



**RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS: A CASE OF A
SELECTED HIGH SCHOOL, DURBAN.**

by

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School of Applied Human Sciences
Discipline of Criminology and Forensic Studies University
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DECLARATION


I, Fernanda Munguambe, declare that:

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2. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs, or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signature of student: 

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Signature of Supervisor 

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved son, Lusanda Agoshtinho Munguambe. You have been a great source of motivation throughout this journey. This dissertation is a reminder to you that, regardless of the many challenges you will face in this lifetime, hard work and perseverance lead to endless achievements. I love you beyond measure and may you grow up having the courage to chase your dreams and make an impact in the world.

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Psalm 27: 1 The lord is my light and salvation

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To Mrs. Linda Coertze, thank you for editing this work.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ECD	Early Child Development
DoE	Department of Education
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
POIC	People of Colour and Indigenous
RTT	Racial Trauma Theory
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAHRC	The South African Human Rights Commission
SMT	School Management Team
NAP	National Action Plan
UN	United Nations
RTT	Racial Trauma Theory
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAHRC	The South African Human Rights Commission
SMT	School Management Team
NAP	National Action Plan
UN	United Nations

ABSTRACT

In South Africa, many parents choose to enrol their children in multiracial schools where they believe that they will learn more about diversity and celebrate the freedom to study where they desire. However, this study was conceptualized in the belief that the Rainbow Nation is facing an undesirable occurrence among learners in such schools, as various reports and studies have claimed that racial discrimination continues to persist in high schools. Media reports have also affirmed that this widespread issue is prevalent across the country in multiracial schools. This means that learners are suffering because there are persistent incidences of racial discrimination among them. Schools are meant to be a secondary home for learners where they feel safe and learn more about the rich history of South Africa, and here they are educated not to make the same mistakes that our forefathers did. This study explored the extent, causes, and effects of racial discrimination among learners in a selected high school located on the Bluff in Durban. A qualitative research approach was adopted to understand the causes of racial discrimination in the 21st century, and data were collected using semistructured one-on-one interviews. The study recruited eighteen (18) participants: 6 teachers and 12 learners. The social learning, the ecological systems, and the racial trauma theories were used to support the research questions. The findings in this study show that Black learners are not the only race facing racism as White learners are equally exposed to racial discrimination. The study exposed what is commonly referred to as ‘reverse racism’, and the White learners found it hard to raise their concerns. Most scholarly works and the literature support the notion that it is Black learners, or learners of colour, who are exposed to racist slurs, while White learners are the perpetrators. Furthermore, the learners were more outspoken than the teachers. When the teachers were asked to comment on cases of racism in the school, most of them said they had not witnessed any such incidents. However, the learners confidently said that racial discrimination was everywhere and that it was not only prevalent among learners. They argued that teachers discriminated against learners when they said, “I see no colour”. This made them feel invisible and unrecognised. It is evident that racial integration and tolerance should be encouraged among learners and teachers alike.

Key terms: Colour-blind, learners, racial discrimination, high schools, teachers

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Schools are ‘homes away from home’ where learners from different cultural and social backgrounds acquire knowledge and skills and should learn to live in harmony. As crucial as the classroom environment is to the educational experience, other environments, such as the personal and social contexts in which students interact, also add to their overall educational experiences (Harmon, 2011). This study explored learners’ and teachers’ perceptions of racial discrimination in a school, and the results urge that teachers and parents have the responsibility to ensure that learners feel safe and included in the learning environment despite their physical and cultural differences. Racial discrimination has been a pandemic in South Africa for years, and even after 30 years of celebrating democracy, learners in multiracial schools seem to forget the importance of democracy and why South Africa is called a rainbow nation.

To date, the Department of Basic Education is blamed for taking sides when incidences of racism are reported in schools (Gillborn, 2023:204), and such reports, particularly in the media, root learners, particularly at the high school level, to have no respect for or understand the importance of racial integration. The knowledge of racial change in schools is vital as it creates a safe space for change and racially integrated schools in a country that was once desegregated because of people with different skin colours (Naidoo, 2016).

South Africa has a long history of racial segregation, which means that researchers in this field of study have focused on how the history of South Africa has shaped racism in multiracial schools in post-apartheid South Africa. School segregation is a deeply charged and contested topic in South Africa, where racial segregation was abolished three decades ago. In democratic, post-apartheid South Africa, racial integration in schools is seen as a way to promote social justice and a means to disrupt the definition of society along racial lines (Elbers, Gruijters and Reddy, 2024:2). This dissertation explores the background to racial integration in schools. The literature review seeks, among other things, to establish whether schools have programs that promote racial integration and whether those programs will have a positive impact on learners who need to understand the importance of diversity across the South African society.

