may influence the educational experiences and outcomes of pupils/students from minority ethnic backgrounds.

7.2 Eurocentric Curriculum

Following the 1988 Education Reform Act, the National Curriculum was introduced in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland as a curriculum for primary and secondary state schools nationwide. The National Curriculum has several stated aims, which include:

> '*To provide opportunities for all pupils/students to learn and achieve, promote pupils/students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and prepare all pupils/students for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life. It also aims at contributing to the development of pupils/students' sense of identity through knowledge and understanding of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural heritages of Britain's diverse society and the local, national, European, Commonwealth and global dimensions of their lives*' (National Curriculum 2014).

To gain an insight into the participants' impression of the National Curriculum, I explored about their perceptions regarding the English Curriculum and how it promotes ethnic

diversity (Maylor *et al* 2007). The respondents expressed their concerns about the content of the English curriculum. Specifically, most of them disclosed that the English curriculum is very Eurocentric and has less room for considering other cultures. Except for Kuku (pupil), all the participants acknowledged the English Curriculum is Eurocentric. Kuku *(pupil)* recalls her experiences*: I think the curriculum promotes other cultures because we have school council meetings and they speak to all pupils/students from different ethnic backgrounds for our ideas, and after that, they feedback to the head teacher, then they take an overall decision on our behalf.*

Inversely, *K.B. (student)* reveals that in his opinion: *the national curriculum doesn't promote other people's culture. They've made it in a way that it's English, so flow with us. Most of the things we learn are English culture. The writing in our textbooks shows they are European and not African. Anna (pupil)* also comments: *I think the schools should get more Black people involved in the curriculum. For example, in history in primary schools, it is more about White people like Christopher Columbus and the Tudors, but they should include more Black people like Martin Luther King and other people from Africa. They should also include social problems like racism in the curriculum. We hardly use books by African authors.* Alex also expresses:

> *Alex (community leader): No, not that much because I don't think the curriculum is written in a way that will promote a lot of cultural awareness of other cultures. That is not taken into consideration because the curriculum is written with European settings and standards, so I don't think it really considers other cultures. Therefore, from that point of view, I would say Black Africans and other minority ethnic communities would suffer in that regard. This particularly brings pressure on the children because they are usually torn between being Africans or Europeans.*

The National Curriculum has been described as Eurocentric, biased, and non-African and this creates problems of cultural identity as sometimes-young people are torn between being Africans or Europeans. K.B. describes the National Curriculum to have a characteristic of 'if you go to Rome, do what the Romans do', *when he narrates, 'it's English so flow with us.'* Promotion of other cultures through the curriculum is also dependent on

the type of school, such as academies or free schools, which is not obligatory for such schools to cover certain subjects or topics.

The respondents' remarks are consistent with proposals from minority ethnic students and some members of staff at the Cambridge University (2017) calling for English Literature to be decolonised. Similarly, the findings from Gillborn and Youdell's study, (2009) in which they describe the English Curriculum to be Eurocentric is consistent with the participant's views. They argue that several attempts by successive governments to create reforms in an already "*shell shocked system*" have failed. They commented a series of reforms have rather regularised a national system of testing linked to a compulsory and an overwhelming Eurocentric curriculum which has further led to the divisive consequence of an educational system that already functioned in racialised ways, that underprivileged many minority pupils/students.

As discussed in Chapter Two, it is very crucial to include everyone in the educational success. Closing the attainment gap amongst the different ethnic groups is a widely accepted nationwide issue, which needs to be addressed. Ghanaians have migrated to the U.K. since as early as the 16th century, and ever since, the Ghanaian descended population have kept on growing. This necessitates that they have access to good and quality education so that they can reach their fullest potential. However, achievement data have always shown that the attainment levels of Black Africans is lower in comparison with their Chinese, Indian, Irish, British, and Bangladeshi counterparts. It is also pertinent that in discussing the various groups, their ethnic backgrounds, cultural values, and practices are taken into consideration as these may influence the way they access the curriculum.

Yet, the respondents appeared to acknowledge that they are barely included in the curriculum. The lack of diversity and the Eurocentric nature of the English Curriculum conform to that of various controversies in the academic world. For instance, NUS (2015), embarked on a nationwide campaign: Why is my Curriculum White? The study highlighted that there was a lack of inclusion and diversity in the courses being taught. They commented the education they receive at many of the universities is largely moulded by colonialism.

The BME students described the university curriculum to be unrepresentative of other Black culture, their cultures and histories were ignored in the field of academia and White writing has been given a high status. Anna and K.B expressed the same feeling when they commented the type of books they used in schools are mostly by White authors. Excluding other cultures in the curriculum, results in blindness to other viewpoints, and a sweeping dismissal of the huge amounts of thought infuriating work created during the course of history by non-White academics and scholars. This perspective supports the assertion by the Black British Academics network that there are only 85 Black professors out of over 18500 professors in the UK (Berliner, 2014).

Similarly, Rao-Middleton, (2013) advocated for the history curriculum to change in British schools because, at the GCSE and A levels, history is repetitive and very dull, the curriculum itself is particularly Eurocentric and misrepresentative. It often marginalises and misrepresents the contributions of people of colour and women. Equally, in the United States of America, scholars in the academic world have backed the promotion of a diverse and an inclusive curriculum. Maylor (2007), suggests that the time allocated to teach history in schools is vastly focused on European societies and culture. When there is, a reference made to Africa or Asia, attention is given to how the Europeans exploited, interacted, and changed those societies.

One of the pertinent factors underpinning the improvement of the attainment levels of Caribbeans and Black Africans is that the National Curriculum has continued to fail to acknowledge the fact that the society is changing, and it is becoming more diversified. Considerable numbers of people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds are migrating and becoming settled in England. There should therefore be comprehensive strategies to make the curriculum more diversified. This difficulty has put this group at a disadvantaged position (se for example, Gillborn, 2002).

Drawing on CRT, it advocates for diversity in education and proposes educational institutions uphold dominant and subordinate positions within the school setting. They also argue the experiences of many minority groups are often silenced within a dominant group. CRT questions why some people are more privileged than others are, and they have their voices heard compared to marginalised groups (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002).

In Chapter Two, I revealed that the 1948 British and Nationality Act encouraged citizens of Commonwealth countries to migrate into the UK. However, until the mid-1960's, the UK government had no policy on the education of immigrant children, which led to a debate on the living conditions of minority ethnic communities. As described in Chapter Two, the government's 1966 act authorised the assimilation of immigrants, whereby minority ethnic communities lost their official recognition of language and culture. Approaching the end of the 1980's, the then Swann Report's '*Education for All'* recommended strongly that there should be a broadly based 'multicultural approach' to the curriculum by all schools. The multi-cultural approach was emphasised in relation to the books and teaching materials used by schools (Swann, 1985). This led to the introduction of the integration policy to replace assimilation, making references to diversity, equal opportunity and the recognition in schools of children from minority ethnic backgrounds thus, promoting multicultural education.

However, it is apparent that after 50 years of legislating for the integration of minority ethnic communities in British schools, and several attempts by previous and current governments to promote equality and diversity, assimilation policy to a certain extent is deep rooted within key sectors and aspects of our society, which is one fundamental problem that minority ethnic communities face. The respondents have expressed a wish for a more diverse curriculum, which promotes other cultures and ethnic groups, will be very much welcomed and appreciated.

7.3 Peer Pressure

As shown previously, many internal school factors do influence a person's attitude towards teaching and learning in school. The section following will elaborate on another element of the emergent sub themes, which is peer pressure influence on educational experience. Prior research has indicated that one of the fundamental causes of underachievement of Black students is peer pressure (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). In preceding Chapters, I specified that one of the key aims of this study is to analyse the factors that influence the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin.

Interestingly, the respondents have been quite divided about this matter. The four groups, which are the young people, parents, teachers, and the community leaders, have varied opinions. The question posed to the young people was very direct on the issue of negative peer pressure. They were asked whether, in their view, peer pressure affected their school experiences and academic achievement. Out of the 18 pupils/students interviewed, only two narrated there is a relationship between peer pressure and academic achievement. Nonetheless, they expressed the view that peer pressure had no influence on their own academic achievement. They all answered '*no*' as to whether peer pressure influenced their educational experiences. Below are examples of the responses from the young people.

Daniel (pupil): *No, my peers do not influence my studies*.

Hailey (pupil): *No because I know why I go to school and I don't allow my friends to influence me.*

Ama (pupil): *My friends are not able to decide whether I should learn or not.*

Dick (pupil): *No, they don't.*

Davey (pupil): *No, I don't allow my friends to influence me.*

Isaac (pupil): No. *I make sure all my friends are good, so they don't influence me in a bad way.*

Louise (pupil): *No.*

Surprisingly, all the five parents and one teacher shared the same opinion as the young people, and they responded that negative peer pressure had no influence on the educational experience and the academic achievement of their children. The parents admitted peer pressure might affect academic achievement. However, they had no such experiences with their own children. Lynn, Ed, Ella and Bobo who are parents, shares their opinions in responding to the question: *Do you think that friendships, or any other kinds of peer groups, have any impact on your child's educational experience and achievement? Why?*

> *Lynn (parent): No, because right from the start, I have always encouraged my children to make good friends who can affect them positively. I also keep a close eye to the kind of friendships they make. So, I must say I am very lucky since I am aware peer pressure can be problematic for some families. Rather, they should believe in our children that they are capable.*
>
> *Ed (parent): No, my children have no issues with peer pressure because we always advise them.*
>
> *Ella (parent): No, because they know my expectations.*
>
> *Bobo (parent): No, my children have been excellent, and they haven't allowed their friends to influence them.*

The parents have acknowledged that although peer pressure is in existence in schools, it had not impacted on their children's school experiences and academic achievement negatively because they consistently give their children guidance regarding the type of friendships they can fall into.

In support of the views of the parents, one teacher expressed the view that although peer pressure exists in schools, however, it is not the major determinant of Black pupil's educational experience and underachievement. He raised the concern that there are other detrimental and pressing issues as to why Blacks are not achieving well in school. Bobby (teacher) reveals:

> *I think there are more serious issues other than peer pressure that influences Blacks to underperform, such as discrimination. I don't think peer pressure is the major issue. However, sometimes in the classroom, some of the pupils/students feel intimidated because they are the minority and they try to be with their friends so that they can feel safe and accepted.*

Bobby indicated that from his perspective and experience, other issues other than peer pressure, such as discrimination, are more harmful to the educational experience and attainment of Black pupils/students. In his opinion, Black pupils/students sometimes feel safer when they stay closer to their peers.

Findings from all the parents and the 16, out of the 18 pupils/students corroborate the ideas of Mirza (1997), who highlights how some pupils/students are not capable of developing long-term strategies when encountered with teacher racism and labelling. She identified three types of racism in schools: The first, being the Colour Blind, which she explains all pupils/students are comparable but practically, and permitted racism to go unopposed. Secondly, The Liberal Chauvinists, she elaborates believe Black pupils/students to be culturally underprivileged and thus have low expectations of them. The Overt Racists accept, as true Black pupils/students are inferior and actively segregated against them. Further supporting the idea of Mirza, Gilborn (1997), suggests minority ethnic communities are deprived and underachieve because schools can be more selective about whom they enrol due to the Marketization of Education.

Evidently, the views of the majority of the young people and parents contradict the opinion of Tony Sewell and other scholars who claim Blacks underperforming in schools is hugely attributed to peer pressure.

Contrary to the perspectives of the majority of the young people and parent respondents, the remaining three teachers, two pupils/students and the two community leaders suggested that there is a correlation between peer pressure and academic experience and achievement of Black pupils/students. To emphasise again, although the two of the eighteen-young people acknowledge peer pressure might affect educational experiences and academic achievement, they maintain it has no influence on their personal educational

experiences. They recounted their views about peer pressure among Black pupils/students. Amika (pupil) notes: *Yes, I think peer pressure can affect the way you learn in school because some of my Black friends follow their friends and they don't take their studies seriously. Therefore, the kind of friendship you fall into is vital. I am lucky because I am focused, and I know what I want in life.*

Similarly, Maria (pupil) echoes Amika's view and argues: *I think Black students limit themselves to what is expected of them and they follow their friends. Especially, the Black boys don't focus enough and if you are a Black boy and you try harder in school, the other Black boys will insult you, and when you are smart, they will go why are you trying to be White? Sometimes the children themselves are not motivated. Sometimes they are not aware how good they are and that they can achieve anything in life. Sienna (teacher) explains: with the little ones, it is not exactly peer pressure. Having said that, when they grow up, they hear things and begin to see the differences. They then start to play with their kind and the problem lingers on. If there are many differences, such as the child that you are playing with is coming from a background that does not understand the English educational system, then they begin to form cliques and eventually gangs because they can't really fit in.* Likewise, *Tumi (teacher) reveals: I think there is an issue of peer pressure or they follow their friends wrongly to show they are cool. Also, a lot of them do have low aspirations, which do not help them to achieve.* Sharing the same outlook, Wisdom and Sammy narrates:

> *Wisdom (community leader): I think peer pressure is also a contributory factor of underachievement. There is also an issue of racial integration among Blacks. They make friends with their fellow Blacks, which sometimes results in disruptive behaviours in class. When this happens, the teachers label them, and they don't waste their time on them. So, if you are friends with such people and you sit at the same table with them, you may be ignored. Some of the children also don't give their best in school.*
>
> *Sammy (teacher): What some of the Black children are interested in is their friends and gadgets and not their studies. They would come in and will mess about in class. They want to please their peers rather than concentrating on their studies.*

163

Seventy-two percent (72%) of the respondents maintained peer pressure had no influence on the achievement of Blacks, including Africans. Whereas twenty-eight percent (28%) of the respondents supported the view that peer pressure affected educational experiences and achievement of Blacks. This viewpoint stems from a range of reasons, such as the issue of racial integration, whereby Black pupils/students sometimes form cliques with each other for the reason of sharing similar cultural and ethnic attributes. Some of the pupils/students also feel to be recognised and accepted as been cool, some pupils/students needed to exhibit certain behaviours, which are sometimes negative. The views regarding negative peer influence supports the argument by Sewell (1997, 2000, 2015), who identifies peer pressure and street culture as a fundamental cause to enlighten why many Black-Caribbean pupils/students' achievement decline by the end of secondary school.

Probably best known for blaming peer pressure for the persistent Black underachievement, Sewell perceives that a considerable number of boys who grow up in female single-parent families is an issue, and points out that this makes boys susceptible to deleterious influences of peer pressure and street culture. Boys find a culture of masculinity appealing. This challenge the status of schooling and education qualifications. He maintains they put up certain behaviours, such as acting White to look cool in the eyes of their peer group. He claims generally, Black pupils/students, especially boys have no interest in educational activities but are rather interested in money and consumer goods that are more harmful to their academic success than racism. He mentions "*Black culture has become the dominant culture, and it now affects everyone*" (Sewell, 2000).

Mac an Ghaill (1988), similarly illustrates this outlook with his account of the '*Rasta's'* who arrived late, worried other students, disrupted teachers, tried to create arguments and spoke persistently. However, critics of Sewell and Mac an Ghaill maintain that their views disregard a racist, ethnocentric hidden curriculum, intolerant teacher attitudes, and racist policies of the educational system. For example, Strand (2008), explains that Black Caribbean

pupils/students have been victims of institutional racism in English schools, which can dramatically erode their success academically.

Earlier scholars have raised many questions regarding the controversy surrounding the effect of peer pressure on the academic achievement of Black students. They have called for the notion of the rationale behind 'acting White,' presenting the evidence that argues for the other influences (such as those mentioned above), on the academic attainment of Black students to be addressed (see also, Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; Cook and Ludwig 1998).

It is worthwhile to analyse that the views of Sewell corroborate with that of Kami (pupil), who comments peer pressure is not always negative. Kami argues friends can influence their peers positively academically when he recalls: *Throughout my education, I've had good friends who encourage and support me with my learning. Also, we do fun activities together, such as playing football on the field, and sometimes we talk about our schoolwork.*

Studies have revealed that Black students do have the self-belief that they can do well in school (Gillborn, 2007; Strand, 2008; Mirza, 2014). Yet, their educational outcomes do not reflect this belief. In this current study, majority of the respondents, 21 out of the 29 participants (72%) unanimously agreed that there are other significant issues other than peer pressure that affects the educational experiences and attainment of Black pupils/students, including Ghanaians. These include those discussed in Chapter Six such as racial stereotyping and discrimination in schools that need to be addressed by both the government and school leadership.

Drawing on early anti-racist activists, (see, for example, Hessari and Hill, 1989; Troyna and Hatcher, 1992; Tomlinson, Roberts and Menter 1992) and the perspective of CRT, this thesis draws on viewpoints, which identifies and analyses the cultural and structural aspects of education that uphold racial issues in schools. Steele and Aronson (1995), explain racial stereotyping are deeply rooted in society. However, their detrimental effects are hardly recognised. They argue that stereotyping may negatively affect the academic achievement

of Black students, preventing them to achieve high on standardised tests. Conforming to negative stereotypes of Black pupils/students might be enough to influence their educational experience and academic achievement.

In the section following, I elaborate on the other internal factor: participation in the decision-making by the young people and their parents regarding pertinent life changing issues relating to the education of the young people.

7.4 Participation in decision-making

> *'Children and young people play an active role in their school, becoming rights-respecting and adults work with children to create an environment that is conducive to participation, where a range of opportunities are provided for all children to engage and influence decision-making and actions'* (UNICEF UK /2011).

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), which came into UK Law in 1992, advocates for the significance of advancing the voices and rights of children in schools and within the classroom. According to the Department for Education (2014), involving young people in their education motivates them to become effective and dynamic within the society, which has a positive correlation with academic experience and attainment. It is reported that actively engaging pupils/students in the decision-making processes helps them to develop lifetime skills such as communication, self-respect, self-confidence, increased responsibility and in the end, it facilitates pupil engagement with their learning.

UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award gives recognition to schools in the UK to create safe and stimulating places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are developed, and they can succeed. The rationale is to enhance pupils/students' development and acceptance of difference and diversity, through the provision of a robust moral compass.

The Scottish Executive (2006), similarly maintains that positive pupil participation has a progressive impact both to the school and pupil as it enables pupils/students to develop self-knowledge, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and social skills. They argue that

members of staff may reflect on their engagement with children and young people, giving them the opportunity to make choices daily (see also Denham 2001; DFCSF 2002; Kirby *et al.* 2003; Robinson, 2014 and Waller, 2014).

Waller, (2014) advocates for the significance of the participation of young children in the early stage of their lives, involving early childhood settings. Denham (2001), explains that actively involving children and young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of government services is very beneficial which includes better services, personal, social education and development and promoting citizenship and inclusion. Children and young people form 20% of the UK's population (McLaughlin, 2015) and they have the right to be listened to as part of their human rights.

 However, the perceptions and experiences of many of the young people in this current study proved they did not feel they were involved in the decision-making by their schools. They expressed concerns as to how they feel their voices were not valued and they anticipated their involvement will promote their self-belief and confidence. It is significant to mention at this stage that in my experiences as a primary school teacher, young people's participation is a topic for discussion in many schools, affecting many young people, irrespective of their ethnic or cultural backgrounds, including Anglo and Eastern Europeans. In the UK, the voices of some children in schools are sometimes rather on the quiet, and are they are hardly listened to, which is a cultural thing as the various proverbs I shall be enumerating shortly suggest. Currently, in many UK schools, having a 'voice' as a young person, can be dependent on a 'minority model', based on social class. For example, a young person having a parent who is a doctor, may be listened to a lot more by his teachers/school than a child from a less affluent background (see, for example Archer, 2011).

7.4.1 Involvement in decision-making

In this section of the thesis therefore, I present the respondents' perception and experiences regarding their participation in decision-making at school generally. Beka, K.B., and Dilly, felt they were involved in the decision making of their education as they expressed their thoughts below:

> Beka (pupil): *Yes. I feel I am involved because I chose my subjects at GCSE level and I opted to attend geography sessions after school.*
>
> K.B. (pupil): *Yes, I think I have a massive say in my education because I know my abilities and I know which schools I want to go to, so I work towards those schools.*
>
> Dilly (pupil): *Yes, I feel I am involved to some extent because as you are progressing, no one tells you which subject to take. You make the decision yourself. However, the teachers don't explain to you why you have been put in a particular set which is probably wrong, and by the time you are in year 11, you can figure it yourself that your friend is in that particular set because he/she is not clever, instead of thinking they need more help. The perception is that they are daft and they will take the easier subjects such as PE and drama and subjects that do not involve academic work. So the students form that perception themselves. Because you have that particular perception about yourself, then you go like ok, I am not clever, so surely, I should be doing x y z instead of maths and science as the clever people do.*

The answers from the young people depict that although there is a degree of pupil involvement in decision making, it is evident it does not actively engage pupils/students at all stages, leaving them to form their perceptions about certain issues, such as why one has been placed in a particular group or set.