1.2 Background to the Study

South Africa has a history of racial segregation which defined a time when learners of distinct colour were not allowed to study in the same school. Apartheid, or ‘apartness’, was an official policy that signalled an era of exclusion of racial groups that was applied to schools and society in South Africa (Naicker, 2021:4), although it was also very similar to the policy of segregation in the USA that was abolished through the peaceful but powerful resistance of leaders such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King (Djameleddine,2021:8).The apartheid regime enforced racial discrimination in schools as it outlawed learners of different colours being educated together. According to Yeban (2023), schools were once divided based on the colour of learners’ skin and their cultures, which meant that White learners and learners of colour went to different schools. Unfortunately, during this era, Black, Coloured, and Indian learners were forced to study in schools with far fewer resources than what schools for White learners received, and this created resentment and some hatred of White learners among the other cultural groups. Apartheid thus shaped the South African education system in favour of those with the resources and who were regarded as ‘superior.’ Black learners were segregated from White learners, and even their education systems were not the same. McConnochie (2019:92) argues that the schools during apartheid were harshly segregated by race in white schools they received most of the resources and funding, resulting in fewer resources for black schools and making it clear that studying in white schools can improve the learners' learning capacity because of the resources that they have.

Racial discrimination is discrimination against victims by race, skin colour, and ethnic grouping (Hall, 2010). Racial discrimination is not something new; yet, despite the country’s thirty (30) years of democracy and concerted efforts to end racism, South Africa continues to face the pain of its history as researchers and the older generation constantly remind the younger generation of events and relationships during apartheid. Motloug (2018:1) states that the transformation of South Africa into an ideal ‘rainbow nation’ continues to be a challenge, as the legacy of tensions among the different racial groups that is a direct result of apartheid still permeates most aspects of South African society. For one to understand racial discrimination in schools, one should understand the history of apartheid in South Africa and other parts of the world. According to Ocampo (2004), the apartheid system created educational inequalities through overt racist policies. Additionally, Ladd and Fiske (2004) point out that education under apartheid was the antithesis of race-blindness, as white schools had more funding per learner

compared to Black learners. Even soon after 1994, which marked the transition to a democratic dispensation in South Africa, the government continued spending more on learners in White schools compared to schools that had Black learners. The apartheid regime divided South Africans into four categories: Whites, Indians, Coloureds, and Black people, and schools were segregated accordingly. However, schooling for Black learners was inferior compared to that of other races. Black schools were overcrowded, and under-resourced, and some were staffed by poorly qualified teachers. The schools designated for each of the four racial groups received vastly different resources and learned from different curricula (Soudien 2023).

This segregation was the result of legal intervention. The Bantu Education Act of 1952 came into effect on 1 January 1954. It was a policy that governed the education of Black South African children through a system of apartheid, which sanctioned racial segregation and discrimination against non-Whites (Bauer, 2018). Under the Act, learners of colour were required to attend only government schools. According to Nganga et al. (2021:23), high schools were initially concentrated in the Bantustans, which were large areas of land designated for Black South African development. However, in the 1970s, high schools were opened in Soweto and other areas in Johannesburg.

South Africa continues to struggle with racial discrimination in schools. Although learners of colour are now accepted in any school in South Africa and are often the predominant race in these schools, many still battle the fact that they were once segregated and are constantly reminded of their history. Conversely, many learners of colour thrive in these schools, as is evidenced by the National Senior Certificate (Grade 12) results that are published in the media each year when Matriculants of Colour often walk away with top academic honours (National Department of Basic Education, 2023). However, racial tension in post-apartheid South African schools remains an issue that the Department of Education is facing despite the policies they have implemented to introduce racial integration. Therefore, exploring the school integration phenomenon and diversity from a scholarly perspective can help South African society to understand the nature and prevalence of persistent social inequality in the post-apartheid era (Inside education, 2024).

1.3 Problem Statement

In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education is still fighting racial discrimination in schools 30 years on, and they are still dismantling racism and apartheid's legacy. According to Ratsomo (2024), racism has deep roots in the economic and social fabric of this country, and there is evidence that it is increasing in former White South African schools where learners of colour are now predominant. Karrim (2020) reports that dozens of schools across South Africa have recently faced allegations of racist incidences, especially in these former White schools. Additionally, such behaviour is often ignored by the police and the Department of Basic Education, who fail to act when learners or staff complain of racism. Shepherd (2024) states that learners' voices are always silenced when they are reporting teachers who are racist. One learner stated, "Some teachers are racists at school and when we complain, nobody does anything. Our voices are shut down". This statement indicates that racial discrimination among learners is an issue that does not only involve parents but teachers as well. Teachers need to take responsibility for teaching learners the importance of diversity and they need to guide them to accept this reality.

Irwin et al., (2021) states that approximately 22% of learners aged 12-18 years are reported to be victims of racial discrimination in schools, and this form of prejudice is mostly reported by females. According to the National Bullying Prevention Centre (2019), 69% of learners of colour reported being bullied at school, and these incidents happened in predominantly White schools where learners of colour are reminded daily that they do not belong in those schools. Learners of colour are studying in former White schools because of the availability of resources. In modern South Africa, a school's apartheid-era grouping remains a strong representation of its overall status and class (Gruijters, Elbers, and Reddy 2024:1750. Due to fewer resources black schools continue to perform poorly hence learners and parents prefer schools with resources. (Reddy et al., 2012, cited in Elbers, 2024:19). This results to Black learners wanting to study in formerly white schools or model c schools because they perceive that they will get more than just education as they will be exposed to skills development as well because of the resources available in these school. As much as the government and Education Department have tried to eradicate hate slurs based on race among learners in schools, it cannot be ignored that it is the government system that creates and sustains racial discrimination. This is due to their inability to implement tough policies that will make learners comprehend how serious the issue of racism is and what the consequences are.

1.4 Aim of the Study

With the history of racial discrimination in South Africa, racism has been part of our lives and will remain so for some time to come. Therefore, increasing incidences of racial discrimination among high school learners will persist if teachers, parents, and society do not take any action to combat such acts. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the racial discrimination phenomenon in a South African high school. To address some of the issues that cause the persistent prevalence of racial discrimination in South African schools, issues of policy, staff, and the role of the Department of Basic Education were explored to determine how perpetrators are or could be apprehended and brought to book. The increasing number of cases of racial discrimination in South African schools needs to be addressed so that all children will be able to take part in school-based activities without being exposed to racism.

One of the objectives of the study was to examine the consequences that learners face when being discriminated against by other learners. For instance, the study looked at suspension periods and determined how long learners were suspended if they had been found guilty of racist actions. Another objective was to determine if justice for victims occurs. The Department of Basic Education is required to do an inspection at schools every month and draft a report on whether the schools are teaching learners the importance of diversity and the history of South Africa. A key requirement is that these reports should focus not only on one side but should present a balanced view of the actual situation. The purpose is to make learners feel proud of their race and culture and to respect where they are coming from. This is not a smooth journey for all learners, but they learn one or a few things about the struggle that their parents experienced.

1.5 Research Objectives and Key Questions

The objectives of the study were to:

- Determine the nature and extent of racial discrimination in the selected high school.
- Identify the factors that contribute to the continued prevalence of racial discrimination among learners in the high school under study.
- Identify the effects of racial discrimination on learners in the selected high school; and
- Establish ways of promoting racial integration in the selected high school.

The key questions that this study posed were the following:

- What is the nature and extent of racial discrimination in the selected high school?
- Why does racial discrimination still exist among learners in the high school under study?
- What are the effects of racial discrimination in the selected high school?
- How can racial integration be promoted in the selected high school?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The primary significance of this study is to bring social justice to learners who are victims of racial discrimination in schools. The review included discovering if schools have educational policies that teach learners about diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence in the school environment. Today's learners are completely aware that race can cause depression in some learners due to wide access to technology, which means they can watch news that is broadcast abroad. Addressing racial discrimination in schools can have long-term positive effects on society by promoting tolerance, empathy, and understanding among learners from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The findings that emerged from this study, when disseminated appropriately, will enable learners and teachers to realize that racial discrimination is affecting all learners, especially the victims. If teachers can recognize racist behaviour, they will be able to implement programs that promote diversity among learners and create a conducive teaching environment where learners of all races can express themselves without feeling like outcasts. With the help of the Department of Basic Education, the SAPS, parents, and community members, this issue can be defeated to create a peaceful and supportive environment for all learners in schools. This study encourages teachers not to see colour when teaching. The commonly used phrase: "I see no colour in my classroom" needs to be abolished as each learner must be proud of their skin colour. Teachers who say they see no colour choose what they see and what they ignore.

It is this researcher's plea that we can close the chapter that reminds people of colour and where they are coming from in post-apartheid South Africa. South Africans need to understand the reasons why we are calling ourselves a rainbow nation and all should embrace this philosophy. It is particularly important to keep on raising awareness about racial integration among children, especially when they are still toddlers so that they will understand the importance of racial and other diversity.

1.7 Definitions of Key Concepts

Racial discrimination: When a person is treated less favourably or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation because of their race, the country where they were born, their ethnic origin, or their skin colour (Baker, 2024).

Apartheid: A policy in South Africa that governed relations between the White minority and non-White majority during the 20th century (1945 – 1994) (Van Zyl-Hermann, 2023).