Conversely, the majority of the respondents expressed their dismay and concern at the luck of their school's active involvement of them in the decision-making processes regarding issues affecting them. They admitted they are hardly consulted by their schools and teachers even when the issues related to them directly. There has been a growing consensus that pupil involvement will be very much appreciated. Some of the adults also reiterated the voices of the pupils/students to emphasise that, their opinions as parents are not sought by schools and teachers on most occasions.

7.4.2 Non-involvement in decision-making

The following respondents narrate their participation in decision making is very limited.

Hanock (pupil) explains: *No, I am not involved in making decisions. I think because we are still in high school, they just tell us what to do without consulting us.* Kuku (pupil) shares her similar experience and comments: *not really, I don't feel involved because my teachers had a meeting and they decided which level of exams I should take, and they asked me to aim for those grades. I don't think the selection process is fair because I feel like they are setting standards for us but we can do better. I think the decision always lies with the teachers. I think the selection process is also biased because some people do well in exams, but they are not good in class, and it means that those people are always placed in a lower set, putting them at a disadvantage position.* The experiences of Hailey and Maria are similar. Hailey (pupil): *No. In the secondary and primary school, you really don't have a say.* Maria (pupil): *No, I don't feel my teachers get me involved.*

Likewise, Anna, Louisa, Kami, Paula, Isaac, Ella, Davey and Danny who are pupils/students*, responded a simple no to this question.* Equally, the adult respondents remarked:

> *Lacey (parent): No, we hardly get involve in the decisions. The school just calls for parents evening to inform you about the decisions.*
>
> *Lynn (parent): The school did not involve us to why my children were taking certain subjects such as triple science, so I think it was purely in their decision. In that instance, they did not consult us.*
>
> *Rob (teacher): I would say most decisions are made, then parents and pupils/students are informed, but they are not involved in the decision making directly. With the pupils/students, there is a student council, which voices out the views of the students sometimes, but the majority of the decisions are made for them.*

The narrations above reveal parents and pupils/students are hardly consulted regarding issues relating to them. The young people, as well as their parents involved in this study, would want to play active roles in decisions at every level. Many proverbs around the world

value children and young people as an investment for the society. For instance, *"it is the young trees that makes the forest thick"* (Uganda), "*children are the wealth of a nation*" (Tanzania), "*when a child knows how to wash his hands he eats with his elders*" (Ghana), "*educate the children, so you will not have to punish the men*" (Brazil). Tisdall (2014), however, argues that the "*UK proverb does not provide these levels of recognition*" as the proverb accredited to the UK is that "*children should be seen not heard."* He comments:

> '*This proverb suggests cultural views, perceptions of children and childhood, would not support children and young people's involvement at all in individual or collective decision-making. The participation rights of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), then, would be a particular challenge to policy, practice and lived realities within families, communities, and public spaces. To realise children and young people's participation rights, the major cultural change would be required'* (p. 168).

Children and young people are social actors and their voices ought to be heard and necessitates that they are encouraged so that they can freely express their views and participate in the decision-making process in school, university, college and the wider society.

There has been the introduction of several policies and political initiatives that demand the voices of children and young people to be represented. For example, the *1989 Children's Act* allows children to be consulted and be involved at all levels in the decision-making processes of matters that affect them. The UK government in 2001 established the Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU) and endorsed for children and young people to participate and influence governmental departments across the board including education.

The Green Papers *Every Child Matters and Every Youth Matters* released in 2003 and 2005 respectively by the DfES was explicit about the involvement of children and young people in policies affecting them throughout their education. The 2002 Education Act required schools and Local Authorities to seek the opinions of students in matters affecting them in accordance with the guidance set by the Secretary of State.

Regardless of the government's legislation in including children and young people in the decision-making processes, the respondents' angst echoed Flutter and Ruddock's (2004) idea, who argue that while the learner's voice has been on government and schools' agenda since the 1990's pupils/students are rarely consulted and are persistently inaudible in the processes involving a change in many institutions.

Learner voice can have a positive impact on the mechanisms and processes involving their education, which can have a direct bearing on their learning and attainment. Matthews et al. (1998) claim that in the UK, children and young people are given very few opportunities to participate in discussions relating to their social, economic and environmental futures as engaging in them is perceived to be an adult activity.

Minow (1987), agrees that children's rights are often not taken seriously, which makes it nearly impossible to involve them in decision-making processes. Equally, he claims that there is always an underlying concern of adults relinquishing power and control from children and young people. In agreement with Minow and Mathews, Rudd, Colligan and Naik, (2007), elaborate that the educational system in the UK should be reformed to address the needs of the learner rather than the learner attuning to the system.

Flutter and Rudduck (2004), argues that the focus of successive governments has always emphasised on the culture of achievement and pays more attention to targets, performance, results and the position of schools on league tables. Richardson (2007), reports:

> *'A study of two schools over a couple of years in 2003 indicates that Black pupils/students are under-represented in higher tiers and over-represented in lower tiers: two-thirds of the Black pupils/students are listed for maths in the foundation tier. That means that two-thirds of Black pupils/students cannot possibly achieve a C grade due to the exam that their teachers have enrolled them in. The decision exclusively lies in the hands of teachers. Parents and pupils/students have no say'* (p. 62) (See also Fielding 2004; Smyth, 2006).

Pupils/students' role in schools has traditionally been deemed to be that of a passive one. As explained in Chapter Three, pupils/students are generally termed to be consumers of educational supplies rather than being active participants. Discussing the prospects for a

171

vigorous agency can have a transforming outcome on pupils/students and ultimately on the schools themselves. Hart (1997), comments children can develop an unpretentious gratitude for democracy and a sense of their ability and responsibility to participate through direct participation. The whole field of critical pedagogy is concerned with empowering pupils/students/ students, in involving their `voice'.

The discussions above have highlighted the outcome of deliberating with pupils/students concerning their involvement in teaching and learning. However, despite the benefits of pupil participation, teachers may discover that pupil consultation and participation bring to the fore issues that are not simple and straightforward to resolve. The procedure itself can excavate tensions between members of staff or teachers and pupils/students. Teachers and other members of staff may be reluctant to introduce change or act on pupil data when necessary and the time and resources required can practically impose difficulties. Pupils/students, on the other hand, may find the process of participation very uncomfortable due to anxieties as they may feel their views may affect their relationship with their peers. They may also feel frustrated or disappointed when their opinions are not taken into consideration, and some may feel sceptical with the whole process because they are unaccustomed to having their opinions listened to by adults.

As I mentioned previously, children and young people's participation can have a positive impact on the school and pupils/students as it can stimulate self-confidence and can motivate children and young people to achieve well in schools.

Pupils/students who are less confident in their abilities as learners are largely vulnerable to lose motivation when continually faced with negative feedback and results. Flutter and Ruddock (2004), confirms the profound impact that frequent negative feedback can have on self-esteem and attitudes in their studies. Nevertheless, they also note, *"confidence and engagement with learning could be restored, in some cases, if pupils/students were given opportunities to experience success in their learning and if they were supported in developing positive self-images"* (p. 10)

7.5 Conclusion

In examining the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin, this Chapter has presented the factors that are directly or indirectly internal to the school system, which includes the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum, peer pressure, and lack of pupil participation. It is worthwhile to mention that peer pressure, although existing in schools, is to some degree not as a direct result of the school system. However, the respondents commented because their schools/teachers perceive Black pupils/students to have a lower self-esteem, they allow their peers to influence them in school. The issue of preconceived minds by schools and teachers has been examined thoroughly in the preceding Chapter. Reflecting on their perceptions and experiences, the respondents have demonstrated these factors are very influential and may affect school experiences and thereby academic achievement. The accounts of the respondents illustrate that they unanimously agree the curriculum is very much Eurocentric, they have less participation in the decision making of their education and peer pressure has a degree of influence, although not greater, on educational experiences and academic achievement. The majority of the respondents claim these factors may influence their experience negatively, which can also influence academic outcome. The anxieties of the respondents are in agreement with some of the concerns highlighted within the literature in Chapter Three. In the Chapter following I present further discourse between the factors that are external to the school system, and can influence educational experiences and achievement either positively or negatively.

Chapter Eight- Findings: External Factors

> *'School performance is a complex phenomenon, shaped by a wide variety of factors intrinsic to students, and in their external environment'* (Farrington *et al* 2012 p. 9)

8.1 Introduction

Many factors may influence a young person's educational experience and outcome. These factors, however, may be either internal or external to the school system. Positive factors will tend to have an optimistic educational outcome and vice versa. In the previous Chapter, the factors that are internal to the school system and could influence educational experience and attainment have been discussed. It was revealed that factors such as the Eurocentric nature of the National Curriculum, pupil participation and peer pressure, could go a long way in influencing a person's educational experience.

Previous Chapters have shown that pupils/students of Chinese and Indian backgrounds are achieving better and above the national average than their peers from other ethnic groups, including Black Africans. I have also criticised the dominant statistical classification whereby, Black Africans are always put into one huge category on the achievement data without presenting the attainment of each sub-category, making it impossible, from such classifications, to identify the subgroups who are underachieving and may need additional support.

In this Chapter, I present an extension of the data assessed and discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, and further explore the factors that are external to the school system, which may affect educational experience and achievement. In this section of the thesis, I introduce the factors that are external to the school system, which may influence educational experiences and achievement.

The factors that I will be deliberating upon in this section are, the impact of role models and parental involvement, which are imbedded in the young people's cultural capital. Previous study has maintained that there is a direct correlation between social class and academic achievement (see, for example, Hara and Burke, 1998; Marcon, 1999; Hill and Craft 2003;

Topor, Keane, Shelton and Calkins, 2010), which is also linked to cultural, social and economic capital. In Chapter Two, I argued that the relationship between race, class, gender and attainment has been vigorously discussed in the research literature (e.g. Gillborn, 2006; Cole, 2009; Hill, 2009 and Gillborn, 2010).

Ghanaians and other children of African origin are aware they face many challenges in school including, quality of education, inequalities and racism in the English education system. This view is shared by Cole, Hill and Sharanjeet Shan, 1997; Cole, Hill and Waller 2001; Rhamie, 2012. The challenges tend to affect the achievement of Black pupils/students in schools across England in that they fall behind their classroom work and score poorly on tests compared to their particular abilities.

Previous studies have indicated that Black students are more likely to come from a lower socio-economic background, and there is the likelihood that they will underperform in schools (see for example Reay, David, and Ball, 2006). Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less successful than their more advantaged peers in tests across a range of subjects (see, for example, Gill, Mayor, and Blair 1992; Mason 2000, Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Hill 2001; DFES 2003; Tomlinson 2008, DfE 2011, 2012 and 2013). '*This is a prevalent global phenomenon, with social difficulty having an undesirable impact on achievement in all 30 industrialised states belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development*' (Kerr and West for OECD, 2010). Children from deprived and underprivileged families are most probable to attend the nethermost performing schools and to attain the lowest academic results (BERA 2010, Tomlin, 2006). Data also shows more precise patterns of inequality. For instance, if we look at attainment in England, Poverty – as indicated by eligibility for free school meals – is powerfully linked with low attainment levels. The next section provides evidence from this current study, which suggests the external school factors that may influence educational experience. These factors are the influence of role models and parental engagement.

8.2 Role models

Role models play significant roles in the lives of young people as they develop. Social scientists for many decades have noted the prominence of role models in the psychological development and the development of young people's goals and future aspirations (see, for example, Mead, 1934; Skinner, 1971; Stryker, 1980 and Cooley, 1982). However, previous psychological research has focused mainly on role models serving as a source of information as for how young people ought to behave or as mentors. As young people are vigorously developing their identities and setting important life changing decisions, it is of particular interest to know who their role models are. Bryant and Zimmerman (2003), argue that the choice of role models may affect a young person's academic and psychological adjustments.

It has been argued that the increasing underachievement and under-representation of boys at higher levels of the education system, may be related to their choice of role models (see also Leo-Rhynie 1993; Samms-Vaughan 2006). Previous studies have revealed that race and gender-matched role models can offer young people greater range of opportunities. Young people with gender-matched role models at the beginning of their educational development are noted for achieving better academically (Zirkel, 2002); they also enjoyed achievement-oriented activities largely; were thoughtful about their futures and looked up to adults rather than their peers for guidance, more often, than young people without race and gender-matched role models.

Role models as a concept has received a considerable amount of attention from early researchers since the 1970's. Gibson (2003), defines role models as a *"cognitive construction based on the attributes of people in social roles that an individual perceives to be similar to him or herself to some extent and desires to increase perceived similarity by emulating those attributes"* (p. 136). Many individuals have expressed their views regarding the presence of positive role models who motivate and encourage them to aspire and achieve high in life.

In Chapter Three, a review of the literature revealed that many scholars, including Sewell and Ogbu, maintained that young Black people underachieve in school because they lack role models, especially, father figures at home and therefore turn to their peers for inspiration. In this section of the Chapter, I attempt to reveal the perceptions of the participants regarding the value of role models and how they can influence educational experiences and achievement. I examine what could be done to improve the educational experiences and attainment of the young people and Black pupils/students in general. As discussed above, positive role models do play vital roles in the lives of young people and most of the participants are in agreement with this assertion. They disclosed role models are very instrumental in the lives of young people, and they expressed the following opinions:

Researcher: *In your opinion, what can be done to improve the educational experiences and attainment of Ghanaians and Black pupils/students in general?*

> Alex (community leader): *Well, it will be nice if the children are given enough support from school and have good role models within the community who are also Blacks.*

> Ed (parent): *One of the biggest weaknesses is the lack of Black role models. The prominent ones are on top of the pyramid, so they are sometimes perceived to be unique or heroes e.g. Obama and Mandela. So in as much as we admire them, we can't aspire to be like them because we think they got there by luck, and they are exceptional. There should be more role models and opportunities where the top jobs are assigned to not only the Whites and one Black person. If you live in a neighbourhood where your friend's parents are in good/managerial jobs, it will inspire you because you see it as a natural thing.*

> Paula (Student): *We need more inspirational leaders and role models to motivate us. I only had one teacher throughout my education who was Black. The Black teachers take more interest in the welfare of Black students, and they tend to nurture us.*

> Tumi (teacher): *It is important for Black children to have role models at school who can motivate them because some of them lack role models to motivate them at home. Some of them come from single homes, or the parents may lack motivation, so there may be nobody to look up to or motivate them. So it is good for them to have someone to motivate them at school.*

According to the respondents, the availability of Black role models is very limited, and support systems in school are sometimes inadequate. A young person having a positive role model in his or her life can influence educational experiences and outcomes. Their viewpoints reveal that having positive role models in school are very essential, but practically, they are quite inadequate. In some cases, they do not exist at all. Their major concern was that many schools do not have members of staff who are Blacks whom children from African and Caribbean backgrounds could look up to. They, therefore, end up looking up to their peers for inspiration.

Similarly, the Race Equality Foundation (2012) after the London riots in 2011, reported that although role models do play positive roles in enabling young people to aspire and achieve in life, many Black young people lack role models that they can look up to. Practically, there are not many Black people who occupy prominent positions or professions within our society, which serves as a deterrent to them and demotivates young Black people to have the belief and confidence that they can do well in life.

Likewise, an independent account to the UK government on raising ambitions and the achievement of Black boys and young Black men, (Reach, 2007), acknowledged Black pupils/students, especially boys and young Black men face severe oppositions in every sector of the society. The report notes Black boys are less likely to achieve in school, are more likely to commit crimes than their White peers and are likely to be unemployed. Although the report recognised that there are several instances of Black boys and young Black men who outshine at school, at the university and in all aspects of life, these are in most cases, exceptions rather than the norm. The study recommended that there should be more Black male role models, and any negative image surrounding young Black men by the media should be discouraged. In Chapter Six, I refer to David Cameron's speech, in which he maintains that, Black people are more likely to end up in prison than to go to a top University (see also the Inequality Audit Report, 2017; The Lammy Report, 2017).

Furthermore, the Reach report recommended that the government should put together an organised national role model agenda for Black boys and young Black men. As parents do play a significant role in the education of their children, the report also claims schools should work very closely with parents by actively engaging and forming closer relationships with them. This is an indication that many parents find it difficult to engage with schools and teachers. In Chapter Six, I noted the concern that Black parents are faced with further obstacles, including teacher perception and stereotyping of Black families, which lead to parents feeling "*disempowered and disengaged.*" The education system, the report revealed, is recognised as being the driver, measure of achievement and the major force behind creating aspirations amongst young people. Schools are consequently the preliminary point for any steps and changes in achievement and aspirations.

Consistent with the views of the respondents, Johnson (2016), suggests for the need for African Americans to have role models within the community. He explains that many Black communities who lack role models, especially amongst young people without father figures are very high. Affecting their goals in life, they end up aspiring to be athletes and musicians. He recommended that there is the need to build a pool of Black role models within the community, who can be hands on, having partnerships with schools and colleges so that they can make a maximum impact in the lives of Black youngsters.

Equally, the respondents in this study have consistently established that the existence of positive role models have a positive correlation to educational experience and academic achievement. They recall that there are not enough Black role models within their schools and communities, however, they admitted their parents inspired and motivated them to work harder. On the other hand, the older respondents, comprising teachers, community leaders and the parents expressed the following concerns. They mentioned another contributory factor that explains why many young Black people underachieve in school, especially boys, emanates from the lack of positive male role models at home and within the community, and they tend to rely heavily on their peers for inspiration and guidance. BERA (2011), suggests it is essential to have male role models in schools for boys as the people they emulate in life can affect their adulthood. There is evidence to support the assertion that

young people with paternal role models tend to achieve higher academically and the reverse is also true (see for example, Ashley, 2003; Carrington and Skelton, 2003; Francis and Skelton, 2005).

Surprisingly, the notion of matching pupils/students and teachers by gender to reduce the dissatisfaction of boys in the school system and improve their educational outcome has been refuted by other research findings. Without a doubt, boys, just like girls, are noted for their heterogeneity, as they have distinct identities relating to race, social class, sexuality, gender, and other factors. They could never be anticipated to behave in the same manner. The findings suggest that teacher gender is not a concern for pupils/students. Lahelma (2000), in her study of Finnish's pupils/students' perception of teacher gender, established that pupils/students reject the idea that the gender of the teacher is a significant factor in building teacher-pupil relationship and highlights that individual teaching ability has the utmost influence (see also Smedley, 1999; Ashley, 2003; Drudy et al., 2005). It is also important to note that there is yet no evidence to suggest that male teachers as a group adopt different pedagogies and behaviours in the classroom to female teachers, which can affect boys' educational outcomes (see, Smedley 1999; Lahelma, 2000; Hutchings, 2002 and Skelton, 2002).

Although the significance of the influence of role models on the educational experience and academic achievement of young people, have been challenged by other scholars (see for example, Lahelma 2000; Hutchings 2002), the findings from this study however, cannot be overlooked. Overwhelmingly, most of the respondents acknowledged that in determining the factors that may influence the educational experience and academic achievement of a young person, positive role models play an essential role in the lives of young people, especially in their educational journeys and in making lifetime choices. Fifty years after the publication of *The Plowden's Report,* the views of the respondents support the assertion that the demand for male primary school teachers and early years practitioners (Plowden, 1967) remains relevant in current educational discussions. Boys, especially, White working class and African Caribbean boys continue to underachieve, and their lack of motivation in school continues to dominate the education agenda.

All the young respondents unanimously agreed that their parents motivated and inspired them to work harder in school. I am persuaded to believe that their perceptions are to some extent related to what Bourdieu termed 'habitus', which is underpinned by the concept that it is a socially constructed process, resulting in patterns that are exchangeable from one context to the other. Nonetheless, that can shift over time in relation to specific circumstances. Habitus is not fixed and can be changed in situations that are not expected (Navarro, 2006). Habitus consists of sets of values and attitudes that can be transferable within the family setting and is held by the dominant class. Habitus spawns combined dispositions of a particular socio-economic group, which are precisely accustomed to the social conditions of particular fields. Habitus describe dispositions, tendencies to think, feel and behave in an expected manner (see also Reay, 1998; Colley et al. 2003). There are no principles that dictate behaviour. Values and behaviour are therefore, constructed through the habitus of the family. The values and attitudes the young respondents acquire by exemplifying their role models, influence their behaviour and inspiration to thrive and achieve in life. Through parental encouragement and guidance, young people can secure varying sets of values and attitudes, which is embedded in their family habitus.