Racial integration: The process of bringing different racial or ethnic groups together into one unified society where they have equal access to education, employment, housing, and public facilities. It seeks to eliminate segregation based on race and to promote equality among all individuals (Monarrez, 2023).

Racial segregation: The practice of restricting people to certain circumscribed areas of residence or to separate institutions (e.g., schools, churches) and facilities (parks, playgrounds, restaurants, restrooms) on the basis of race or perceived race (Hinrichs, 2024:219).

Diversity: The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, and backgrounds. (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021).

Learner: A person who attends an Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre, school, or Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centre (Government Gazette, 2011:48).

Teachers: A person appointed by the Department of Basic Education to perform extracurricular duties, teach and train others, and provide professional educational services to the persons they teach (Educators Employment Act 1994).

1.8 Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is the study of the nature of phenomena, which includes their quality, different manifestations, the context in which they

exist, or the perspectives from which they can be perceived. However, it excludes their range, frequency, and place in an objectively determined chain of cause and effect (Eze, 2023:20).

1.8.1 Research design

Research design is a plan that guides the researcher in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting observations. It is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation (Dasgupta, 2015:147). The researcher must not forget the research design to maximize efficiency and reliability. Thus, this study used the explanatory research design. Qualitative explanatory research generates data that describe the ‘who’, ‘what’, and ‘where’ of events or experiences from a subjective perspective (Kim et al., 2017: 23). This research design was suitable for the study as it assisted the researcher to generate in-depth information on what caused racial discrimination in the high school under study and how best to react to such incidences.

1.8.2 Sampling

The purposive sampling technique was utilized to select the research participants. This technique of sampling involved selecting participants purposefully as it was perceived that they would have authentic knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under study (Palinkas et al., 2015; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to handpick the participants who would benefit the study because they had the necessary experience regarding racial issues in the school.

Selecting a sample is appropriate when the researcher wishes to concentrate on a relatively small group of participants with sufficient knowledge to address the research questions and objectives. In the case of this study, the researcher selected a sample of twelve girls (learners) of different races and grades (Grade 10, 11 and 12). Eight teachers were also selected to participate in the study. The researcher recruited participants from a selected school that had the potential to address the objectives and answer the research questions.

1.8.3 Data collection and analysis

Data were collected using semi-structured group interviews. The group comprised participants who shared similar experiences and characteristics. The participants were divided into groups that represented different races and grades. The teachers were interviewed individually because

of their teaching schedules. I interviewed them during recess times. The teachers were selected based on their years and levels of teaching. This ensured that teachers with considerable experience were included in the study.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis, which is a common analysis method in qualitative research. Thematic analysis is commonly used to examine data and to identify the common themes and patterns of meaning that emerge repeatedly.

1.9 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter one: Introduction and Background

This chapter presents the background to the study and provides an overview of the problem that was investigated as well as the aim, objectives, and research questions. The methodology is also briefly discussed to orientate the reader.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter, the phenomenon of racial discrimination among high school learners is explored by reviewing previous scholarly literature to illuminate the racism phenomenon as it manifests in schools. This chapter focuses on schools where racism is reportedly rife focusing on African, European countries and South Africa.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework was applied to focus on the objectives of this study. These theories are the social learning theory and the ecological systems theory. Each of these theories is discussed and it is explained how they were applied to the various objectives the study sought to achieve.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was utilized in detail. Due to the nature of the study, the qualitative research approach was supported by a explanatory research design. This chapter also discusses the methods of data collection and analysis as well as the ethical considerations that were adhered to.

Chapter Five: Data Presentation and Interpretation of the Findings

This chapter presents a summary of the results that emerged from the data analysis process. These results are in line with the research questions and objectives that directed the study. The discourse refers to findings from the literature and determines if the current study supported or refuted these results.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter presents concluding remarks about the findings and offers some recommendations for future study. The limitations of the study are also acknowledged.

1.10 Chapter Conclusion

South Africa's history of apartheid and curiosity about whether it still affects young learners in high school motivated this research. I was conscious of the fact that cases of racial discrimination were still prevalent in multiracial schools despite policies that had been implemented to, among other purposes, celebrate the freedom that the heroes of the struggle fought for. This chapter introduced the study and discussed the background, purpose, objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, and the methodology that was employed. This chapter was concluded with an overview of the chapters.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews related studies by other scholars to shed light on earlier scholarly findings that applied to the current study. Notions of the continued prevalence of racial discrimination in high schools in South Africa and in the rest of the world are discussed and analysed. Randolph (2009) believes that the purpose of a literature review is to guide researchers to collect and summarise the most relevant information that corresponds to the aims and objectives of their research. According to Hart (1998), the reason for reviewing the literature is to distinguish what has been done from what needs to be done, discover important variables relevant to the topic, and identify relationships between relevant ideas and practices. Apart from the above reasons for engaging in a literature review, many other reasons are valid for conducting such a review; for instance, to delimit the research problem and to seek appropriate approaches to raise awareness of the issue under study.