In the next section of the thesis, therefore, I present findings on the other determinant of educational experience and academic achievement that I investigated, which is external to the school: parental engagement.

8.3 Parental Engagement

In this section, I present another element that may influence a young person's educational experience that I have investigated. The role of parents in the education of their children cannot be omitted as their engagement is vital and it affects the educational experience and attainment of their children. It has been revealed that parental support, either negative or positive can influence the educational experiences and academic achievement of a young person. Parental engagement has persistently been found to be positively related to a young person's academic performance (Hara and Burke, 1998; Marcon, 1999; Hill and Craft

2003; Topor, Keane, Shelton and Calkins, 2010). Precisely, young people whose parents are more involved in their education are likely to have high levels of attainment than young people whose parents are less likely to get involved in their education. The influence of parental engagement on academic achievement has not only been well documented in the academic world, but also amongst policy makers who have combined efforts, which is intended for increasing parental involvement in the wider educational policy initiative. Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003 comments:

> *'Parental involvement takes many forms, including good parenting in the home, the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of effective social and educational values. High aspirations relating to personal fulfilment and good citizenship; contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school; and involvement in school governance' (p. 4).*

Previous studies have indicated that there is a correlation between parental involvement and a young person's academic achievement (see for example Hara and Burke, 1998; Marcon, 1999; Hill and Croft 2003; Topor, Keane, Shelton and Calkins, 2010). However, the question, which ought to be asked, is: what are the factors that may influence parents to either get involved in the education of their child/children? In exploring the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin, I deemed it crucial as part of this current study, to explore the respondents' views regarding the role of parental involvement in influencing their educational experience and academic achievement. As already mentioned in previous Chapters, the respondents involved in this current study comprise young people, teachers, parents, and community leaders. The question posed: *What is your opinion about the impact of parental involvement in your education/the education of your child*? Opinions were divided, and their responses can be categorised into two sections: positive parental engagement and negative parental engagement. While the majority of the young people commented on how in their opinion, their parents have a positive impact in their education, most of the adults, however, were of the view some African and Caribbean parents do not participate and engage much with their children's education.

8.3.1 Positive Parental Engagement

In this section, I present findings from the respondents, whose views relate to positive parental involvement. I asked the participants to comment on their views regarding the role of parental involvement in a young person's education and its impact on educational experiences. *Anna (pupil)* narrates: *My parents expect me to do very well, and they want me to get A*s. My parents are strict, and if they think I am not doing enough, they get disappointed. Also, my grandmother had to work for my mum to have an education in Ghana, whereas over here in the UK, it's free so they don't want me to take it for granted.* Manuela *(pupil)* is of a similar outlook and she comments*: my parents care about me, and they want me to do well in school. They ask more questions about my education, and they ask how I am doing in school, but they can't afford to get me a private tutor because they are cleaners.*

Hailey (pupil) expresses: *my parents play a massive role, to be honest. For instance, when they realised I wasn't doing well in maths, they got me a tutor to support me at home.* With the same perspective, *K.B. (pupil)* comments: *If I need help, I go to them, and if they can't, they provide me with the resources to help me. My father has a pharmacy degree and a master's in public health, and my mum is a qualified midwife and nurse so in that case I would say they influence my learning.*

Sharing a mutual view about the significance of parental participation, *Kami (pupil) says: my mum pushes me to work hard. If it weren't for her, I wouldn't be able to pass my 11+ and go to a grammar school. She doesn't allow me to do stuff if she thinks I've not revised very well. Both my parents have degrees from a university, and they have good jobs, and they want me to do better than them. Louise (pupil)* also notes: *my parents were involved in making sure that we got our homework done, and they ensured that we are doing well in school by checking our grades. They ensured I am independent and doing well at school. My mum has a PhD and my dad, a degree. This is helping me to work extremely hard in school.*

The young people in this study do, not only recognise the benefits of parental participation to their educational outcome, but the comments of the adults also confirm the points of view of the young people. The adults narrated:

> *Sammy (teacher): It is the culture of the Asians to provide support and parental guidance at home right from the start, and that helps them to excel. The parents from these communities give massive support to their children, and this is far above what the other ethnic groups do.*
>
> *Bobo (parent): It's about we as parents encouraging them at home to study and discouraging them from watching TV all the time and then get them additional tuition. So we are so keen on giving our children extra tuition at home. The extra tuition they are getting is making a difference in their education compared to some of my friend's children who cannot afford private tuition. We've never missed a parent's evening because we think it's the only way we can know how well our children are doing in school so that we can advise and direct our children accordingly. This helps them to achieve better. My income determines the number of private tutoring sessions my children can have. The higher the income, the more sessions your children can attend. For instance, 11+ can cost up to £35 per session. So I understand it when some parents want to tutor their children themselves because they cannot afford.*

All the 29 respondents in this study universally agreed that positive parental involvement is essential in enhancing the educational experience and academic achievement of a young person.

The majority of the young people confirmed that their parents are very much involved in their education by providing them with financial and emotional support which affected their educational experience and academic achievement. Their parents in some instances provided them with private tuition and educational resources at home, which influenced their educational experience and outcome. The income or the occupation of the parents, was also a major indicator of the level of support that was provided at home. Bobo (parent) echoed why in his view parental support is very vital in the academic achievement of a young person, and this outlook influenced the degree of his provision. He classified family to be middle class.

Most of the young people who disclosed that positive parental involvement facilitated good educational experiences and outcomes were registered to take higher tier papers at GCSE's and they are from varying socio-economic backgrounds. Although six of the young participants (Manuella, Kuku, Hayley, Dick, Mani and Hannock) are from working-class backgrounds, with both parents working as cleaners or carers, only Hayley and Manuella were registered to take the foundation paper. They maintained their parents cared a lot about their education, but they could not afford to hire a private tutor to support them at home. It is significant to highlight at this stage that only three of the eighteen young participants had private tutors at home.

It is noteworthy to acknowledge that sometimes many adults lose their status through immigration. For instance, a person can be a teacher in Ghana but a cleaner in England as a result of immigration. Sometimes parents can have low level skilled jobs due to the availability of jobs, but they can be highly educated in their home countries.

Still on the subject of parental involvement, one teacher re-enforced that the Chinese and Indians are on top of the attainment table because it is embedded in their culture to receive parental support right from the foundation stage, regardless of their socio-economic background, as compared to other ethnic groups. Hence, their ability to perform extremely well in school. The question that ought to be answered therefore and will be highlighted later in this Chapter is: does a person's socio-economic status influence his/her educational experience and academic achievement?

In Chapter Three, I presented a critical review of the literature regarding the significance of parental support in the education of a young person. Many scholars espouse the views of the respondents regarding positive parental support. For instance, Fan and Chen (2001), suggest that there is the prospect of parents to impart exemplary positive attitudes and behaviours towards their children. It is evident that parental involvement can contribute to youth academic achievement (see also Jeynes, 2003, 2007; Houtenville and Conway, 2008). It is likely that children will perform better in school when their parents are involved,

show an interest in their schoolwork, willingly support their children with homework, and can hold their children accountable for any completed schoolwork.

Young people may place value in their schooling and actively engage with their schoolwork when their parents show a keen interest in their education. Larocque, Kleiman, and Darling, (2011), notes "*family involvement can be defined as the parents' or caregivers' investment in the education of their children*." Parental support as mentioned in Chapter Three, can take different forms, either socially, emotionally, financially and much more.

The outcome of parental involvement on academic success and cognitive development has been investigated in current studies of English preschool children (Melhuish et al. 2001). It has been alleged that the quality of schools and the teachers may not only determine the educational success of young people; somewhat the degree of parental involvement has a critical role to play in the academic achievement of their children. Young people are more probable to have higher academic attainment levels and enhanced behaviour when their families are involved in their education (Bryan, 2005).

Other studies also indicate that a sustained effort of parental involvement during a child's education can improve academic attainment (see, for example, Fan, 2001; Driessen, Smit and Sleegers, 2005; Hong and Ho, 2005).

According to Bergsten, 1998; Hill, 2001 and Wynn, 2002, parental participation in a child's education alongside with environmental and economic factors, may influence a child's progress in areas such as cognition, language, and social skills. Various studies in the subject of parental participation, have established the significance of family interaction and engagement in the years before starting school. Other researchers have maintained there is a strong positive correlation between parent-initiated participation practices and school outcomes (see, for example, Hess and Holloway, 1984; Hill, 2001; Epstein and Sanders, 2002).

The perspectives of the respondents support the argument that higher levels of parent-initiated involvement, including parent attending school events, open school nights and parent–teacher conferences, are related positively to a young person's school performance (e.g., Becker and Epstein, 1982; Stevenson and Baker, 1987). Moreover, studies with young people have found that parental support with homework is positively related to the amount of time young people spend on their homework (Keith *et al.*, 1986; Hewison, 1988; Muller and Kerbow, 1993).

Similarly, researchers have argued that there is a strong positive relationship between school-initiated parental involvement practices and children's school outcomes (see, for example, Greenwood and Hickman, 1991). Hoover-Dempsey *et al.* (1987) found that high levels of teacher interaction with parents of middle school children were positively related to parents' attendance of parent–teacher conferences and school activities.

Parental principles toward education symbolise the significance parents consign on their children's educational achievement (see, Wigfield and Eccles 2000; Bandura, 2006).

On school attainment, parents may set certain objectives and hold several aspirations for their children, such as going to the college or university. Equally, parents may perhaps make clear to their children, their expectations regarding schooling (i.e., the value of education), with the intent for their children to take on these values and beliefs.

Moreover, it is evident from previous studies that parental aspirations, goals, and values are associated with their children's attitude towards their academic objectives, perseverance in school, academic work, and school attendance (Crandall *et al.*, 1964; Keeves, 1972; Pugh, 1976; Astone and McLanahan, 1991).

The respondents' view is consistent with Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory. According to Bourdieu, systems of education within industrialised societies perform in such a way as to maintain class inequalities. The educational system he upholds, can achieve successful outcomes if it is facilitated by the ownership of cultural capital and of a habitus that is of a higher class. Pupils/students of the lower class, he comments, do not acquire these qualities generally, so the underachievement of the majority of these group is unavoidable. Conversely, educational success and failure are seen as being attributed to individuals having the ability or inability to excel, which is inherent. Consequently, for Bourdieu, educational qualifications help to replicate and legitimatises social inequality, as individuals of higher-class status, are seen to merit their place in the social structure. Lynn (parent) narrates, "*As a chartered accountant, I want my children to take courses that are more academic such as law or medicine"* demonstrates this correlation between parents' cultural capital and the educational outcome of their children. Therefore, she encouraged and supported them to pass their 11+. Kami (pupil) reiterated his mother's view by saying *"it's my mum really. If it weren't for her, I wouldn't have passed my 11+, and I wouldn't be where I am now."* Clearly, this is a typical example of cultural capital passed on from mother to son.

 In Chapter Four, it was revealed that the existence of cultural capital characterises the power to promote a young person's academic achievement.

As some forms of capital are highly valued than others, the greater the parents' cultural capital, the higher the benefit of acquiring further capital to profit the family. In the section following, the views relating to Black parents not doing much to engage with the education of their children either due to the lack of any form of capital or by intent are presented.

8.3.2 Negative Parental Involvement

As set out above, the role of parents in the education of their children cannot be avoided in this current study. The impact of positive parental involvement is immense, and the benefits on the educational outcome of a young person are largely advantageous. It is evident that young people, whose parents are more involved, have good educational experience and higher academic attainment.

Parental involvement has an enormous positive impact on their children's learning. Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003 notes:

> *'Parental participation in the form of 'at-home good parenting' has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation. In the primary age range, the impact caused by different levels of parental involvement is much bigger than differences associated with variations in the quality of schools. The scale of the impact is evident across all social classes and all ethnic groups' (p. 4).*

In this section, I present the stance of the next category of respondents regarding the issue of negative parental involvement. Some of the participants are of the view that some Black parents do not engage sufficiently with their children's education because they have misplaced priorities. Others argued that many Black parents are willing to participate, but are unfamiliar with the English system and therefore will need the support of schools and the government to enhance their involvement. On the subject of parental participation, and how this may influence the educational experiences of a young person, the following concerns have been raised. Hailey (pupil comments)*: I think it will be good if our parents are aware of the activities in school, that is, the curriculum. They should also come together with the teachers so that they can help us. Some of our parents also work; work, work, and they do not have time for us.*

Similarly, Sammy (teacher) notes: *I think the parents themselves need help from the government and schools. The parents should get involved in their children's education. Teachers have about 150 to 200 children they focus on every week in secondary schools, so it is difficult to pay attention to one child. Yes, the parents should be supportive and lead*

the children in the right direction, and it will yield positive results. Revealing her opinion about why some parents are unable to support their children at home, Sienna (teacher) explains: *Many of the Black African pupils/students were born here, but a lot of them are struggling because their parents are not familiar with how the education system works in England. Therefore, from my point of view as long as the children are born here and speak good English, there is the danger of overlooking their needs. In addition, there is no support in integrating parents into how the system works so that they can support the children appropriately to make the expected progress. Sometimes the parents want to help, but they have no idea of how to go about it. Therefore, schools should work with parents and provide support, information, training as to how they can help their children at home.* The comments from three adults, Tumi, and Wisdom below, buttress the above viewpoints.

Tumi (parent): I think some of the parents are not inspirational, so it is not impacted on the children. A lot of them do have aspirations, which do not help their children to achieve. With the Indians and Chinese, they have high aspirations; they start leading their children in the right direction from a tender age. Basic language to other skills is transferred. They also have time for their children, and they hire private tutors for them. Even if the parent were a bus driver, he would not mind investing all his earnings to enrol the child in a private school. The African parents have misplaced priorities, as they prefer to invest in properties back home rather than investing in their children's education, which may include basic educational needs. Thirdly, most parents do not have a good education themselves, so when the children take their homework home, they don't get any support. In that case, they should provide their children with tutoring where necessary.

Wisdom (community leader): The parents are supposed to give their children extra support, but because they don't know how the system works here, there is no parental support for the children. Most of the time, they don't turn up for parents evening, and when they do, they don't find out the levels in which they have placed their children. Because we the Africans don't probe, the teachers also do not divulge detailed information about a child. This is evident in the amount of time parents spend with teachers during parents evening. Also, I think truancy is another cause of underachievement since the parental control is not very strong. The parents work around the clock without knowing what goes on in the life of their child. This happens because most of the parents do not have white collar jobs, so they do a few hours here and there to make ends meet. I have organised Saturday schools at my church for only £10 for 3 hours, but about 80% of the parents are not bringing their children. I have about 400 people in the church, and when you go, you cannot even see 20 children there. This tells you where the parents place their priorities.

This group of respondents acknowledged some Ghanaian parents are not actively involved in the education of their children, which may affect their educational experience. Their lack of involvement, the participants maintain may be due to several factors, including their understanding of the English Curriculum or other issues taking precedence over the education of their children's education such as the parents inability to, or be able to afford, to take time off work.

An underlying factor that can determine an increase in student achievement is the level of importance parents put upon education (Hart *et al.*, 1998). Hart establishes that, including parents in the education of young people can result in a high rate of academic success for students at all educational and economic levels. He notes children of low socio-economic status (SES) are most likely to score below average irrespective of the level of parental participation. All children, in spite of their SES, benefit academically from increased parental involvement (Lareau and Benson 1984). Young people with low SES consistently, are likely to score lower than high SES children on tests. When parents become vigorously involved in their child's education, the academic enhancement in the student is more dramatic for the lower SES child, although that child will still be inclined to test lower than their high SES counterparts do.

In a report for DCSF, Page and Whitting, (2007), reveal that engaging effectively with Black and minority ethnic parents in children's and parental services, is to recognise their intrinsic diversity and provide services accordingly, instead of taking the colour-blind approach. Moreover, they reveal that parents are enthusiastic to be involved in the services they access, and principally in decision-making. They assert that although Sure Start was based on such involvement, minority ethnic parents' involvement was said to be inadequate in practice.

However, there have been occasions in which minority ethnic parents had been recruited in inventive roles such as volunteer representatives of the community. Schools can successfully engage minority ethnic parents through, for example, setting up parent groups and networks, parent councils, and linking with community organisations like religious groups.

The views of some of the respondents reveal some African parents did not engage much with the education of their children. This they note that could either be an ignorance on the part of the parents of the British Education System or their affordability to take time off work and therefore must put other things, such as work first.

This assertion has been reaffirmed in previous studies in the UK and the USA. For instance, Katz, La Placa and Hunter (2007, for JRF), note that one of the key reasons for the lack of or limited parental engagement is the lack of knowledge about the existence of local services and the extent to which they can support (see also Gibbons and Thorpe, 1989; Henricson, 2002; Bhabra; Ghate 2004).

Cultural differences interpreted by the dominant school culture as limitations have also been acknowledged to influence parental engagement (see, De La Luz Reynoso and Tidwill, 1996; Davies, 1998; Barlow *et al.*, 2004). For instance, it has been suggested that programs that support parents are derived from White middle-class principles, which do not routinely identify different cultural approaches towards parenting (Bailey-Smith, 2001; Lloyd, O'Brien and Lewis, 2004). Johnson (2003), argues a person's way of life and language put peculiar problems in the way of immigrant and refugee parents in the United States. Staff members of a school may perceive that immigrant parents do not take an entire interest in their children's education. However, this may be the consequence of parents' lack of ability to communicate in English and a lack of a bilingual staff member in schools. Minority, ethnic, and refugee parents may also be coming from cultural backgrounds where parents are unlikely to play a major role in the education of their children or educational services. Webster-Stratton (1999) narrates that this can result in schools' negative perceptions that parents are not interested in building partnerships with them. Equally, in some cultures,

parents have absolute confidence in the school and hardly ever question its ability and the decisions it makes.

In many cultures, children assume liability for their individual learning, for instance through memorisation in conventional teacher-fronted institutions. In a system, whereby schools, children, parents, and teachers repeatedly again work together, may seem unfamiliar and out of the norm to minority ethnic and refugee parents.

In comparison, other concerns can be applied to the issue of parental engagement. For instance, Katz and Pinkerton (2003) establish that in the USA, many parents of South Asian origin abandoned the idea that their children's emotional and behavioural needs could be dealt with by consultations with an expert. They ascribe these matters not as mental, but as a movement away from a norm that is widely accepted, and rather approved of, seeking the support of relatives or religious leaders.

Bringing Bourdieu's Theory into perspective, it is clear parents with recognised professional status and other attributes, such as having knowledge of the English education system, can be of value to their children, and can enhance the educational experience and academic achievement. The reverse is true for families who lack any form of cultural capital that is valued by the education system. For example, Manuela (pupil), affirms this assertion when she declares her parents care about her so much, and they give priority to her schooling and academic achievement which Bourdieu describes as a family habitus because it feels right and natural for the family. However, they are not in possession of economic resources and the social networks. Hence, her parents could not afford to hire the services of a private tutor to support her at home, because they did not earn enough as cleaners. Manuela has been registered to take the foundation paper at GCSE. The evidence in this scenario suggests Manuela's possession of the various forms of capital, to some extent have influenced the level of paper she has been registered for at GSCE and thus, her academic outcome.

8.4 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have presented evidence on the impact of factors that are external to the school system, which are role models and parental involvement and its influence on educational experience. The majority of the respondents expressed the view that the existence of positive role models means that, the young people have someone to look up to for inspiration rather than their peers. However, they mention that many of our Black communities lack role models. Johnson (2016), comments that there is the need for African Americans to have role models within the community to enhance their future aspirations. He explains many Black communities who lack role models, especially amongst young people without father figures are very high. Their peers influence their aspirations, and they end up aspiring to be athletes and musicians. He calls for the need for role models within the community to be hands on, having partnerships with schools and colleges so that they can make maximum impact in the lives of young people.

To create the awareness of the impact of positive role models on educational experience and academic achievement, schools have also been recommended to work very closely with parents by actively engaging and forming a closer relationship with them. Demonstrating that many Black parents find it difficult to involve themselves with schools and teachers. Many Black parents are concerned that, they are faced with further barriers, including teacher perception and stereotyping of Black families and feel reluctant to be engaged with schools.

It has been suggested that the education of young people will be very effective, and outcomes will be more positive when schools and parents work together in close partnership. Largely, the level of skill, knowledge, and resources, which is embedded in the social, economic, and cultural capital of parents, can affect their standard of engagement. Most of the young respondents indicated that their parents are positively involved in their education, and they support them emotionally, financially, and sometimes they engage the services of private tutors to help boost their performance in school when necessary.

Key findings from existing literature highlight the importance of engaging with minority ethnic parents specifically, by firstly, recognising that there is diversity across and within minority ethnic groups. Therefore, they should not be treated as if they were homogeneous. Lloyd and Rafferty, (2006 p. 36) suggest: "*BME communities should not be viewed as a homogeneous whole. Diversity among both ethnic and cultural groups should not be overlooked.*"

Furthermore, promoting different cultures and challenging racism, have been argued to enhance parental involvement. Box *et al*. (2001, p.65), for instance, comments:

> '*Some school staff have ambivalent attitudes to race, which influences their treatment of Black and minority ethnic children and their parents* and *there is also little respect for the concerns of Black parents in particular*'.

Training for support staff to respond more confidently to minority ethnic families they advocate should be established. Addressing barriers to parental engagement such as language problems, accessibility of services and empowering parents by involving them at every stage of the decision-making process, could increase the level of parental engagement (see, for example, Bell *et al.* 2005; William and Churchill 2006).

In Chapter Three, an in-depth discussion regarding parental involvement has been presented. The impact of positive parental involvement has been recognised to be significantly crucial in influencing the educational experience and academic achievement of young people.

Obviously, many minority ethnic parents want to support their children, but sometimes they find it difficult to understand or integrate into the system due to their level of knowledge, social networks, and their economic capital. In Chapter Four, Bourdieu's Social Reproductive Theory was introduced and detailed coherently to depict that the possession of cultural capital and other forms of capital can influence parental engagement.

In the next Chapter, I briefly present and discuss the final theme that emerged from this current study. This is a report about participant's perception regarding the issue of whom the burden of educational responsibility finally rests. Opinions however, were very much polarized regarding this matter.

Chapter Nine- Findings: Ghanaians' Perception of the Burden Educational Responsibility

'Educational accountability is a shared responsibility between schools, families, and other parts of the community to ensure that all children are encouraged and supported through the educational process' (Comer, 1993 p. 47)

9.1 Introduction

This Chapter follows on from the previous Chapters, which outline the factors that are internal and external to the school system, and can influence educational experience, and academic outcome of the young people. The previous Chapter revealed that the existence of positive role models and positive parental participation have a direct correlation with educational experience and outcome. In eliciting the perspectives of the respondents regarding the elements that may influence the educational experience and academic attainment of the young people, it was relevant as part of this study to explore participants opinions regarding educational responsibility. In order to ascertain a broader understanding regarding the phenomenon under study, I found it very prudent to explore the perspectives of the participants even further by probing and enquiring into what I think is very critical for this study. This topic is regarding the burden of educational responsibility, that is who should be held responsible the young people's education? In this Chapter therefore, I present the findings and discussions on their perspectives regarding the burden of educational responsibility.

There are few controversies surrounding who should be responsible for the education of young persons. In England, schools are primarily held responsible in ensuring their pupils/students make progress against the standards set by the Department for Education. The performance of teachers is therefore measured against the standards set by the school and their ability to raise attainments. Hence, the formation of school performance league

tables. However, prior to the introduction of league tables of schools based upon exam or test performance, the LEA Advisory staff and the HMI, (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education) were given the responsibility of ensuring high standards of education across board. In recent years, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), have been held accountable for LA (Local Authority) schools. The emergence of academies has meant businesses are playing active roles in specific schools and they are held accountable to the success of the schools involved.

Educational responsibility is a complex and challenging concept, which makes it cumbersome to decide whom to place the burden of responsibility. Reflecting on my own experience as a primary school teacher, part of my role requires me to empower and encourage pupils/students in my care to take control and be responsible for their learning. Being curios, I thought it would be a fantastic opportunity to inquire of the participants who in their opinion, is responsible for their education. It is important to highlight at this stage that including comments regarding the issue of the burden of educational responsibility could facilitate my recommendations for further studies and implications for policy. In addition, it is worthwhile to mention that highlighting the burden of educational responsibility in this current study is hoped to make a valuable contribution to existing knowledge. In the succeeding sections, I present the findings from two perspectives, the young people and the adults.

9.2 Young People's Perception of the Burden Educational Responsibility

When questioned who is ultimately responsible for the education of the young people, opinions were highly polarized but the majority, (12 out of the 18 young respondents), responded it was their parents' responsibility.

Two individuals also thought it was the sole responsibility of either the pupil or the government. Whereas the remaining four mentioned it is a collective responsibility of (A) either the parent and pupil; (B) parent, school and pupil; (C) parent, government, pupil and the school. Two related questions were asked depending on the participant, one for the

adults and the other for the young people. In the next section, I present the views of the young people regarding whom to place the burden of educational responsibility.

9.2.1 Parental responsibility

The question to the young people was very direct. *Researcher: Ultimately, who do you think is responsible for your education?*

> *Ama (pupil): My parents because it's their job to look after me, and they need to make sure I am doing well in school.*
>
> Louise (pupil): *My parents, teachers, and the government is to ensure there are good teachers and everything is ok.*
>
> *Hailey (pupil): My parents because right from the beginning, they encouraged me to do well so I feel they have a lot of influence on my education*
>
> *Paula (student): It is your parents who instil the values of education.*

This group of young people have deliberated the burden of educational responsibility rests upon their parents.

9.2.2 Responsibility of the pupil

The following respondents revealed they are responsible for their education and they must be held accountable.

> *Davey (student): It's me because there will be no one to blame at the end of the day. However, at the GCSE level, the teachers have a massive say in your education because they decide what you can do.*
>
> *Kuku (pupil): It's myself.*
>
> *Bekka (pupil): It's me because I can decide to do well or bad. My parents can strive me to do well, but it's my choice to do it or not.*
>
> *Mani (pupil): Myself because if I don't do well, I am to be blamed.*

9.2.3 Collective responsibility

Disclosing that the burden of responsibility is collective, KB, Kami and Manuela shared their thoughts:

> *KB (student): I think people might think it's the individual's responsibility, but I think it's a collective responsibility of everyone from teachers to parents as they can help you to achieve your goals in life.*
>
> *Kami (pupil): I think it's between my schools and me. I am supposed to make the best out of my education and the school is supposed to give me a chance.*
>
> *Manuela (pupil): I think it's me, my parents and the teachers because I have to work harder but my teachers and parents have to encourage me to do well.*

9.2.4 Teacher/school responsibility

Remarking that his teachers and school are responsible for his education, and the only participant with this viewpoint:

> *Dick (pupil)explains: I think it's my teachers, that is why the college must try very hard to recruit very good teachers.*

Although opinions were polarized about educational responsibility, I have been overwhelmed by the fact that the most popular viewpoint amongst the young people was split between their parents and the young people themselves. Even when they have emphasised that it is a collective responsibility, they clearly explained it is between them and either their parents, school or government but they should be held responsible for their educational success or failure. Four of the young people noted it is the sole responsibility of the pupil.

Astonishingly, all of the young people who argued the burden of educational responsibility rests upon the pupil, had part of their education in Ghana. They emigrated from a culture that valued education but placed educational responsibility on the pupils/students. In Ghana, children assume liability for their individual learning, for instance through

memorisation in conventional teacher-fronted institutions. The educational system in Ghana is such that, children are held accountable for their academic success or failure. Drawing on the comments by the young people, clearly, it is evidenced that the young people, who shared this opinion, transported this ideology from Ghana and therefore, their cultural values largely played a massive role in motivating their perception of their educational responsibility in England.

As I mentioned earlier, previous studies, specifically buttressing the argument that young people are responsible for their own education is very limited. However, Sewell, (1997, 2000, 2015) claims that Black pupils/students, especially boys have no interest in educational activities, but are rather interested in money and consumer goods which are more harmful to their academic success. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) suggest that, Black pupils/students continually underperform due to their adoption of a culture opposition of acting White. They revealed that some Black pupils/students perceive a good educational attainment as being 'White,' which can be described as being disloyal to their own culture. This outlook however, completely contradicts the viewpoint of Sewell, who suggests that Black students act 'Black' by rejecting the values and norms of a good education system.

The findings of Fordham and Ogbu provide a useful insight into the differences between educational experiences and academic outcomes amongst Black pupils/students. Their study focused on a predominantly Black Washington high school and they report:

> *'Negative peer pressure causes many Black students to perform below the level that standardized test scores indicate they should. Such students, they say, do not put forth the necessary effort and perseverance in their schoolwork and, consequently, do poorly in school. Excelling in an arena seen as dominated by White values and expectations puts Black students in jeopardy of being accused of acting White' (p. 187).*

Page (2005), in agreement with Sewell, Fordham, and Ogbu addresses the issue of peer pressure and academic achievement. She mentions that in America, African-Americans go through many challenges that affect their educational outcomes and the persistent peer

pressure culture of sometimes acting White is a contributory factor to the Black/White achievement gap in schools. However, I cannot stress enough that the viewpoints of Sewell, Fordham, Ogbu, and Page on the bases of the evidence from the young people are speculative and negates that of the young people who contended that they are responsible for their education and they take their education very seriously.

9.3 Adults' Perception of Educational Responsibility

Moving on to the perspectives of the adults regarding the issue of the burden of educational responsibility, the question posed to the adults was slightly different but very much interrelated to that of the young people. Similar to the standpoints of the young people, the opinions of the adult respondents regarding whom the onus of responsibility lies have been clearly polarized between different stakeholders and the sole responsibility of the parent.

Researcher: In your opinion, who do you think is ultimately responsible for the education of your child/ren?

Ella, Sienna and Alex express their opinions and they universally agreed that the burden of educational responsibility is collective. Their thoughts about a collective responsibility are below. They emphasised that key stakeholders such the parents, community, and the government are collectively responsible for the education of young people.

9.3.1 Collective responsibility

Ella (parent): The parent, teacher, and government should work together.

Sienna (teacher): I think it is the responsibility of the society and parents but the government will have to be involved because they should put measures in place to enable the young people to have something to do especially if they are not academically inclined. I also think the society should have that right to tell a child off when appropriate. In our communities, everyone minds their own business so if a child is on the streets, no one can approach them therefore they tend to do anything they want.

Alex (Community leader): I would say that of course it is the government in conjunction with the parents. The system should really look after us. The child's education is the responsibility of the government and they are to ensure the right measures are put in place so that children can develop equally as well as supporting parents. I think what is happening now is that too much emphasis is been placed on the underachievement of the children and they are not integrating. The needs of the parents as to how they can support their children at home to develop is not taken into consideration. I don't think the government is doing enough in the sense that, when you look at certain communities that are deprived, access to libraries and other facilities are non-existence. Therefore, if you have to use libraries in certain communities, you have to travel to town, which can be difficult for a child in the sense that if a child wants to study and the home condition is not conducive, that child will have to travel. Also, most of our people live in shared accommodations, which make it difficult for kids to study.

9.3.2 Parental responsibility

Another group of adults had a different perspective about who is ultimately responsible for the education of their children. Precisely, they narrated it is their responsibility to ensure their children succeeds in school. Lynn, Ed, Sammy and Wisdom reveals:

Lynn (parent): I think the primary responsibility should lie with parents. They need to provide guidance for the children but the school also play a major role. As they provide them with the education, parents should be able to challenge the school where necessary and they need to be actively involved in their children's education, scrutinizing their books, and asking questions during parent's evenings.

Ed (parent): The responsibility lies with the parents because education is like a supermarket. You should know what you want to buy before you get in to a supermarket not after getting there.

Sammy (Teacher): I think it is the responsibility of the parents. The parents also should look at the interests of their children so that they can support them in that respect. The Asians are doing well because they invest in the education of their children compared with Black parents.

Wisdom: (Community leader): The parents should be held responsible but most of the African parents do not show much interest. For instance, I have organised Saturday schools for only £10 for 3 hours but about 80% of the parents are not sending their children. I have about 400 people in the church and when you go, you can't even see 20 children there. This tells you where the parents place their priorities.

The adults, comprising parents, teachers and community leaders unanimously agreed that the education of a young person is principally the responsibility of parents. When they have expressed it is a collective responsibility, the parents have been cited on all occasions. However, some of the adults have highlighted that the government and schools must put systems in place to enable young people to have quality education irrespective of their socio-economic background. To my surprise, the adults involved in this study did not recognise the young people themselves have a role to play in ensuring a successful educational experience and outcome. This is contrary to some of the perspectives of the young people, who mentioned that they have a responsibility and they must take ownership of their learning. The adults, including the teachers, not coming into terms with the fact that young people have a responsibility, has put me in a shocking state in that it is evident the adults who are key stakeholders, do not empower, nurture and encourage the young people in their care to take control of their educational experiences and achievement. This is an area in my opinion that can be probed and developed for further studies.

In the previous Chapter, I emphasised that parental engagement and participation does have a positive impact on educational experience and academic achievement. The DfE (2015), in a statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police, explicitly states school attendance is a parental legal responsibility. The consequences, which includes fines and jail sentences merited to parents who do not ensure their child/children turn up for school is highlighted in the report. Conversely, the report did not factor into account, the responsibility of parents to provide guidance, support, and instil the values of education in their children as some of the participants narrate. There is limited literature to corroborate the views of the adults, placing the burden of educational

responsibility on parents. Nevertheless, some previous studies indicate there is a positive correlation between parental involvement and educational experience and outcome. For instance, Fan and Chen (2001), suggest there is the possibility of parents to impart exemplary positive attitudes and behaviours towards their children. It is evident that parental involvement can contribute to youth academic outcome (see also Jeynes, 2003, 2007; Houtenville and Conway, 2008). It is likely that children will perform better in school when their parents are involved, show an interest in their schoolwork, willingly support their children with homework, and they can hold their children accountable for any completed schoolwork.

Young people may place value on their schooling and actively engage with their schoolwork when their parents show a keen interest in their education. Larocque, Kleiman and Darling, (2011 p. 116), note "*family involvement can be defined as the parents' or caregivers' investment in the education of their children.*" Parental support as mentioned in Chapter Three, can take different forms, either socially, emotionally, financially and much more.

The outcome of parental involvement on academic success and cognitive development have been investigated in previous research amongst English preschool children (see, Sylva, *et al.*, 1999; Melhuish et al., 2004). It has been alleged that the quality of schools and the teachers may not only determine the educational success of young people; somewhat, the degree of parental involvement has a critical role to play in the academic achievement of their children. Young people are more probable to have higher academic attainment levels and enhanced behaviour when families are involved in their education (Bryan, 2005).

Other studies also indicate that a sustained effort of parental involvement during the period of a child's education can improve academic attainment (see, for example, Fan, 2001; Driessen, Smit and Sleegers, 2005; Hong and Ho, 2005).

According to Bergsten, 1998; Hill, 2001; Wynn, Carboni and Patall 2002, parental participation in a child's education alongside with environmental and economic factors may influence a child's progress in areas such as cognition, language, and social skills. Various

studies in this field establish the significance of family interaction and engagement in the years before starting school. Other researchers maintain that there is a strong positive correlation between parents-initiated participation practices and school outcomes (see Hess and Holloway, 1984; Hill et al. 2001; Sanders and Epstein, 2002;).

NASWUT (2011), reports that parents are to be held responsible for the bad behaviour of the children in schools. The report claims lack of parental support is a key setback behind pupils/students' lack of discipline in schools. It notes many pupils/students turn up at schools with gadgets, such as mobile phones and iPods other than the basic equipment they will require in their learning such as pens. Wisdom (community leader), backs this notion when he expresses some Black *parents have misplaced priorities when it comes to the education of their children.* Although opinions regarding the issue of educational responsibility are highly polarized, unequivocally, respondents have shown that the responsibility first of all, lies with the parents followed by the pupil and then a collective responsibility between several stakeholders. Below is a pictorial presentation of the opinions of all the 29 participants involved in this study.

The chart below is an illustration of the perceptions of the respondents regarding whom the burden of educational responsibility falls.

Burden of educational responsibility: views of all 29 participants
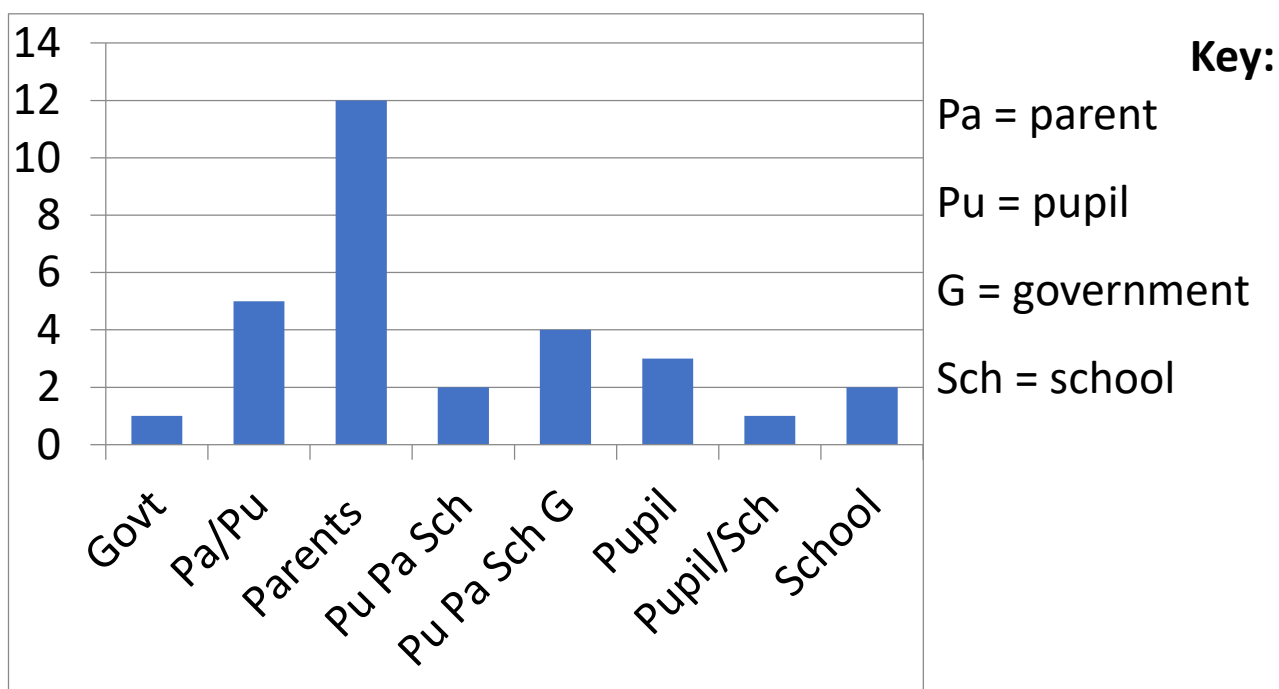
Figure 10: Respondents' Perception of the Burden of Educational Responsibility

Clearly, the bar graph depicts the burden of educational responsibility, (according to the respondents), lies upon parents. Precisely, Anna (pupil) comments: *it's the responsibility of my parents because it's their job to look after me and they need to make sure I am doing well in school.*

Another group of participants reveal, without a doubt that the burden of educational responsibility lies with either the pupil, parent and pupil, or the government. Alex (community leader) expresses his concerns by echoing: *the burden of responsibility lies with the government in conjunction with the parents.* He indicated that the system should really be looking after all of us. He believes that the burden of educational responsibility should be that of the government's as the government is to ensure that the right measures are put in place so that children can develop. Equally, he echoes parents should also be supported, so that they can intend get involved in the education of their children. He narrates:

> *What is happening now is that they are neglecting the needs of the parents as to how they can support their children at home. I don't think the government is doing enough in the sense that when you look at*

207

certain communities, they are deprived. Access to libraries and other facilities are non-existence really, so if you have to use libraries in certain communities, you have to travel further away from home, which can be difficult sometimes.

9.4 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have enumerated the findings with respect to the participants' perception of who should bear the burden of educational responsibility. The most widely held view was that parents are responsible for the educational success of their children and it is essential to encourage them to support and participate in the education of their children. Even though the DfE, in collaboration with OFSTED, Local Authorities and businesses in the case of Academies, are accountable for ensuring schools provide quality education, the least popular viewpoint was that of the government being responsible for the education of young people.