This chapter aims to provide a historical overview of racial discrimination in schools by dating it back to the dark era of racial segregation. When the study was conceptualised, the researcher assumed the continued existence of racial discrimination in the selected South African high schools, nationally, as well as globally regardless of democratic principles and practices. The researcher believed that this assumption would hold in predominantly white schools that have embraced the label of ‘multiracial.’ Additionally, the intention was to explore legislative guidelines to bring racist learners to the book and to determine what punishment they might receive to correct their behaviour. In conclusion, the implementation of alternative strategies to racial discrimination in schools is discussed by reviewing the policies that were implemented by the government in various pieces of legislation.

2.2 Historical Overview of Racial Discrimination in South Africa

Systematic racial discrimination dates as far back as the 16th century when it was introduced by European slave dealers in the early 1500s and the 1600s. Fredrickson (2003) states that the period of the Renaissance and Reformation was also the time when Europeans came increasingly in contact with people of darker pigmentation in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The Europeans generally had advanced technologies and made various judgments about the people they encountered. Between 1525 and 1866, 12.5 million people were trafficked from

Africa and sent to the Americas on ships as part of the transatlantic slave trade (Gobel, 2016). Racial discrimination in South Africa became most prominent during the Great Depression before World War II when the Afrikaner Nationalist Party ruled the country. Afrikaners are descendants of the Dutch who arrived in droves on the southern tip of Africa after 1652. According to History (2023), South Africa experienced growing economic hardships throughout the Great Depression and World War II, which persuaded the government to tighten its racial segregation laws. Under the banner of "apartheid," which translates to "apartness," the Afrikaner Nationalist Party won the general election in 1948. The rules and practices created by the Nationalist government divided people of different ethnicities into groups with differing levels of support and wealth. White people were at the top of this pyramid, and Black people, who made up the majority, were at the base. Due to their political, social, and economic oppression, people of colour began to demonstrate violently under the aegis of outlawed political organizations like the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the African National Congress (ANC). Wolpe (1972) views apartheid as an intensification of the earlier policy of segregation that ascribed to a particular racial ideology of the ruling Nationalist Party. Ellis (2019:63) states that apartheid can be defined as a social and political policy of segregation and discrimination by the minority for the majority of the country's community. According to the African Union (2016), apartheid existed from 1948 to 1994. Racial segregation was a defining feature of this era, as the all-white government mandated that non-white South Africans, who made up the vast majority of the population, must reside in different neighbourhoods and utilize different public spaces. Furthermore, the law restricted how the two groups may interact, especially in the areas of social, political, economic, and educational spheres.

Chisholm (2019) argues that the South African education system has always been subjected to international trends and influences since the colonial period and right through apartheid into the post-apartheid era. Indeed, Chaplin (2020:43) concurs that racism in South Africa must be understood within the context of "European expansionism" and "global influences". Before 1994, South Africa had adhered to the apartheid system for more than four decades. Racial segregation was officially legalized during this time, although White colonial control had come before, during which time local Black communities were denied their land and endured an unfair system of political, social, and economic oppression (Moloi, 2014).

Chisholm (2019) provides a helpful overview of the historical legacy of race, helping us understand that racism in South Africa did not start with apartheid in the 1940s and that education provision was differently and unequally funded for Black and White learners even before apartheid. Many research findings have persistently described apartheid as a way of looking down on other races and segregating them as a perception of inequality among the racial groups for one group to control the other. Ayubi (2023) argues that with no legal policy based on apartheid, socially, economically, and politically the division between White and Black South Africans continues to exist.

2.3 The Nature and Extent of Racial Discrimination

2.3.1 Racial Discrimination as a multifaceted phenomenon

According to Clair and Denis (2015), racism is analytically distinct from racial discrimination, as racial discrimination is concerned with the unequal treatment of one race by another and McKay-Panos (2020) states that racism is the combination of racial prejudice and power, in this power means being accepted in the society and recognized. Smith (2020) states that racial discrimination involves treating someone unfairly because of their skin colour or certain racial features associated with personal characteristics such as hair texture, skin colour, or certain facial features. Although racial discrimination can happen in private or public spaces, it cannot be ignored that it is systematic and deliberate. “A person who is victimized because of their race feels that these acts are offensive or annoying and [he or she] is defenceless against racial discrimination because a clear imbalance of power and resources exists between the perpetrator and the victim” (Salmivalli, 2010).