Contrary to the most widely held view in this study, other scholars however, feel it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the delivery of quality education. For example, Frith (2005) comments that the government's proposed educational reforms have rather thrived in extending inequalities in education and society by maintaining competition between schools, clutching creative space out of the curriculum and turning away generations of children from learning. Sivanandan, (1976, p. 358) reinforces this viewpoint and he mentions:

> *'Governments have side-tracked radical goal into a nationalist accomplishment, reduced militancy to rhetoric, put dispute to profit, and above all, kept a Black under-class from conveying to the struggles of the white workers, political dimensions peculiar to its own momentous battle contrary to capital.'*

Earlier in the Chapter, I suggested that there is limited literature surrounding educational responsibility generally, and the burden of responsibility has largely been placed on schools, and they are to ensure that their pupils/students perform within or above the standards set by the government. However, the majority of the participants have argued that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children achieve in school. In order for parents to take up this responsibility, schools need to work in close partnership with them by engaging

them in various roles within and outside school. Parents can also be encouraged to participate in the education of their children by highlighting the benefits of parental participation to them.

In the previous Chapter, I noted key findings from existing literature, highlights the importance of engaging with minority ethnic parents specifically, by firstly recognising that there is diversity across and within minority ethnic communities, and therefore they should not be treated as if they were homogeneous.

Furthermore, as I discussed in Chapter Eight, promoting different cultures, and challenging racism, have been argued to enhance parental involvement. Box *et al.* (2001 p. 6), for instance, comments:

> *'Some school staff have "ambivalent attitudes to race, which influences their treatment of Black and minority ethnic children and their parents and there is also little respect for the concerns of Black parents in particular. Training for support staff to respond more confidently to minority ethnic families they advocate, should be established.'*

Addressing barriers to parental engagement such as language problems, accessibility of services and empowering parents by involving them at every stage of the decision-making process, could increase the level of parental engagement (see for example Bell *et al* 2004; William and Churchill 2006).

Following on from this Chapter is the next and final Chapter, where I conclude this thesis by recapping on the key issues discussed and the findings presented. The likely contribution of this thesis to knowledge, the theoretical frameworks adopted, the implications to policy and finally, recommendations for future and further research are detailed below.

Chapter Ten - Thesis Conclusion

'Qualitative researchers seek to uncover multiple realities and the research embodies a unique approach that can help researchers answer wicked questions about human action and experience' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013 p. 16).

10.1 Introduction

The objective of this Chapter is to deliberate upon how the research questions asked in the earliest Chapters have been answered in view of existing literature, and the contribution this study makes to knowledge. The sections within this Chapter have been categorised into seven sub-sections. I start this Chapter by re-capping my personal reflections and the purpose of this study. Secondly, a summary of the key findings from this study will be presented. In the next section, I evaluate the various theories I have used and their contribution to this thesis and it findings. The fourth sub-section will discuss the contribution the current study has made to existing knowledge in general and specifically to the field of Race, Ethnicity, and Education. From then on, the benefits and limitations of researching into hard to reach communities will be discussed. The next sub-section will highlight and discuss what I have personally gained from this study and what the implications for policy and further studies are. Ultimately, this Chapter presents suggestions and recommendations for the furtherance of future research.

I established in Chapter Five that it was incumbent to engage with all the participants in a variety of contexts, in order to obtain the best possible data for this current study, because the participants interpreted their own situation and experiences in different ways. The data collected facilitated in my understanding of the participants' perceptions of the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin. For the purpose of this study, the perceptions of four different groups have been explored and the data obtained has given a range of outlooks. The factors informing the research process implemented in this study was to guarantee a careful representation of my target group's perception. The participants involved in this study are young people, teachers, parents, and community leaders. This study did not involve any educational establishment. The data obtained for the purposes of

this study has been gathered from spaces such as libraries, church premises and the homes of the participants. A key significance of this study is the fundamental theories that I used to frame this study to understand the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin. I began with the issues that have been recurrent in the literature, which addresses the challenges they are facing in their education. I have drawn from issues such as racial stereotyping, parental participation, and peer pressure, which may influence educational experience and academic achievement.

10.2 Recapitulation of Personal Reflections and Purpose of Study

According to a report by Holcroft-Emmess (2016) to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, "Black and minority ethnic communities in Britain still face "entrenched" race inequality in many areas, including employment, housing and health." The report suggests:

> *'The life chances of young people from a minority ethnic background have become much worse over the past five years and are at the most challenging for generations. Since 2010, there has been a 49% increase in the number of 16-to-24-year-olds across the UK from minority ethnic communities who are long-term unemployed, compared with a fall of 2% for White people' (p. 1).*

The primary aim of this study has been to explore and examine the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin between the ages of fifteen to nineteen. The rationale was to discover how these young people and key stakeholders involved in their education-parents, teachers and community leaders perceived and felt about the quality of education they are receiving in schools and how in their opinions their educational experiences may have influenced their academic outcome. In Chapter One, I set out my motivation for undertaking this study emanated from my personal experiences as a teacher and coming from a minority ethnic background. The challenges I face within society, sometimes observing how Black pupils/students underachieve in schools, and my experience as a parent finding unacceptable the treatment, and expectations of Black pupils/students in my son's school, have been the principal drive behind this study. Equally important, the manner in which achievement tables have been presented over the past three decades cannot be

left uncriticised. Achievement tables have often homogenised the achievement of Black Africans, which (until the last couple of years), is often below the National average, making it cumbersome to identify which groups within that category are underperforming so that the necessary provisions can be put in place to support them. Hence, the rationale for focusing on Ghanaians, a sub-group within the category of Black Africans.

A report by UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to the UK government (2011), states there are high rates of exclusion and underachievement amongst Blacks in schools. Recommendations have been made to the UK government to take drastic steps to tackle this social issue as confirmed by the Inequality Audit Report, 2017.

Education academics advocating for anti-racist education in schools, such as Gaine (2005); Gillborn, (2007); Rollock (2007); Cole (2009, 2016, 2017); Maylor *et al.* (2009); Mirza, (2014); Tomlinson 2017 maintain that institutional racism has infiltrated the English educational system through the actions of teachers either wittingly or unwittingly, resulting in the underachievement of many minority ethnic pupils/students including Black Africans. The issue of cultural capital and social class playing a contributory factor to the achievement of minority ethnic communities have also been highlighted by other scholars such as Bourdieu, Passeron (1977); Hill, (2001); Hill, Cole and Waller (2001); Kelsh and Hill (2006); Hill (2008); Hill, (2009).

During the period between 2013 and 2017 in which this present study has been conducted, no study at the time had highlighted the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin specifically, across England. Many studies about Black Africans have centred on the education of African Caribbeans and outcomes have often been generalised for Black Africans as well. An attempt therefore has been made by the current study to answer the following research question: What are Ghanains perception regarding their experiences of the British education system? The following are the sub questions:

1. What are pupils/students', parents' and teachers' views regarding the extent to which the principle of non-discrimination as part of their rights as young people is promoted in schools?

2. What factors may affect their educational experiences and thereby, academic achievement in school?

3. To what extent are pupils/students and parents involved in the decision-making regarding their education and the degree to which their views are taken into account?

4. What are pupils/students' parents', community leaders and teachers' views regarding how they and schools can enhance Ghanaians' educational experiences and subsequently attainment levels?

10.3 The key findings

In concluding this current study, it is significant to uncover the factors that may influence the educational experience and thereby academic achievement of the young people. These factors may be internal or external to the school system. The framework of this study has been designed to elicit and understand the educational experiences and perspectives of Ghanaians who are teenagers, teachers, parents, and community leaders as highlighted in previous Chapters. Participants involved in this study were of Ghanaian origin and resided in towns and cities across England from various social class backgrounds and educational establishments. The snowball sampling effect was crucial in creating a group of participants of suitable numbers. The evidence was centred on an empirical study, in seeking to theorise and explain the multi-faceted outcomes. The key findings are outlined in sections 10.3.1 - 10.3.4 below.

10.3.1 The impact of school and teacher/pupil relationships

According to The London Development Agency Education Commission (2003), low teacher expectations play a contributory role in the underachievement of African Caribbean pupils/students. The report highlights that, Black pupils/students complained of positive teacher attention being inadequate, behaviour management systems were unfair, they were being watched at break times with suspicion, they were subject to negative stereotyping and they feel they were just disliked simply because they were Blacks (see for example, Firth 2005).

Similarly, the results of this study indicate that although the relationship between the young people, teachers, and school can be positive, in the majority of cases however, experiences have been negative. The young respondents described how issues such as discrimination and the stereotypical attitudes of teachers, including low teacher expectations and schools influenced the way they are perceived due to their racial backgrounds. Many of their teachers they recall, have very low expectations of them as Ghanaians and they are consequently registered to sit for lower tier exams at GCSE levels. A considerable number of participants reported they would not want to be seen to be in groups with their peers who are Ghanaians or Blacks by their teachers, as this can result in a devastating consequence on their academic achievement. They had to use many strategies to combat the many challenges they face. The parents echo the viewpoints of the young people by indicating that due to the negative stereotyping that their children face in schools, they have guided their children by giving them emotional and academic support to boost their self-confidence. Black children, no less than White children, are bright, driven and aspire to achieve high for themselves and their families (Gillborn, 2007). However, these qualities do not guarantee success for Black children, including Ghanaians in schools, hence, the high incidence of low achievers amongst Black minority ethnic pupils/students. Schools are very crucial places that may affect how one can be confident about their gender and can go a long way to influence how well they perform academically. For Black boys in particular, it is an

important environment for 'masculine identity development' (Davis, 2001, cited in Ross and Stevenson, 2015).

On the issue of equal opportunity, four of the young people agreed equal opportunities are promoted in schools largely. Nevertheless, the remaining fourteen recounted they felt other people from different backgrounds are given more opportunities than them and this perspective is similar to Healey (2004 p. 437), who narrates:

> *'Discrimination and racial inequality are deep-rooted and consequential in our society and therefore we must critically understand the assumptions, structures, and institutions that form the lives and experiences of minority groups.'*

The interview data gathered for this study suggests that several factors have led to educational inequalities within various educational establishments, which have affected the education of pupils/students from diverse ethnic groups, including Ghanaians, and this is consistent with existing literature. Griffin, (2008 p. 13) comments:

> *'It is crucial to recognise that equal opportunity is a problem faced by our society today, despite many attempts to improve and resolve this social issue. Social inequalities are deeply rooted and it cannot be disputed that some people have fewer or more restricted, opportunities to achieve and flourish than other people do. This is because both children and adults have opportunities restricted to them in our society because of discrimination and prejudice, stereotyping and failing to treat people as individuals.'*

The perspective of the participants regarding discrimination and unequal opportunities have been a compelling emergent theme in this thesis.

10.3.2 The Influence of other Internal School Factors

In this study, I have indicated that there are several other internal school factors that may influence educational experience and subsequently academic achievement. The 1989 Children's Act allows children to be consulted and be involved at all levels in the decision-making processes of matters that may affect them directly. The UK government in 2001 established the Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU) and endorsed for children and young people to participate and impact governmental departments across the board, including education.

However, it is clear from this study that, there is far less participation of young people in their own education. The decisions exclusively lie in the hands of teachers. Neither the parents nor the young people themselves can extensively engage in decisions (Richardson, 2007). As I mentioned earlier, the lack of participation by the young people is not an issue faced exclusively by Black pupils/students, particularly Ghanaians. It is crucial to highlight that the lack of participation can be true for most young people from different backgrounds, including Whites. The voices of young people are hardly adhered to in the UK, and this is a cultural issue. The proverbs cited earlier in Chapter Seven, corroborates this assertion. Hart (1997), comments children can develop an unpretentious gratitude of democracy and a sense of their ability and responsibility to participate through direct participation. Lack of young people involvement in making decisions regarding issues affecting them, can result in a strain on pupil/teacher relationships.

Many scholars advocate for young people to be involved when making decisions involving them, even in the early stages of their lives (see for example, Fielding, 2004; Smyth, 2006; Waller, 2014). Young people have nearly always played passive roles in their education in the state education system in England. Engaging them would yield the benefit of them growing to be confident and taking

ownership of their learning, which may result in positive educational experience and academic outcome.

This study has examined the internal factors that may influence educational experience and consequently, academic outcome. Peer pressure has been identified to play a contributing role in influencing educational experiences and academic achievement. The majority of the young people claimed that peer pressure as an internal school factor, might affect their experience negatively, which can also affect academic achievement (Sewell, 2003, 2007).

Hessari and Hill, (1989) among other commentators such as Gaine, (2000, 2008); Gillborn and Youdell, (2009), describe the English curriculum as Eurocentric. They argue that several attempts by successive governments to create reforms in an already "*shell shocked system*" have failed. They commented that a series of reforms have rather regularised a national system of testing linked to a compulsory and an overwhelming Eurocentric curriculum which has further led to the divisive consequence of an educational system that already functions in racialised ways that underprivileged many minority pupils/students. This argument is widely represented and illustrated in the anecdotes of the participants. They argued sometimes they are made to feel they are in Rome, so they should do what the Romans do.

10.3.3 The Impact of External School Factors

In exploring the factors that may affect educational experience, I found it prudent to consider the factors that are external to the school system. Subsequently, through this study, I have revealed that role models and parental involvement influence educational experience. The perspectives in the study support the assertion that the existence of positive role models is crucial in influencing educational experience. It means young people can have someone to look up to for inspiration rather than their peers. However, this study revealed that many young people in our Black communities lack role models. Johnson (2016), comments there

is the need for African Americans to have role models within their community. He explains that many Black communities lack role models, especially young people without father figures. Their peers influence their aspirations, and they end up aspiring to be athletes and musicians. Hence, the need for creating a pool of role models within the community to be hands on, having partnerships with schools and colleges so that they can make maximum impact in the lives of young people.

To create the awareness of the impact of positive role models on educational experience and academic outcome, the findings have shown that schools ought to work very closely with parents by actively engaging and forming a closer relationship with them. Many parents find it difficult to engage with schools and teachers. The study has also disclosed that many Black parents are concerned that they are faced with further barriers, including teacher perception and stereotyping of Black families and feel reluctant to get engaged with schools (Topor, Keane, Shelton and Calkins, 2010).

This study has suggested that the education of young people will be much more effective, and outcomes will be more positive and encouraging when schools and parents work together in close partnership. One major outcome of this study has been to highlight that the acquisition of the various forms of capital can influence the degree of parental involvement. The majority of the young respondents in this study indicated that their parents are positively involved in their education, they supported them emotionally and financially. Three of the young people highlighted that sometimes their parents engage the services of private tutors to help boost their attainment in school whenever necessary as a result of their social class and the level of their parents' education.

10.3.4 Burden of Educational Responsibility

There are many stakeholders involved in the education of a young person and previous discussions have surrounded who should ultimately be responsible for the education of a young person. The findings from this study have led me to develop a framework, which defines who should be educationally responsible: The Burden of Educational Responsibility. In examining who should be held responsible for the education of a young person, the most widely held view among the respondents in this study regarding the burden of educational responsibility was that, parents should be held responsible for the educational success or failure of their children and it is essential to encourage them to support and participate in the education of their children. In the UK, the DfE and Local Authorities, in collaboration with OFSTED are accountable for ensuring schools provide quality and equitable education. The government being responsible for the education of young people, however, was the least popular viewpoint in this study. Most of the adult participants were aware of the structures and aims of the national and local government but the perspective that parents were responsible for their children's education was the most popular viewpoint held regarding this subject.

Many of the participants noted it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children achieve in school. For parents to take up this responsibility, schools and teachers need to work in close partnership with them by engaging them in various roles within and outside school. Parents can also be encouraged to participate in the education of their children by highlighting the benefits to them.

Key findings from existing literature highlights the importance of engaging with minority ethnic parents specifically, by firstly recognising that there is diversity across and within minority ethnic communities, and therefore they should not be treated as if they are a homogeneous group. Lloyd and Rafferty, (2006 p. 36) suggest: "*BME communities should not be viewed as a homogeneous whole. Diversity among both ethnic and cultural groups should not be overlooked.*"

As I revealed in Chapter Eight, different cultures have varying approaches to education, and parents taking up a leading role may be an unfamiliar practice to many parents from some minority ethnic backgrounds and thereby must be encouraged.

10.4 Justification of theoretical framework

Choosing the most suitable utility for any study is indeed a cumbersome task and at times frustrating as it can significantly impact on the entire study, and this current study is no exception. Reflecting on my personal journey, I was challenged by several existing frameworks that could have well been suitable for this current study. Nonetheless, I had to reject these frameworks although they had some relevance to study. I considered them to have limited utility in explaining the educational experiences of Ghanaian teenagers living in England. Undeniably, this was quite a pessimistic period for me. In the preceding sub-sections I presented a personal reflection of the rationale behind the frameworks I thought had inadequate value in this study, which I originally presented in Chapter Four. These are Post-Colonial Theory, Cultural Deficit Theory, Marxist Theory and Intersectionality.

10.4.1 Post-Colonial Theory

As outlined in Chapter Four, Post-Colonial theory is a framework or lens that analyses life after a foreign rule. This theory comprises a set of critical and theoretical approaches, which are used to examine literature, culture, politics and history of former colonies and also of the colonising states. Principally, Post-Colonial Theory was considered to be of limited utility in this study and an in-depth overview of the rationale behind culling this framework was outlined in Chapter Four.

I previously commented that Post-Colonialism as a critical theory focuses on experiences based on colonial rule from the perspective of the colonised society. Post-Colonialism theory is often concerned about issues relating to the national culture after the departure of the imperial power (Sawant, 2012).

Post-Colonial theory was not deemed a suitable framework because it is argued that Post-Colonial theories largely seeks to unveil and discover the effects of colonisation on the colonised, although in some limited cases it strives to unravel issues affecting residents as a result of colonisation such as violence and anarchy among natives (see for example Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2003; Go, 2013).

With respect to literature, Post-Colonial theory deals with literature about the colonised in colonised countries. It aims to scrutinize and criticise the limitations of literary analysis by highlighting the interest of the colonised and the cataclysmic impact of the dominant colonising culture on the colonised by revealing the colonial ideologies that are concealed within literary texts (see Achebe, 1977).

Reflecting on my rationale and relating it to the voices emanating from this study, I must admit that one emergent theme was consistent with the principles of Post-Colonial Theory. This theme relates to the issue of Eurocentric nature of the English curriculum. Participants' comments and aspects of the literature revealed that the National Curriculum is Eurocentric, biased, and non-diverse and this creates problems of cultural identity as sometimes-young people are torn between being Africans or Europeans. It was evident that a series of reforms have rather regularised a national system of testing linked to a compulsory and an overwhelming Eurocentric curriculum which has further led to the divisive consequence of an educational system that already functioned in racialised ways, that underprivileged many minority pupils/students.

The lack of diversity within, and the Eurocentric nature of the English Curriculum conform to that of various controversies in the academic world in that it is suggested that the type of books being used in schools are largely written by White authors. Excluding other cultures in the curriculum results in blindness to other viewpoints, and a sweeping dismissal of the huge amounts of thought infuriating work created during the course of history by non-White academics and scholars. Maylor (2007), suggests that the time allocated to teach history in schools is vastly focused on European societies and culture. When there is, a reference

made to Africa or Asia, attention is given to how the Europeans exploited, interacted, and changed those societies.

Although the subject of Eurocentric nature of the Curriculum demonstrates a distinct feature of Post-Colonial framework, its utilisation was not complete in this study due to the reasons outlined below.

First, the broader emergent issues and position did not surround issues consistent with the ideologies of Post-Colonial Theory in its entirety. For instance, Post-Colonial Theory could not offer a justification as to why the young people in this study were faced with issues, which influenced their educational experiences such as the lack of participation in decision making, the negative relationships which sometimes exists between their schools/teachers and them and the lack of role models and peer pressure influence.

Hence, the rationale for utilising Critical Race Theory in this current study, which had a wider viewpoint throughout the study. For instance, on criticising the Eurocentricity of the curriculum, advocators of CRT argue for diversity in education and suggest that educational institutions uphold dominant and subordinate positions within the school setting. They argue that the experiences of many minority groups are often silenced by a dominant group. CRT questions why some people are more privileged than others are, and they have their voices heard compared to marginalised groups (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002).

10.4.2 Cultural Deficit Theory

Similarly, in framing this current study, I concluded that Cultural Deficit Theory had limited utility in explaining the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin. The rationale behind the rejection is that, right from the onset, this framework condemns minority pupils/students accusing them of having their educational experiences being shaped by their dysfunctional homes and family backgrounds.

As I commented in Chapter Four, Cultural Deficit Theory is the belief that poor attainment and underachievement of Blacks are generally attributed by the pupils/students' or students' socio-economic background and family status. Principally, Cultural Deficit Theorists focuses

on the idea of 'nature verses nurture' and criticise the child's social, cultural and economic background as being deprived of the ingredients needed to succeed academically.

Cultural Deficit Model perceives that members of a minority group have contrasting attributes because their culture is deficient in comparison with the majority group. It is the assertion that racial and minority ethnic groups underperform academically compared to their White peers due to their dysfunctional family culture and the lack of other essential characteristics (see for example Salkind, 2008).

Studies that focus on Cultural Deficit Theory as a framework blames student themselves for their lack of educational success by hooking on and referring to negative stereotypes that are often associated with minority groups. Schools are therefore rarely held accountable. As suggested by Irizarry (2009) and commented on in Chapter Four, '*schools are absolved from their responsibilities to educate appropriately, and this charge is shifted almost entirely to students and families.*'

Additionally, Cultural Deficit model fails to notice or recognise the core values of a traditional home life and therefore causes harm to pupils/students and the community. Students are harmed through the alienation of their culture rather than bridging the gaps within the community. Schools and educators should embrace other cultures as a principal space for enquiry rather than criticising them.

Refusing to accept Cultural Deficit Theory as a suitable framework has been justified by the emergent themes in the participants' responses. None of the participants acknowledged their families or cultural backgrounds were dysfunctional, which influenced their educational experiences, thus defeating the fundamental precepts of Cultural Deficit Theory. Consequently, this theory has been branded inadequate in this current study as it has not been considered as useful in explaining the educational experiences of Ghanaian teenagers living in England. This theory could not offer adequate interpretations as to why the young people involved in this study were faced with the issues highlighted in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, which includes racial stereotyping, lack of equal opportunities and the Eurocentric Curriculum.

Finally, I personally do not consider Cultural Deficit Theory as the most suitable framework for this study for the reason that in my outlook, this model is discriminatory and deficient. The core principles of this theory do not conform to the aims of this study and does not support the answering of the research questions.

10.4.3 Marxist Theory

Taking a stance between Marxist Theory and SRT as a useful utility was one of the challenging points in my doctoral journey. The fundamental principles guiding these two frameworks were fairly interrelated and they could to a large extent be utilised as a framework to explain the educational experiences of the Ghanaian teenagers. However, I came to a difficult crossroad of choosing one framework over the other on the basis of its limitations and suitability for being the most appropriate utility.

I recognise the role of Marxist theory in explaining the different types of oppressions faced by a group of people, such as Marxists work on racism and Marxist feminists on gender, and those that exists within schools and by the educational system such as working-class pupils/students. For example, with respect to education, Marxist theory gives a detailed explanation for the underachievement in schools of the working class. According to Marxists, the role of schools in reproducing social, educational, cultural and economic inequality cannot be disregarded. Bowles and Gintis (1976) suggest that this can be described as the 'hidden curriculum' of the educational system.

Moreover, the ideology of cultural reproductions of Bourdieu and Althusser are central to Marxist theory. For Bourdieu, pupils/students (children and teenagers) bring their social class backgrounds into school, which may include language and attitude towards behaviour and learning. These attributes may be deemed suitable or unsuitable by the school depending on the social status of the child. Therefore, children and teenagers attending a comprehensive school within the catchment of a council estate may be stereotyped and labelled with their teachers having low expectations of them compared to children or teenagers who attend selective or prestigious private schools. Teachers' expectations of

the latter group are more likely to be higher as set out, in the USA by Anyon (1980) in her ground-breaking study of the hidden curricula and pedagogies of schools serving widely different socio-economic communities.

Furthermore, several neo-Marxist writings on racism provide a significant insight into rethinking the connection between race, power relations and political apparatus (see for example, Gilroy, 1987; Omi and Winant, 1994; Cole, 2016, 2017).

Conversely, despite the unique standpoint of Marxist Theory in explaining the different types of oppression faced by minorities in society and within the education system, utilising it as a suitable framework in this current study was quite limited.

First, the core premise of Marxist theory is founded on the concept of class. Marxists have always strived to struggle for the interests of the working class. Kelsh and Hill (2006) explain the significance of bringing back the concept of Marxist theory in educational research and practice. The theory has the potency to examine the structure of ownership and power in capitalist social relations. Marxist analysis of education suggests that we live in a capitalist society and economy in which the capitalists exploit workers - a category that include women and workers from minority ethnic groups. Hence, for Marxist analysts, different policies, such as those of education impact on the extents to include or empower, exclude and disempower sections of the working class, which include minority ethnic cultures.

The focal point of this current study however is not exclusive to working class pupils/students as it analyses the specific educational experiences of Ghanaian teenagers of varying socio-economic backgrounds. The underlying issues revealed in Chapters Six, Seven, Eight and Nine does not suggest that the teenagers were faced with the aforementioned challenges due to their social class. The young people themselves did not identify their social class as a barrier to a successful educational experience. Naturally, racial stereotyping does not see through a person's social class; therefore, a person from an upper-class family background may still be confronted with challenges associated with racial and ethnic discrimination.

More so, Marxists are criticised for not placing particular emphasis on the voices of and experiences of people of colour; their understanding into how racism operates within society and providing an insight into how people of colour are racialised (Delgado, 1989). As a matter of precision, Marxist theory is blamed for not giving racially minoritised groups the platform and the semantics to *'speak back about their experiences of racism and facilitate psychic preservation'* (Tate 1997, p.220). This is a means through which psychological and spiritual empowerment are sought in response to the decreasing consequences of racism (see Gilborn and Rollock, 2011).

Furthermore, most of the concerns highlighted in this study, especially those relating to racial discrimination are at the micro-institutional level of analysis, but a common feature of Marxist theory is the focus of its analysis on the macrostructural level. In relation to racism, the focus is predominantly on the role and function played by racism within and between core institutions, for instance the workplace and the government. Any adequate analysis of racism must encompass such a macrostructural conception one that highlights the dynamic yet persistent forms of class exploitation and the political suppression of people of colour. This relative absence, or underplaying, of the suppression of people of colour, limits the utilisation of Marxist Theory.

Finally, Marxists over dependence on the concept of class has excluded them from examining racial and ethnic issues, limiting them into the wider social relations (see, Parkin, 1979; Banton, 1983). In reality, a Black person coming from a middle class or an upper-class family may experience racial discrimination due to his/her colour or racial background because the first thing the victimizer identifies with, is the skin colour of the victim and not the social class. This study has demonstrated that issues such as low teacher expectation of Blacks is not predominantly dependent on their social class but their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The preconceived minds of schools and teachers regarding people of colour based on their race, far outweighs their social class, at least in the subjective responses of the participants. However, the reverse may be true for White working-class boys.

10.4.4 Intersectionality

As a framework, Intersectionality embraces the idea that classical conceptualisations of any forms of oppression, within society such as racism, xenophobia, classism, sexism and homophobia do not act autonomously and independently of each other. Rather, these forms of oppressions are interrelated, generating a system of oppression that is reflective of the intersections of various forms of discrimination.

I previously mentioned in Chapter Four that in spite of the close links between Intersectionality and the aims of this current study, intersectionality could not be considered as the most useful theory in analysing the educational experiences of the teenage Ghanaians. The rationale for rejecting intersectionality is that this study does not focus on gender analysis. In further studies, I could replicate the study by looking at experiences from a gender perspective. Therefore, the analysis of this study fails to fall within the precepts of an intersectional analysis. Fundamentally, the gender and class analysis element of this thesis were not strong as they were not pursued enough for this study to be ascribed as intersectional.

Furthermore, the themes that emerged from this study were independent of each other and there was no evidence to suggest that they were intersecting. For instance, views regarding racial stereotyping, discrimination and the possession of cultural capital were independent of each other and they were not related to class or gender.

On this basis this study draws on a synthesis between Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Pierre Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) as an analytical framework. These theoretical frameworks will now be analysed in terms of their ability in relation to analysing race, class and ethnicity and how these have affected the experiences, achievement, and performance in schools of young people of Ghanaian origin.

10.4.5 Critical Race Theory and Social Reproduction Theory

This study considers the key concepts and methodological approaches through the `lens' of CRT and SRT. It refers to the main contemporary proponents and the key characteristics of these two theories.

I have used a synthesis between CRT and SRT. CRT highlights discriminatory forms of oppression and SRT enlightens forms of oppression related to social class.

All through this thesis, I have specifically foregrounded Bourdieu's understanding of habitus and CRT, and have drawn together an understanding of both frameworks to analyse the educational experiences of Ghanaian teenagers. Within this thesis, I have presented interpretations of these frameworks and demonstrated their usefulness as analytic tools for understanding the factors, which may influence the educational experiences of young Ghanaians.

SRT has been beneficial as an analytical lens in this current study because, even though societies maintain that individuals have equal rights, the educational system can be seen to conceal, and thus legitimise in an understated way, the predictability of the distribution of powers and privileges, that are disseminated through the socially uneven allocation of school titles and degrees (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). According to Bourdieu and Passeron's social reproduction model, the education system does not automatically reflect the structure of the labour market. The cultural events and procedures – which fundamentally precede the education system – have partial significant influence on the education system. Educational institutions and schools uncritically and blatantly consent to the cultural practices of the dominant classes, while viewing students from dominated classes as possessing habitus ill-disposed to learning. Macris 2011 (p. 35). Comments:

> *'Bourdieu believes that schools do not mirror the dominant culture but are relatively autonomous institutions that are influenced both directly and indirectly by other powerful institutions. Furthermore, schools do not necessarily directly impose the dominant order but function as one part of a wider group or symbolic social institutions. While the process of social reproduction is in fact very real, it is subtle.'*

In extending and incorporating Bourdieu's model on the analysis of race and racism, I argue that a young person's social ranking does not simply depend on the availability or the acquisition of capital but critically, on his/her perceived fit within the field of what Bourdieu describes as the '*homogeneity of dispositions.*' The implication is that although the Ghanaian parents and the young people themselves may possess the legitimate forms of capital, and may also possess appropriate forms of capital and deploy it within the applicable context, the actual worth and power assigned to their capital is dependent on agents in that field, as clarified in Chapter Four.

The fundamental aim of this study has been to explore the perspectives of the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin and how race, racism, and the various forms of capital come into force to influence their experiences. In drawing together my analysis of the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin, I have been able to identify the role of racial stereotyping, discrimination, race and racism, and the possession of cultural capital in influencing educational experience and academic attainment. These factors have persistently influenced the young peoples' engagement with the educational system.

Following on from the above, I have used CRT as a critical theory and as an analytical tool to demonstrate that racism largely is still engrained in the British school system through the existence of power structures based on White privilege and supremacy, which propagates the marginalisation of Black people. By using essentialism, I have focused on the experiences of a category (race) to the experience of one sub-group, (young people of Ghanaian origin). People who are under oppression share a common experience of oppression, however that oppression may vary by gender, race, class and other presenting characteristics.

The data from this study suggests that the young people have experienced subtle form of micro-aggressions such as institutional racism and racial stereotyping as a minority ethnic group. The achievement data discussed in Chapter Three, depicts all Black Africans are the same, hence, trying to diminish the persistent discrimination against this group and denying any forms of bias between them as a minority ethnic group and the dominant culture. Micro-aggressions refer to any forms of racism either overt or covert that may be inherited from a cultural heritage. Also, the data reveals the assumption that Blacks are underachievers is an internalised form of racial oppression, as some Black pupils/students may begin to accept the ideology that they cannot succeed academically and may not thrive to give their best. Although CRT has been instrumental in the understanding of the prevalence of racism within society, one of the criticisms levelled against CRT is that, it '*views racism as so powerful and deeply entrenched that the perspective effectively breeds hopelessness*' (Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent, and Ball 2015).

CRT has indeed added value to the views of previous anti-racist scholars, who have framed the relationship between the British educational system and Black pupils/students and how these have been translated into policy statements and provisions as early as the 1960s. CRT has also added to the outlooks of various scholars, who have challenged the prevalence of social injustices within the society, such as race, which causes inequalities. Cole, Hill, and Waller, 2001 comment:

> *'The strength of anti-racist education is that it requires teachers and teacher educators to engage in critical education to question their own practice and that of their schools, with a commitment to working within a morality of social justice and an egalitarianism and a concomitant determination to raise issues of for example, racism within the classroom, school, and society'* (See also, Toyna, 1995; Hatcher, 1996; Gaine, 2000).

The Parekh report (2000) recommends that the government and other stakeholders should jointly draw up legislation to address the issues surrounding race, equality, and cultural diversity. This was to be realised by building a human rights culture. It also recommended for targets to be set to reduce the number of exclusions experienced by pupils/students of

specific ethnic backgrounds. This is an indication that after seventeen years of publishing Parekh's report, as indicated for example in the 2017 Inequality Audit Report, there are still concerns regarding the issues of race, discrimination, and social inequality.

From the above discussions and the data gathered, through the comments of the participants involved in this study, this is a justification therefore that this thesis can indeed be considered as an application of CRT and SRT.

10.5 Likely Contribution to Knowledge

I have previously stated the aims of this current study in the preceding Chapters and I have critically examined the factors that may influence the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin either negatively or positively. This study was not conducted in a school setting, although this has been the most traditional way of collecting data from pupils/students in most studies (see for example, McLaughlin Black-Hawkins and McIntyre 2004). The rationale was to create a unique identity for this study. Participants were recruited directly from various Ghanaian communities in England. Although this study was conducted outside a school environment, the findings showed, this study has replicated other studies within the field of race ethnicity and education (see for example, Abbas, 2000; Rollock, 2006; Gosai, 2009). This study has therefore made significant contributions to the field of inquiry in a number of ways.

As I established in Chapter One, during the period in which this study started in 2013, no study had solely examined the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin and living in England. In relation to this, the findings of this study have brought to light the voices and feelings of these young people and have facilitated to broaden the academic knowledge on Ghanaians in England. This study has therefore provided a voice for the Ghanaian teenagers to disclose their viewpoints regarding the issues that influence their educational experiences. The voices of the Ghanaian teenagers of course, might be similar to other pupils/students of West African origin.

There are limited studies that have specifically looked at the perceptions of young people of Ghanaian origin and living in England. This study has therefore filled an important gap in the literature by providing the opportunity to hear the voices of the Ghanaian teenagers, it has added a new dimension to the study of their educational experiences.

An aspect that has added another breadth to the outcome of this study and I found astonishing and certainly has added value to this study are the opinions in relation to the young people who have had part of their education in Ghana. All the young people who had part of their education in Ghana were of the outlook that the burden of educational responsibility solely lies with the pupil. This ideology to a large extent impacts on their educational experience and outcome. In Ghana, children are held accountable for their academic success or failure. Therefore, it is obvious that the young people imported this cultural facet, this belief and thus, their cultural values have largely played a massive role in influencing their perception of educational responsibility. This goes a long way to widen knowledge in relation to cultural values and the implications on educational experience.

Surprisingly, all the young people kept referring to themselves as 'Black' rather than Ghanaians. None of them identified themselves as Ghanaians and responded by commenting: '*as a Black person* ….' This is a revelation that the system has made them to internalise the terminology Black (as revealed by national data) rather than identifying themselves to be Ghanaians, which is very intriguing but raises concerns regarding identity.

Furthermore, this study is positioned within the framework of previous literature emphasising the issues of race and racism within the British educational system (Coard, 1979; Mac an Ghaill1988 and 1994; Gillborn, 1995; Sewell, 1997; Blair, 2001; Cole, Hill and Waller, 2001; LDA, 2003; Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent and Ball 2015 and Tomlinson 2009, 2014). The responses from the participants revealed that as Ghanaians, they are faced with diverse forms of challenges in school, which influences their educational experiences. These challenges are examined within the context of the literature on race and educational policy, as well as focusing on the various legislations set out by different governments to

promote the education of Black and minority ethnic communities in England (see, Coard, 1971; Cole and Hill, 2001; Macpherson, 1999; Richardson and Tomlinson 2008, 2009).

Theoretically, the findings in this study have been drawn from previous research in education, relating to the educational achievement of Black pupils/students in British schools; providing me with a wider lens of analysis through the exploration of the participants' perception, in the form of data gathered.

Apart from the educational literatures unravelling the issues faced by the young people, this study has further drawn upon various theories regarding racial stereotyping, discrimination, low teacher expectations, the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum, cultural capital, role models and peer pressure. These theories have been derived from existing literature, which has critically scrutinised Black pupil underachievement in schools. The perception of the participants in this study are therefore of a similar outlook to previous studies on African Carribbeans (see, for example, Rhamie, 2003; Gosai, 2009; Okoye 2016).

Another major contribution this study makes to knowledge is that methodologically, an account of any study focusing on young people of Ghanaian origin which answered the research questions posed by this study in conjunction with the combination of the sampling methods used and using the comparable data collection and analysis method used in this study, has not yet been undertaken within England. This became apparent when the literature was being critically examined. The current study thus contributes to the field of Race Ethnicity and Education in the UK.

This study has made an important contribution in that the findings and discussions revisits and confirm analysis of the issues that are recurrent in the literature. For instance, findings concerning racial stereotyping and low teacher expectations by schools, is consistent with those described in the literature. Furthermore, the young people's experiences of facing discrimination at school, views on the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum, parental involvement, role models, involvement in decision-making and peer pressure are consistent with those illuminated in the literature. In addition, new insights to this study reveals that although successive governments have held schools accountable for educational

attainment, the young people in this study had different opinions about whom the burden of responsibility should rest upon. Findings from this study disclose that the young people concluded that their educational success is dependent on them and their parents. The irony is that government policy influences peoples' perception of who should be responsible for the education of a person. Therefore, OFSTED not including and holding parents and pupils/students accountable in the reports will influence parents' and pupils/students' behaviour and they will continue to take less responsibility for their education. On this basis, I am advocating for an Educational Responsibility Model, measuring the responsibility of each stakeholder involved in the education of a young person. This will be explored further in section 10.8.

Lastly, this study has contributed to the field of Race, Ethnicity, and Education, through the comments of the respondents sharing their experiences about the types of discrimination they face. Therefore, I have argued for government and schools to promote anti-racist, multicultural education and to ensure young people of minority ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated into the British system. This assertion is also supported by other scholars such as Strand, (2008); Modood, (2013); Race 2017. Hence, the rationale for me advocating for Race, Ethnicity, and Education to be embedded into the teacher training modules in all the different teacher-training routes.

10.6 Researching hard to reach communities: key strengths and limitations

The demand for including all members of the community in education research, especially those that are 'inaccessible' has been on the increase (see, Whitenell, 2004, Crozier and Davies, 2007). According to Ipsos MORI (n.d.) hard to reach groups, include minority ethnic communities, refugees, asylum seekers, travellers, religious minorities and a whole lot more. Although Ghanaians migrated to the UK many decades ago, they are not easily accessible and research surrounding this group is fairly limited (Owusu-Kwarteng 2010). I can confidently describe the Ghanaian community in the UK as 'hard to reach'. Therefore,

gaining access into this community makes me feel incredibly lucky and fulfilled, thus, giving this study a unique status.

10.7 Implications for policy and practice

This study is significant in establishing contemporary facts, in relation to the educational experiences of Blacks, including Africans, following the variable introduction of an extensive anti-racist and multicultural policies over the past decades. This study indicates that there are still gaps between policy and practice, adding to the positioning of this study in relation to previous educational literature in revealing the failure of policy and the perpetration of unsuccessful practices.

This study provides evidence that has significant implications for policy and practice. Based on the comments of the participants, there is every indication that schools should embrace an all-inclusive curriculum and develop mutual relationships and respect in addition to a cultural approach pedagogy. Consequently, this will move beyond the literature of 'failing Blacks', demonstrating how the development of an inclusive curriculum focusing on the achievement of all, regardless of a person's social, economic and cultural background. The implementation of such a pedagogy must have a positive focus on attainment within the framework of whole school curriculum and attainment approach for all pupils/students. Several issues emerged from this study, which have been highlighted in the preceding Chapters. Following on, are a series of recommendations, which reflect the issues that emerged from this current study.