Unlike other forms of violence in schools, racial discrimination might start as verbal abuse such as name-calling, gossiping, and disparaging remarks, but when the victim has had enough and feels intimidated and mistreated, it can turn into a physical assault.

Diaz, Hall and Neville (2019) state that racial discrimination can cause racial trauma in schools where learners of one race spread rumours about another learner’s race. Such rumours may cause psychological stress, anxiety, and anger. Learners who are schooling in multiracial schools are quite likely to fall victim to racial discrimination by their peers because, unlike learners who are studying in all-Black or former White schools where there are only a few learners of colour experience an unequal mix of races.

Learners may fall victim to racial discrimination because the perpetrators adopt the views of people around them, especially older people who experienced racism. Others associate only with learners of the same race, which makes it difficult for them to learn about and respect other races. Most learners who grew up in a neighbourhood where only people of the same race reside may find it hard to accept other races as they were taught different cultural practices and perspectives. Senker (2002), in her book titled *Why are people racist?* believes that one of the reasons is that history created an unequal view of races, and this caused conflict among people of different races. Racial discrimination manifests in straightforward actions but also in complex systems of social relations that produce racial inequities in diverse, often conflicting, social and political outcomes.

2.3.2 Direct Racial Discrimination

For Zada (2022) and Cossette-Lefebvre (2022), direct racial discrimination means treating an individual less favourably based on race. Direct discrimination in schools occurs when, for instance, a teacher may refuse to make a Black learner a class representative because of his race, and this is considered direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination also occurs, which is insipient and prevalent in some schools.

2.3.3 Indirect Racial Discrimination

Indirect racial discrimination is best understood in contrast with direct discrimination (Cossette-Lefebvre (2022:341). Añón Roig et al. (2018) argue that indirect discrimination manifests when a school introduces a policy or practice that has an unfair effect on a particular racial or ethnic group as it may put these learners at a disadvantage. For instance, a school may determine that only a small percentage of White or Black learners in a school may be selected for a rugby team. Sometimes, indirect race discrimination can be permitted if the school or committee can demonstrate that there is a good reason for the distinction.

2.3.4 Harassment

Racial harassment occurs when a teacher or learners consistently offend or humiliate a learner in school. Much like other forms of harassment (e.g., sexual), this type of degrading behaviour can be verbal, written, or physical. Stollznaw (2020) offers common examples of racial harassment that include using racist slurs, making racially insensitive gestures or jokes, and

touching another person's hair or clothing without their consent. Racially insensitive visual displays such as posters and drawings may also be considered forms of harassment.

2.4 A European Perspective on Racial Discrimination in Schools

Racial discrimination is a global pandemic that affects both developing and developed countries. This form of discrimination causes a lot of pain to learners as some are still minors and feel like they do not belong in a particular school as they experience a sense of rejection. Hong, Kim, Thornberg, Wachs and Wright (2022) state that racial discrimination is a serious concern that needs attention, as racial discrimination may be associated with aggressive behaviour. Learners who come from different backgrounds and who are abused at home or have anger issues must be assisted to guard against racist actions towards other learners. Tuttle (2023) states most learners have witnessed or experienced racial discrimination in schools, even though teachers may have tried to discipline those learners who manifest racist behaviours. They fail in most instances because the system often favours those who are racist. A study conducted by Wong et al. (2022:5) states that in England only 1,5% of White learners reported experiencing racial discrimination, while 16,3% of Black learners reported experiencing racial discrimination. According to Heyward (2022), data presented by the Department of Education in the US estimated that Black learners were 35% more likely to experience discrimination due to their race than their White counterparts.

Chavez (2021) reported that Black learners were told that they stank while others were called monkeys by their White peers. Such behaviours demonstrate that Black learners are exposed to racial slurs in schools. These experiences can be traced back to the Renaissance period when Black people were treated as slaves and believed to be worthless. The literature affirms that even in modern times Black learners have a tough time in multi-racial schools where they are constantly reminded by their peers that they do not belong and are reminded of their history of slavery during the 1500s. Across America, racism and its manifold expressions have become heated political issues. Moreover, despite racism being in the spotlight, racist speech, behaviour, and thinking remain entrenched unconsciously and implicitly in daily life; hence, many Black learners are still the targets of historical and false perceptions (Baker, 2020). In an article in *The Guardian*, it is stated that "Most Black British children experience racism at school (2020). The article reported that approximately 70% of Black British children experienced racism at school and felt pressure due to their afro hair. Furthermore, more than

95% of Black learners said they had been the targets or had witnessed racist language at school. Studies have shown that racial discrimination among high school learners starts verbally and then escalates to physical violence because learners cannot control their temper and emotions (Biko, 2021:270).