10.7.1 Recommendation one: The impact on teachers and schools

Leadership of schools should develop strategies that will promote other cultures. Black history and culture should be embedded into other curriculum subjects. This might help to challenge a monocultural curriculum, which has the propensity to exclude Black pupils/students and have been described by the participants as Eurocentric (see report on Cambridge University Decolonising English Literature, 2017). As the UK continues to grow to be a multicultural and multiracial society, there is the need for all pupils/students from all backgrounds to engage with a range of cultures and histories of their fellow peers. Building a staff base including people from Black and minority ethnic communities should form the fundamental principle of the recruitment strategies of schools. In this respect, more Black teachers and non-teaching staff can be employed in schools so that Black pupils/students can internalise the notion that it is possible for many more Blacks to occupy positions of authority. The necessity for most schools to review their recruitment strategies is presented in Chapter Four, citing several reports, including that of the AMMA and NASWUT dating from the 1980s to 2015.

Essentially, having adults from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in a school can create a pool of positive role models, who can motivate and inspire all children, regardless of background, including Black pupils/students. In addition, schools should build a strong community link with successful Black people that they could invite to give motivational speeches to their pupils/students. For instance, liaising with Black academics and Black university students may be beneficial in motivating Black pupils/students to aspire to obtain a higher education.

Furthermore, schools should ensure all forms of discrimination and negative stereotyping of teachers and other support workers are not tolerated and therefore must be addressed at every level. The stipulation under the Race Relations Amendment Act should certainly be brought back. Most especially, putting Black pupils/students into lower sets should regularly be monitored and assessed in order to ascertain it is not influenced by low teacher expectations, negative stereotyping and prejudices by teachers. This has been a matter of concern to many of the participants involved in this study.

More so, schools should safeguard the interest of all pupils/students by developing disciplinary procedures, which are fair to all pupils/students, irrespective of their ethnic or social background. It was clearly demonstrated by the participants that disciplinary procedures are often unfair. To uphold social justice, debriefing sessions should be incorporated in the disciplinary procedures so that the young Black people will perceive that there is a sense of care and impartiality behind school disciplinary procedures. Exclusion reduction and prevention strategies should be adequately explained to both parents and pupils/students, and challenging appeal procedures should be properly outlined to them.

Some of the participants suggested that teachers ought to be reflective of their practice and engage positively with Black pupils/students by believing in them, nurturing, and guiding them into aspiring to take academic careers, rather than non-academic career paths, such as sports or music. Teachers' perception of them coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds and therefore cannot have high attainment levels, should not be tolerated. Teachers and schools should further develop their understanding of how ethnicity, class, and gender interact and influence teacher behaviours.

There is the need for teachers to develop the appropriate teaching and learning styles and communication strategies to build trust, confidence, and cordial relationships between them and pupils/students of other ethnic origins. A starting point could be teachers' engagement with them by having informal interactions during break and lunch times, in after school and outside school activities. This could aid in promoting mutual respect between teachers and the pupils/students. Teachers must be aware different cultures exhibit different characteristics, such as that of language, and these characteristics should not be a barrier to a successful educational experience and outcome. This must be addressed as a part of a whole school policy.

The perception of teachers about Black students socialising together with their peers in groups should be a lot more positive.

While recognising that to some extent this does happen in some schools, teachers and schools could set up initiatives that celebrate all cultures within the classroom and as a

whole school initiative, especially, in schools that are diverse and multi-ethnic. At the national level, the concept of celebrating all cultures could be embedded in the National Curriculum in subjects such as PSHE (Physical Social Health Emotional). This could facilitate in building confidence and self-esteem of all young persons within and outside school. Involving Black community groups such as youth clubs, churches, and ethnic group associations will help foster cohesion between schools and the local community.

The DFE and Teacher Development Agency (TDA) should embed race relations in their workshops and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) to support teachers and other non-teaching staff in their dealings with young people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. This will be in line with the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act (2010). Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers and training opportunities targeting leadership and management must incorporate issues relating to race, equality, and social justice. This will help to foster the recruitment and retention of a school leadership that is strong, effective, and fair. More so, the participants suggested that to diminish the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum the government, in collaboration with LEAs and Academies could fund initiatives that can develop an all-inclusive curriculum, which promote other cultures that can empower minority pupils/students. The progress of Black pupil attainment could be monitored regularly so that any issues or concerns may well be addressed at the initial stages before they escalate. School procedures and policies should foster positive educational achievement and policy for all pupils/students.

The DFE, in partnership with Local Authorities, school governors and heads of education trust must monitor that the implementation of Race Relations and equality guidelines in school policies, are translated into practice.

Lastly, OFSTED has a significant monitoring role to play in the above recommendations. Black and minority ethnic communities should form key members of the inspection team as they might be in the position to identify fundamental issues affecting Black pupils/students' educational experiences and attainment such as racial stereotyping and low teacher expectations. This strategy could be as part of a wider framework from OFSTED to involve

an extensive range of pupil voices, which involves all groups that are underachieving in comparison with those that are achieving to establish what works.

OFSTED should measure parental involvement and responsibility when monitoring and evaluating the performance and attainment levels of schools. This could give parents a sense of accountability to be responsible for the educational success and failure of their children. The majority of the participants involved in this study argued parents are responsible for the education of their children and should have a degree of liability. The responsibility model to be discussed in section 10.8 could be a framework that schools, OFSTED, and the government can adopt, which will outline clearly the responsibility of each stakeholder.

10.7.2 Recommendation two: Positive relationship between schools and parents

Parents ought to ensure that they are positively involved in the education of their children by forming partnerships and actively engaging with their children's' school and teachers. They should be in regular interaction with the school, questioning the progress of their children. This could be in many practical ways, such as parent consultation meetings, open evenings, attending workshops to enhance their understanding of the British curriculum, and other various ways that will strengthen their relationship with the school.

 Effective communication between schools must be improved and developed. This can be maintained when teachers and schools have an open-door policy to welcome parents and implement strategies that will facilitate them to work closely together with parents. School governors could monitor the effectiveness of the communication between teachers and parents by often interacting with the stakeholders involved.

Parents must take their relationship with the school a step further by building effective communication channels with their children, probe a lot more into their progress in school, and establish effective and efficient ways that they can support with their education.

10.7.3 Recommendation three: Positive Role Models

The promotion of positive role models both at school and at home is key. This is a shared responsibility between the schools, parents and the media industry. Schools can provide career guidance and extra-curricular activities that promote Black culture. Black pupils/students should be encouraged to take up careers outside showbiz and athletics. Schools should also work collaboratively with the community so that Blacks who are successful within the community can be invited to give inspirational talks to facilitate confidence building and the motivation of Black pupils/students. This could involve mosques, churches, community leaders, and Black professionals who have excelled in their careers. Parents do have the responsibility to provide an enabling environment for learning at home. These could include the provision of books, educational visits, and other useful resources. The government should implement strategies and policies that will provide financial support for parents who are struggling as an incentive to facilitate their

engagement with their children's education. Local governments in collaboration with charities could re-introduce supplementary schools at the local level, which could enhance the educational outcome of Black pupils/students. Agencies, such as charities, parental support initiatives, which are school-based, other educational organisations and the community at large all have a significant role in ensuring struggling parents, are adequately supported.

10.8 Facilitating Outcomes: An Academic Success Responsibility Model (ASR)

As mentioned in Chapter Nine, the participants in this study placed most of the burden of educational responsibility on the parents rather than the school in facilitating the educational outcomes of Ghanaian teenagers. They considered the role of the parents to be that of a supportive one, by ensuring that their children would complete any additional homework activities and by creating an enabling environment at home to support their children's learning. The parents were not in the least responsible for ensuring that their children would receive high quality education from school, which could be achieved through adequate funding of schools and the recruitment of high-calibre teachers or other political and social factors such as government policy. These responsibilities will obviously be placed upon the government and the school. It is also fair to remark that the current economic climate requires many parents to work around the clock in order to make ends meet. This may consequently, affect their parental role. Furthermore, the increasing expectations as well as the responsibilities associated with many careers and job roles has resulted in many parents finding this supportive role challenging.

Schools for many years have been put in the spotlight for facilitating the educational success or failure of young people. The introduction of league tables in 1992, publicly names and shames underperforming schools in England. Since its inception in 1992 by the John Major government, OFSTED has been responsible for policing and inspecting schools in England in order '*to foster the delivery of excellent education and care for young people of all ages'.*

Currently, OFSTED (2015) awards grades to schools in the following areas: effectiveness of leadership, behaviour, and safety of pupils/students, quality of teaching and learning, and achievement of pupils/students. The grades awarded to a school after an inspection is rated between inadequate and outstanding. However, in my assessment, there are series of failures associated with OFSTED's approach. OFSTED fails to recognise the role of parents and pupils/students in facilitating the teaching and learning process. Parents should be awarded a grade to indicate their level of parental involvement/support. This will help to develop an awareness of their role in the teaching and learning process. The government should also recognise their obligation and thereby, parents should be recruited to be a part of the OFSTED team. Merely talking to parents to find out their views about a school is rather inadequate.

Pupils/students' willingness and motivation to learn are casually discussed in OFSTED reports. Their role in facilitating the teaching and learning process should be highlighted as they have a significant role to play in the enhancement of their educational experiences and attainment.

Clearly, schools have a substantial responsibility in facilitating the provision of equitable and quality education of the highest standard. Young people have the right to quality education to enable them to reach their fullest potential, as set out in the UN Convention of the rights of the child (1989).

However, in my experience, I believe for schools to achieve this objective, all stakeholders involved in the education of a young person have a vital role to play. For instance, if schools are willing to provide, within their means, the highest quality education and parental involvement is inadequate, the aim of providing the maximum standard of education will be defeated. Furthermore, if schools have the ability to provide good and outstanding quality teaching but pupils/students are not willing to learn, it will have an adverse impact on their educational experience and attainment. Therefore, based on the underlying issues discussed, I am proposing an educational responsibility model, which outlines the degree and measure of responsibility of stakeholders.

A responsibility model in the field of education in practice however, is limited compared to the field of health and psychology. Before analysing my proposed Academic Success Responsibility model, I will briefly introduce a couple of responsibility models that are already in practice.

Firstly, Responsibility pie is a tool used by health professionals, for assessing how much control a person has over an undesirable situation or challenge the degree of responsibility of the patient in question. In this technique, both the patient and the psychotherapist list all the factors contributing to the undesirable event. A pie chart is then drawn afterwards, and the patient completes the chart according to the degree of each contributing factor with the patient's perceived contribution drawn last (Van Oppen and Arntz, 1994).

Secondly, Pearson and Gallagher's (1983), Gradual Release of Responsibility model (GRR), is a framework within the field of education, which is centred on a specific style of teaching pedagogy, which involves the transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the learner in the learning process to facilitate the independence of the learner. The GRR model of instruction involves the teacher shifting from assuming "*all the responsibility for performing a task to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility*" (Duke and Pearson, 2002, p. 211). The gradual release of responsibility may be within a specific period ranging from days, weeks, months and a year.

Positioning myself in the findings of this study, the framework of responsibility I am proposing is an Academic Success Responsibility model (ASR)). This model is to explicitly measure the degree of responsibility of stakeholders involved in the education of young people in a hierarchical order. It is significant to highlight that the responsibility model is aimed at academic success of pupils/students only and not for the facilitation of a successful educational system or structure. The hierarchy would have had a different outlook if the latter was being considered. An illustration of ASR is depicted below.

243
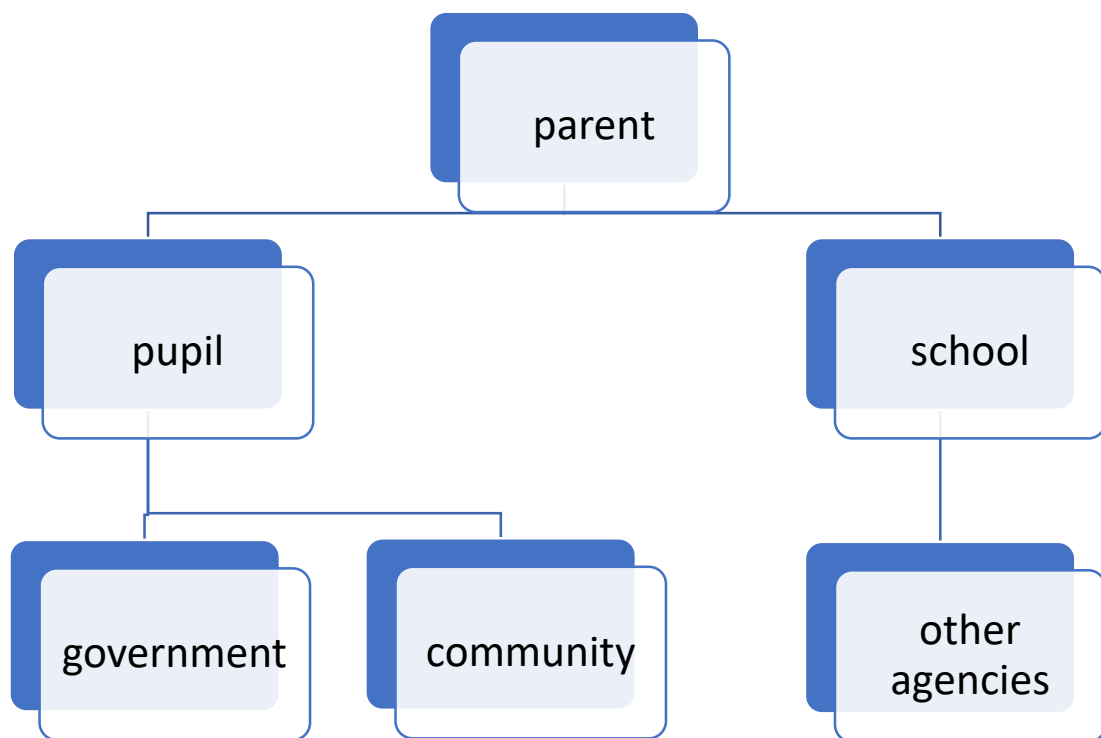
Figure 11: Academic success responsibility chart

Figure 11 illustrates the various stakeholders that facilitate the educational success of a young person. On top of the hierarchy is the parent. It is salient to refer to the point I made earlier that the participants acknowledged that their parents should play a key role in their children's education because their welfare is their parent's primary responsibility. The role of the parents within this hierarchy is understood to be that of facilitators only, rather than carrying out the responsibility of establishing a good educational system. The teenagers recognised that their parents supported them to develop a strong and positive identities as British Ghanaians although this can be impeded by the existence of racial stereotyping within schools whereby the norms and values of non-British and non-white ethnic groups or cultures are often not valued as much as the dominant white British culture and groups. Thus, the possession of a particular type of cultural capital that schools may deem acceptable can influence educational experiences. As set out in the discussion of Social Reproduction Theory in Chapter Four, the transfer of the family's dispositions (cultural capital) play a crucial role in facilitating positive educational experiences and outcomes (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Swartz 1997). However, with the best parenting and home learning environment in the world, it will be challenging for pupils to achieve in racist environments. Parental partnership with schools can only work in contexts where diversity is embraced and respected.

In the participants' point of view, the school and pupil have equal measure of educational responsibility. It is the school's responsibility to provide fair, anti-racist and quality first hand precision teaching that will enable pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils/students from all racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds should be included, respected and treated equally by schools and teachers. Pupils/students, however, must be enthusiastic and open to receiving the instruction and guidance from the school/teachers.

Racism can be described in some contexts as understated and flexible and it shows differently in different circumstances. As set out in Chapter Four, Critical Race Theorists, among other anti-racist theorists have argued that the common acts that are described as racist are hidden and seen to be normal, while the crudest and obvious forms are recognised to be problematic by the majority of people (Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent and Ball, 2015). It is the responsibility of the government therefore to implement policies that condemn institutional racism and promote racial equality within schools and equity in the curriculum. As set out in Chapters Two and Three, very many previous studies have shown that being Black usually occupies a position that is relatively disadvantaged in key areas of social policy and lived experience in the UK (see for example Inequality Audit Report, 2017). The Department for Education in conjunction with Local Authorities and Academy bodies should monitor the implementation of equal opportunities and anti-racist policies within schools and how they are translated into practice.

This strategy should be extended to the wider community so that people can understand the value of integration, diversity and inclusion. This might facilitate the diminution and elimination of racism and racist attitudes that parents might face in the workplace. Community leaders should work closely with schools to raise the awareness of the significance of equality and diversity and how these can be advantageous to our communities.

10.8.1 Dynamics of ASR

10.8.1.1 Parental Engagement and Guidance

Parents have a duty to support and care for their children in every aspect of their lives. As I commented in Chapter Eight, positive parental participation or engagement is significant in facilitating a successful educational outcome of a young person (see, for example, Jeynes, 2003, 2007; Houtenville and Conway, 2008). The onus of responsibility lies with the parent in influencing the success and prosperity of their children. Young people are to be supported with their homework and to be supervised and be supported to have routines that centre on their academic success. It is the responsibility of the parent to instil good virtues and morals, which promotes good behaviour in their children in school. Children may also need emotional support to deal with certain inherent conditions or behaviours. Parents will have to work in close partnerships with schools and welfare institutions to aid in the academic success of their children. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the government, schools, and other agencies to support parents who may need diverse forms of support networks to play their role effectively and successfully. For instance, parents from poor and working-class backgrounds, illiterates and parents with Special Education Needs (SEN) may require different levels of support. Interventions for parents could be in the form of financial, emotional, guidance on parenting, and many more.

Analysing this from my own outlook, effective parental involvement may be dependent on several factors such as government policies and legislation, the effectiveness of leadership and management valuing and involving parents. With recent cuts in the educational budget, this is massively going to impact on the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Therefore, no matter how involved or committed a parent might be, this may not yield the desired outcome.

10.8.1.2 Excellent Teaching and Learning

School and teachers have the responsibility of providing young people with good and outstanding teaching experiences, to facilitate in the fulfilment of their full potential. They have the obligation of putting together a range of strategies that will foster academic success for all pupils/students, including those classified as disadvantaged and young people with Special Education Needs. Schools and teachers must create the enabling environment, which enhances good educational outcomes. Senior leadership must recruit highly skilled professionals, both teaching and non-teaching, who can transfer knowledge and nurture the talents of young people. Schools and teachers must work closely and collaboratively with external agencies who can facilitate in the educational outcomes of young people. School governors must set high standards of expectations for schools and must make sure schools will provide excellent education for all pupils/students.

10.8.1.3 Pupil Engagement

Young people must demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. They must be willing and generally ready to follow any guidance and directions from their school and teachers. Young people who will require different forms of support networks must be supported in that manner. When pupils/students are motivated and willing to learn but government and schools does not provide the right apparatus, enabling environment, good quality teaching and learning due to availability of funds, this will also have an adverse effect on educational success.

10.8.1.4 Government Initiatives

Government must design policy initiatives and funding that will ensure good quality education and opportunity for all. Local governments must allocate sufficient funding and support the government by executing initiatives and policies relating to schools, children and families. They must provide support services for schools to enhance high standards of education.

10.8.1.5 Community and other Stakeholders Initiatives

Lastly, the community at large and other stakeholders whose role is significant in the provision of good quality education cannot go unrecognised. They must have strong links with schools, and they must engage with schools in such a manner that will promote good educational outcomes. Initiatives could include, career advice and guidance, developing positive role models, workshops, work experiences and apprenticeships.

Undoubtedly, the Educational Success Responsibility model suggested, will only be efficient and effective when all the stakeholders within the hierarchy equally play their roles as expected and the communication flow between all stakeholders are effective and efficient.

10.9 Suggestions for further research

Obviously, it would have been exceptionally beneficial to this study if some amount of data had been collected within a school environment, in the form of observation, to complement the interview data. This would have provided further evidence to support the interview data. Therefore, it will be useful to replicate this study in a school setting, observing their experiences over an extended period, and their levels at the end of key stage 4.

In this study, I have highlighted a series of issues that would benefit from further studies. Regarding the perspectives of the young people, future researchers could embrace a comparative approach, by comparing perceptions of young people from two or more other Sub-Saharan African countries with that of Ghanaians, for example, Nigerian, Zimbabwean, and Congolese.

Another dimension could be a comparative approach of the educational experiences of young people of West African origin, for example, Ghanaian, Nigerian, Ivorian, Senegalese, and Gambian. Future research could be sampled in areas of high African concentration such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, and Glasgow. Another aspect that future researchers can consider is that of the educational experiences of Black African working-class boys alongside that of White working-class boys. It will be intriguing to further explore

the percentage of White working-class boys who continue into higher education and pursue courses in the science in comparison with White working-class girls going into the sciences. The same comparative study can be extended to Black boys and girls or using similar research methods and questions, a further study could investigate the educational experiences of inner-city Ghanaian youth, and contrast it with a more suburban, middle class group.