Racial discrimination increases the risk of poor mental health and can lead to school dropouts and even suicide. Research has shown that adolescents are prone to racial discrimination.

According to Elsea and Mukhtar's (2000) study, 57% of the boys and 43% of girls who participated in the study had experienced racial discrimination at school. However, Pather (2016) disagrees, stating that more girls (69%) than boys tend to experience racial discrimination and are victimised. Learners of the ages of 13-18 are prone to experience racial discrimination at school. A study by Eyah (2012) showed that racial discrimination was at its worse in senior high school. The latter study also indicated that learners who entered high school for the first time were more prone to be exposed to racism than their older peers. Tyne (2015) found that 42% of minority youth experienced at least one discriminatory incident during their first year of high school and, in addition, 64% of minority learners said they had experienced at least one 'vicarious' discriminatory incident by the end of their first year.

Salisbury (2020), who interviewed teachers in June 2019, discovered that a 12-year-old Black Muslim girl from Somalia who had come with her family to the United Kingdom (UK) committed suicide. Her body was found in a river. Shukri had been severely bullied at school, and there were concerns that the school had failed to respond adequately despite being made aware of the issue (Townsend, 2019, cited in Salisbury, 2020:3). Salisbury further argues that stories of racism in schools continue to emerge. For instance, in September 2019, a 10-year-old mixed-race boy tried to hang himself after being subjected to persistent and explicit racism by his peers in Canterbury (Australia) (Salisbury, 2020:3). The stories of these two learners are shocking and disheartening. Moreover, there may be more learners who are victims of racial discrimination but who are too scared to report these cases. In this context, Jones et al. (2023) argue that numerous attitudes, beliefs, and practices of racism are the reasons that there are so many cases of racial discrimination in schools. This highlights the urgent need for intervention programmes to curb an increasing number of such cases in schools.

According to Salisbury (2020), several studies have been conducted in the UK on racial discrimination on school premises. However, these studies focused on Black, Latino, and Hispanic races and not on White learners (Barret, Creamer and McGowan, 2020). Therefore, although these studies reported different incidences and affirmed that racial discrimination among learners does occur in schools, they implied that Black and Latino learners and not White learners were involved. However, studies have found that White learners in multiracial schools also fall victim to racism in schools in Africa and on other continents. However, as the current study was conducted in the South African context, it is imperative to discuss the phenomenon of racial discrimination in high schools from an African perspective, which is done in the next section.

2.5 An African Perspective on Racial Discrimination in Schools

According to a 2022 World Population Review report, Africans are racist towards one another, and this racism is what is fuelling growing conflicts in Africa. In Alegria, after independence, the Arab Reform Initiative and Algeria's ruling elite chose to suppress identity issues because they saw diversity as a source of division and a threat to their hold on power. However, Black Algerians and discussions on anti-Black sentiment remain absent from public debates (Irakoze,2020). Recent studies from more than sixty countries with a wide range of income levels have found that approximately one of every three early learners has been a victim of racial discrimination in schools (Abdirahman, Fleming and Jacobsen, 2013:228). Bizimungu (2021) reports that learners are mostly discriminated against by other learners based on the texture of their hair, and one student from Ghana stated in her report that she was discriminated against by other learners because of her afro hairstyle. Furthermore, in private mixed-race schools on the continent, White and mixed-race learners are allowed to keep a hairstyle of their choice, but Black learners with kinky hair must either shave or tie their hair so that it fits in a bun. These schools discriminate against learners for not amending their hairstyles and punish those who are racist towards such learners.

Alsaleem, Alhashem and Mahfouz (2021) conducted a study on racial discrimination among secondary school learners in Mushait City, Southwestern Saudi Arabia, to assess the bullying prevalence and related features among secondary school learners in that country. This study included three hundred secondary schools and learners, 163 females and 137 males. The most prevalent types of racial discrimination were verbal (41.7%), followed by physical (17.0%).

Males were more than twice as likely to be discriminated against because of their skin colour than females (Alsaleem, 2021:1).

Learners in sub-Saharan Africa who studied in Morocco also had experiences of racism. According to Marshall (2019), in 2019 there was a case of a learner who was bullied and a victim of racism and was thinking of leaving school because of the comments that were directed at her. In the four years she lived there, she never made any local friends and was attacked several times. Moroccans often told her and her friends, “You’re African, you’re Black,” as they walked along the street. Moroccans consider themselves White and they do not like Black skin. It is difficult to determine whether this attitude is xenophobia or racism as all the perpetrators have dark skin. Morocco is a diverse country and a post-slavery society, yet learners are never taught the history of Morocco. In 2012, the Moroccan government denied an application to form an association to combat anti-Black racism by claiming that the concept of race does not apply to Moroccan society, so racism could not exist there (King, 2020:3).