Prospective researchers can extend this study by exploring the experiences of students who are Ghanaians in tertiary institutions, comparing it to that of young people in secondary schools.

A further development of this study might be extended to developing an understanding of parental approaches (by parents from different African countries) to participation and how it facilitates an enhancement of their children's educational experiences and academic outcome.

> *"… maintenance of the status quo is assured by complete avoidance of the need for collective responsibility or responsibility of the state for the eradication of social and economic inequities and the elimination of discriminatory practices at a societal as well as an institutional level. The onus for change is placed predominantly on the shoulders of the more vulnerable and less powerful in society."*

> (Smith, 2013 p. 443)

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APPENDIX A: Pupil Interview Schedule (ages 14 -16)

Background/personal data

Name

Age

Country of birth

Parent(s) occupation

Language(s) spoken at home

Views on primary schooling experiences

1. Was your entire primary education in a British school? If not which country did you have part of your primary education?

2. Can you share some of your memorable experiences about the primary school you attended in England?

3. What levels did you attain in the KS2 Sats? What do you think are the reasons behind these levels?

Views on secondary school experiences

4. How would you describe the catchment area of the secondary school you attend?

5. Can you tell me how you feel you are doing in education compared with your mates at your school? What factors in your view determines how you work at school?

6. How many GCSE subjects will you be taking and what levels are they? Who decided on your level of GCSE (High, intermediate, low)? Do you think the process of selection was fair?

7. How do you feel about this? Are you happy with it? Why?

8. How would you describe the relationship between your teachers and you? Do you think the kind of relationship you have with your teachers influence your performance at school? Please explain.

9. Do you know your rights as a pupil and do you think your rights as an adolescent is been promoted in your school?

10. Do you think equal opportunity is promoted in your school? Why/How?

11. What is your opinion about the British curriculum promoting cultural diversity?

12. Have you been excluded from school before? If yes please give reasons. In your view was the exclusion fair or the best 'reward' for you? Why?

Views on responsibility for educational achievement

13. In your experience would you say you are involved in the decision making of your education? Why/How?

14. How would you describe your parent's involvement in your education?

15. Do your teachers in any way inspire and challenge you to do well in school? Why/How?
16. In your view, what can be done to improve your education?
17. Do you take part in any extra-curricular activities? How is this useful to your learning?
18. What level of education have your parents reached? Does this in anyway influence your education?
19. Do you think your behaviour in anyway has either positive or negative effect on your education? Please provide reasons
20. Do your friends in anyway influence your educational experience? Please explain.
21. Ultimately who do you think is responsible for your education generally and why?

APPENDIX B: <u>Pupil Interview Schedule (ages 17-19)</u>

<u>Background/personal data</u>

Name:

Age

Country of birth:

Parent(s) occupation:

Language(s) spoken at home:

<u>Views on primary schooling experiences –</u>

1. Was your entire primary education in a British school? If not which country did you have part of your primary education?

2. Can you share some of your memorable experiences (positive and negative) about the primary school you attended in England?

3. What levels did you attain in the KS2 Sats? What do you think are the factors that contributed to these attainments?

<u>Views on secondary school experiences</u>

4. Can you tell me how you feel you are doing in education compared with your mates at your school?

5. How many GCSE subjects did you take and what grades did you get? Were you happy with your results? Why? In your view what do you think are the factors that contributed to your results?

6. How would you describe the relationship between your teachers and you? Do you think the kind of relationship influenced your performance at school? Please explain.

7. What are your rights and do you think your rights as an adolescent is been promoted in your school/college?

8. Do you think equal opportunity is promoted in your school/college? Why/How?

9. Do you think the British curriculum promote ethnic diversity? Why?

<u>Views on responsibility for educational experience/achievement</u>

10. Do you think you have a say in the decision making of your education? How/Why?

11. How would you describe your parent's involvement in your education?

12. In your view what do you think can be done to improve your educational experiences?

13. Do your teachers in any way inspire and challenge you to do well in school/college? Why/How?

14. How about the community you live in? Do they in anyway encourage/motivate you to do well in school?

15. Do you take part in any extra-curricular activities? How is this useful to your learning?

16. What level of education have your parents reached? How does this influence your learning and educational experiences?
17. Do you think your behaviour in anyway has either positive or negative effect on your education? Why?
18. Do your friends/peers influence your educational experiences?
19. Ultimately who do you think is responsible for your education and why?
20. Have you been excluded from school before?

APPENDIX C: Interview Schedules – Parents

Interview Schedule – Parents

Respondent background information

Name

Age

Marital status

Place of residence

Place of education

Year of arrival in the UK/or if born in the UK state when

No of children by sex and age

Place of birth of children

Type of school child/children are attending: public, private, grammar, etc

Selective Schooling (where relevant)

1. Why do you think that education in an independent or grammar school would be much better for your child/ (ren)?

2. What have been the benefits to you and your child/(ren) so far? Why do you think the benefits would have been different in a public school?

Parental personal experiences with the educational system

3. If you studied in the UK, what was it like to be a student back then?

4. How would you compare your educational experiences with that of your child/(ren) now?

Parent's views on children's experience and performance in school

5. Can you tell me how you think your child/ (ren) is doing in school?

6. What do you think are the factors that determine/influence their educational experiences in school?

7. What are your views about the national curriculum and do you think it promotes cultural diversity?

8. To what extent do you think equal opportunities are promoted in schools?

9. Do you think that friendships, or any other kinds of peer groups, have any impact on your child's achievement and why?

10. How would you describe the relationship between your child/(ren) and their teachers? What impact does it have on their educational experience and achievement?

Parental knowledge of and participation in educational system and impact on child's achievement

11. Can you tell me whether or not you know which streams/sets your child/ (ren) is in for the core subjects? Are you and your child/ (ren) happy with these streams or setting? Please reasons for your answer?

12. Were you or your child/ren involved in the decision making process before they were placed in the sets?

13. In your experience how then would you describe schools involvement of parents in making choices for their children?

14. Would you like to, or are you at present, sending your child/(ren) to extra school, or giving him/her home tuition or anything else that you think might benefit him/her in education? How is this beneficial to their education?

15. How frequently do you attend Open Evenings? How do you think this affect your child/(ren)'s educational experience and achievement?

16. Do you believe your earnings as a parent/parents in any way affects the way you show an interest in your child/ (ren)'s education? Do you feel this contributes to your child's achievement in education?

Responsibility for Educational achievement: parents or schools

17. Ultimately, who do you think is responsible for educational achievement of your child/ren? Please provide reasons.

APPENDIX D: Interview Schedules – Teachers

Background information

Name

Age

Type of teacher

Years of experience

Teachers views on curriculum and achievement

1. Which groups do you think are doing well generally in schools nationally? What in your view may be accountable for this?

2. Do you think the school curriculum promotes the integration of ethnic minorities within the society? Why?

3. Current research studies at this moment suggest that African/Caribbean children are not doing well in school. To what extent would you agree with this statement?

4. What do you think can be done to improve the situation if you agree with the statement?

Teachers views on behaviour and educational responsibility

5. How would you explain the parental involvement of Black Africans/Ghanaians in your classroom/school? What impact does it have on their education success and why?

6. Do you think peer pressure affects Black Africans/Ghanaians that you are dealing with now in terms of level of achievement in education?

7. It has been alleged that the behaviour of African children, boys in particular, are more challenging than other children. How far in your experience with them do you agree with this?

8. What in your view can be done to improve the situation if you agree?

9. Many people seem to assume that Black Africans are deprived and as a result they are placed in lower streams. How far would you agree with this statement from your experience as compared with other children?

10. Have far do you involve parents and children in making decisions about their education?

11. Do you think the principle of equal opportunity is promoted in your school/schools? How/Why? If not, what do you suggest could be done.

12. Who do you think is ultimately responsible for the education of young people?

APPENDIX E: Interview Schedule – Community leaders

Respondent background information

Name

Age

Marital status

Occupation

Personal experiences and views about the British educational system

1. What are your views about the education of Black Africans in England in general?

2. Do think Ghanaians and Black Africans in general are faced with any challenges in schools? If so can you please explain.

3. In your experiences in dealing with the youth, what do you think are the main issues?

4. What are your views about Ghanaians' parental engagement in England?

5. What are your views about the impact of cultural change on parenting styles and thereby the education of their children?

6. In your views or experiences, do you think racial discrimination exist in schools?

7. What are your suggestions regarding how to improve the education of Ghanaians and Black Africans in general?

APPENDIX F: Ethical Approval

13 November 2014

Dear Linda

Re: Application for Ethical Approval

Principal Investigator: Linda Akomaning

Project Number: 14_15 001 (Resubmission) Project Title: Perspectives of the Educational Experiences of Adolescent Ghanaians in England

I am pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Panel (FREP) under the terms of Anglia Ruskin University's Research Ethics Policy (Dated 23/6/14, Version 1).

Ethical approval is given for a period of 3 years from 13 November 2014.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you comply with Anglia Ruskin University's Research Ethics Policy and the Code of Practice for Applying for Ethical Approval at Anglia Ruskin University, including the following:

• The procedure for submitting substantial amendments to the Panel, should there be any changes to your research. You cannot implement these amendments until you have received approval from FREP for them.

• The procedure for reporting adverse events and incidents.

• The Data Protection Act (1998) and any other legislation relevant to your research. You must also ensure that you are aware of any emerging legislation relating to your research and make any changes to your study (which you will need to obtain ethical approval for) to comply with this.

• Obtaining any further ethical approval required from the organisation or country (if not carrying out research in the UK) where you will be carrying the research out. Please ensure that you send the FREP copies of this documentation if required, prior to starting your research.

• Any laws of the country where you are carrying the research and obtaining any other approvals or permissions that are required.

• Any professional codes of conduct relating to research or requirements from your funding body (please note that for externally funded research, a Project Risk Assessment must have been carried out prior to starting the research).

• Completing a Risk Assessment (Health and Safety) if required and updating this annually or if any aspects of your study change which affect this.

• Notifying the FREP Secretary when your study has ended.

Please also note that your research may be subject to random monitoring.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me. May I wish you the best of luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sarah Burch For the Faculty (of Health, Social Care & Education) Research Ethics Panel

T: 0845 196 2560 E: sarah.burch@anglia.ac.uk

cc: Prof. Dave Hill (Supervisor) Beverley Pascoe (RESC Secretary)

APPENDIX G: Participant Consent Form (Pupils)

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

Name of Researcher

Participant Identification Number for this Project…………………………………..

I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for the above-mentioned research project. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any reason. I also understand my responses will be treated as confidential (anonymised). I permit members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I hereby agree to take part in the above-mentioned research project.

………………………………   …………………….   …………………………..

(Name of participant)   (Date)   (Signature)

……………………………   ……………………….   …………………………..

(Name of Parent/Guardian)   (Date)   (Signature)

Linda Akomaning………   ……………………….   ………………………

(Name of Researcher)   (Date)   (Signature)

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Signed: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX H: Participant Consent Form (Teachers)

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

Name of Researcher: Linda Akomaning

Participant Identification Number for this Project:…………………………………..

I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for the above mentioned research project. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any reason. I also understand my responses will be treated as confidential (anonymised). I permit members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I hereby agree to take part in the above mentioned research project.

…………………………………   …………………………   …………………………..

(Name of participant)   (Date)   (Signature)

  Linda Akomaning…   ………………………   ………………………

(Name of Researcher)   (Date)   (Signature)

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Signed: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX I: Participants consent form (Parents)

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

Name of Researcher: Linda Akomaning

Participant Identification Number for this Project……………………………..

I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for the above-mentioned research project. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any reason. I also understand my responses will be treated as confidential (anonymised). I permit members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I hereby agree to take part in the above-mentioned research project.

………………………….   …………………….   …………………………..

(Name of participant)   (Date)   (Signature)

   Linda Akomaning…   ……………………….   ……………………….

(Name of Researcher)   (Date)   (Signature)

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Signed: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX J: Participant Consent Form (Community Leaders)

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

Name of Researcher

Participant Identification Number for this Project:………………………………..

I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for the above-mentioned research project. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any reason. I also understand my responses will be treated as confidential (anonymised). I permit members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I hereby agree to take part in the above-mentioned research project.

………………………………   …………………….   …………………………..
(Name of participant)   (Date)   (Signature)

……………………………..   ……………………….   ………………………….
(Name of Parent/Guardian)   (Date)   (Signature)

  Linda Akomaning………   ……………………….   ……………………….
(Name of Researcher)   (Date)   (Signature)

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Signed: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX K: Participant Information Sheet (Teachers)

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

Name of Researcher: Linda Akomaning

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is an invitation to participate in the above-mentioned research project. Before you decide it is important for you to take some time to read the following information to understand why the research is been done and what it will involve. The aims of this study are to explore the educational experiences of teenagers of Ghanaian origin who are living in England. This research study is to examine how they perceive their education from the pupil's point of view. It is important to understand and document what teenagers of Ghanaian origin think about their educational experience and how this impacts on their performance. It also aims at exploring what changes in your view might be necessary in order to improve the education of Ghanaian heritage pupils specifically and Black Africans in general.

The study will focus on the perceptions and interpretations of the experiences by the respondents and teachers are invited to take part, but participation is totally voluntary. If you decide to take part, you will be given a consent form to complete and you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. The interview will entail questions about your bio-data, teaching strategies and your experiences and perceptions about Ghanaians and Black Africans and factors affecting their attitude towards learning. I will conduct a 25-30 minutes interview that will be audio taped to ascertain your views on learning and attainment (you can choose to opt out of the recording of interviews). Only teachers who volunteer to be interviewed will be interviewed. Apart from maybe getting distressed with some questions during the interview, I can foresee no risks to you. However, you can decide to stop the interview process at anytime without any penalties.

Whilst there may be no personal benefits to your participation in this study, the information you provide may contribute to the future development of education of ethnic minorities in England. You are assured that all the responses that you will give throughout your participation will be treated as highly confidential. Any information which may lead to identifying individual teachers will not be included in the final write up. If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask. If you would like to participate, please, ask for a consent form and if you are interested in the research findings I will be happy to provide a summary of the findings. Please note that for the purposes of this study, only 10 teachers will be

required so interviews will be on a first come first served basis. However if more than five teachers show interest in the study, they can put their views on a blog that I will create.

 Thank you,

Linda Akomaning (Researcher) Researcher Contact (linda.akomaning@anglia.ac.uk 07533406697)

Supervisor: Prof. Dave Hill, Email: dave.hill@anglia.ac.uk

APPENDIX L: Participant Information Sheet (Parents/Guardians)

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

Name of Researcher: Linda Akomaning

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This is an invitation to participate in the above-mentioned research project. Before you decide it is important for you to take some time to read the following information to understand why the research is been done and what it will involve. The aims of this study are to explore the educational experiences of second generation born teenagers of Ghanaian origin who are living in England. This research study is to examine how they perceive their education from the pupil's/parents point of view. It is important to understand and document what teenagers of Ghanaian origin think about their educational experience. The study also aims at exploring what changes in your view might be necessary in order to improve the education of Ghanaian heritage pupils specifically and Black Africans in general.

The study will focus on the perceptions and interpretations of the experiences by respondents from the church and parents/guardians are invited to take part, but participation is totally voluntary. If you decide to take part, you will be given a consent form to complete and you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. The interview will entail questions about your bio-data, your views, perceptions and experiences as a parent. I will conduct a 25-30 minutes interview that will be audio taped to ascertain your views on learning and attainment (you can choose to opt out of the recording of interviews). It is not mandatory for all parents in the church to take part in the interview. Only parents who volunteer to be interviewed will be interviewed. Apart from maybe feeling upset/ emotional about some questions and your time for completing the interview, I can foresee no risks to you.

Whilst there may be no personal benefits to your participation in this study, the information you provide may contribute to the future development of education of ethnic minorities in England.

 You are assured that all the responses that you will give throughout your participation will be treated as highly confidential. Any information which may lead to identifying the parents

299

will not be included in the final write up. If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask. If you would like to participate, please, ask for a consent form. If you are interested in the research findings I will be happy to provide a summary of the findings. Please note that for the purposes of this study, only 10 parents will be required so interviews will be on a first come first served basis. However if more than 10 parents show interest in the study, they can put their views on a blog that I will create.

Thank you,

Linda Akomaning (Researcher)

Researcher Contact (linda.akomaning@anglia.ac.uk 07533406697)

Supervisor: Prof. Dave Hill, Email: dave.hill@anglia.ac.uk

APPENDIX M: Participant Information Sheet (Community Leaders)

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

Name of Researcher: Linda Akomaning

Dear Community Leader,

This is an invitation to participate in the above-mentioned research project. Before you decide it is important for you to take some time to read the following information to understand why the research is been done and what it will involve. The aims of this study are to explore the educational experiences of young people of Ghanaian origin who are living in England. This research study is to examine how they perceive their education from the pupil's/parents/teachers' point of view. It is important to understand and document what teenagers of Ghanaian origin think about their educational experience. The study also aims at exploring what changes in your view might be necessary in order to improve the education of Ghanaian heritage pupils specifically and Black Africans in general.

The study will focus on the perceptions and interpretations of the experiences by respondents who are invited to take part, but participation is totally voluntary. If you decide to take part, you will be given a consent form to complete and you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. The interview will entail questions about your bio-data, your views, perceptions and experiences as a community leader. I will conduct a 25-30 minutes interview that will be audio taped to ascertain your views on learning and attainment (you can choose to opt out of the recording of interviews). It is not mandatory to take part in the interview. Only community leaders who volunteer to be interviewed will be interviewed. Apart from maybe feeling upset/ emotional about some questions and your time for completing the interview, I can foresee no risks to you.

Whilst there may be no personal benefits to your participation in this study, the information you provide may contribute to the future development of education of ethnic minorities in England.

You are assured that all the responses that you will give throughout your participation will be treated as highly confidential. Any information which may lead to identifying the community leaders will not be included in the final write up. If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask. If you would like to participate, please, ask for a consent form. If you are interested in the research findings I will be happy to provide a summary of the findings. Please note that for the purposes of this study, only 5 community leaders will be required so interviews will be on a first come first served basis. However if more than 5 community leaders show interest in the study, they can put their views on a blog that I will create.

Thank you,

Linda Akomaning (Researcher)

Researcher Contact (linda.akomaning@anglia.ac.uk 07533406697)

Supervisor: Prof. Dave Hill, Email: dave.hill@anglia.ac.uk

APPENDIX N: Participant Information Sheet (Pupils/student ages 15-19)

Title of Project: THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF GHANAIAN ORIGIN IN ENGLAND

Name of Researcher: Linda Akomaning

Dear Pupil/student

I am carrying out a study to find out the educational experiences of Ghanaian teenagers and how this affects their learning. I am using this opportunity to invite you to take part in this study. I hope you will be interested in taking part. However, before you decide on whether to take part or not, it is important for you to take some time to read the following information to understand why the research is been carried out and what it will involve.

What is the purpose of the project?

The aims of this study are to look at the educational experiences of young Ghanaians who are living in England. This study is to find out how they perceive their education from their own point of view. It is important to understand what you think about your educational experiences and your views about how to improve the education of Ghanaian heritage pupils specifically and Black Africans in general.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you meet the eligibility criteria to participate in this research.

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

Whilst you may be asked to answer questions in relation to your educational experiences, all information provided by you will be kept confidential. There are no risks in taking part except that some questions may be a bit uncomfortable, which you have every right not to answer. If it's your first time of being interviewed, you may find the whole process quite strange. You have every right to ask for further explanation if unsure of a particular question or word.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Although there may be no direct personal benefits to your participation in this study, the results of this research will be written up in a thesis. The information you provide can contribute to the future improvement of education of Black Africans in England.

Do I have to give consent?

If you decide to take part you will be given a consent form to be completed by your parents and you but you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons. If you choose to be included, you will be asked questions on your school experiences. You will either be in a group of about 3 teenagers for a discussion or I will have a one to one interview with you. The interview will be about 25-30 minutes, and this will be recorded to make certain your views. Again, you can object to the interview been recorded.

Please note: participation on this study is entirely voluntary, so please do not feel obliged to give consent. Refusal will involve no penalty whatsoever and your parents and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any stage without giving an explanation to me.

Will my details be kept confidential?

All the information collected will be strictly private before the information is presented finally. When I write up the study everyone's names and the names will be changed so that no one can be identified. You will be welcomed to choose your own name to be used during the study. If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask. If you would like to participate, please, ask for a consent form.

Thank you,