2.6 A South African Perspective on Racial Discrimination in Schools

Racial discrimination occurs in multiracial schools and predominantly white schools that have enrolled Black, Indian and other races of learners. DuBois (2020) states that the colour line divides learners in predominantly white schools even in the 21st century. Research has shown that Black learners are constantly complaining about the harsh treatment that they are receiving from White learners, yet nothing is done about it. Instead, racial discrimination escalates in these schools. According to Atsango (2020), teachers directed comments at Black learners to shame them into silence. This did not happen in a township school or at a taxi rank. One of the teachers said, “I can’t wait to see you work as a car guard!” This shows that, even after 25 years of democracy, the country that is known for its diversity is still in the grip of the apartheid era, even though some laws and legislation have been implemented to eradicate discrimination against colour. Gruijters (2022) explains that “many, but not all, former White schools are now racially diverse to varying degrees, nonetheless they are not representative of the population, mostly because White learners remain overrepresented in these schools and Black learners, in particular, remain underrepresented in the country’s best schools”. Furthermore, research showed that, in 2021, White learners on average attended a school that was 68.5% White, 3.3% Indian, 8.5% Coloured, and 19.6% Black. White learners thus dominated in some schools even though they only constitute 3.8% of the overall population of learners who attended school in

2021 (Gruijters, 2022). These statistics are from one school and even though there is a small percentage of white learners in those schools' Black learners are allowed to study in model c and former white schools.

In light of recent media reports of racism in some South African schools, it is evident that many Black learners wish to be in former White schools without facing any complications. Numerous laws and policies based on the ideas of Batho-Pele (people first) and Ubuntu (humanness) have propelled the first democratic government in post-apartheid South Africa to adopt a corrective approach to address and transform racial inequities. However, recent media reports have shown that racial discrimination still occurs in South African schools. For example, in 2018 the media reported on a separatist language policy in a school in the Gauteng province that saw Black learners being excluded from that school because they did not speak Afrikaans (Mail and Guardian, 2018).

Another case reported on a controversial school policy on Black girls' 'untidy hair'. In Hoerskool Delmas in Mpumalanga, there was a case of a principal who issued a code of conduct that Black learners should not braid their hair or have Afros or bantu knots (Francis,2020). Additionally, this allows learners to discriminate against each other as it creates a hierarchy that some hair texture is better than other races. These cases of racial discrimination in South African schools are happening at a time when we are trying to rebuild the country to be a rainbow nation that will forget apartheid and look into the bright future. Williams (2018) argues that the South African education system remains damaged with imbalances and systemic challenges. Therefore, for South African multiracial schools to have low cases of racial discrimination, they should hold the perpetrators accountable. Furthermore, one should understand that racism is systemic and cultural. Although everyone has a right to education, Black learners still feel like their rights are not considered because their voices are not heard. They have been marching and protesting but change has been slow or non-existent.

2.7 Factors that Contribute to Racial Discrimination in Schools

Unfair discrimination has shaped the South African education system, resulting in inequality in our schools and society. The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2016) in the US states that racial discrimination may occur because of overt prejudice, hostility, or negative feelings held by someone about a racialized person or group. Unfortunately, people are still treated unequally.

The increase in racial discrimination in schools shows a lack of diversity, discipline, and a weak education system, especially in former White schools where Black learners were not accepted, and both educators and learners need to adapt to a new policy and welcome Black learners (Joorst,2019). Ferlazzo (2020) argues that although an increase in racial discrimination incidences exposes a lack of diversity, the cause may also be due to educators who say “they don’t see colour” in their classes. The latter author highlights that teachers should avoid denying racial identity realities.

The following are the factors that contribute to racial discrimination in schools:

2.7.1 The environment

Although children are born with unbiased innocence, the environment they are born into begins to frame their worldview, from the people they live with to the people they see only on-screen (Lopez, 2020:1). Environment plays a huge role in a child’s behaviour. Learners who are currently in high schools never experienced apartheid; they only see glimpses of it on television, or they are taught about it in history class or by their family members. According to Mdhuli (2018), learners spend the better part of their time at home and in society, followed by the time they spend at school. It is necessary to understand what transpires in learners’ lives to have an in-depth grasp of what happens at school. Family influences and teachings of racism will of necessity cause racial discrimination among learners in schools. Carrus (2018) of the Roma Tre University in Italy led a study on how parents affect their children in terms of racism, he selected parents, and they were tasked to respond to a statement about racial prejudice, then their children were given two tasks to calculate their level of implicit and explicit bias. The attitude of the parents towards their children when in the same environment said a lot, as they taught their children how to treat people of other races. The family and home constitute the primary agents of the socialization of learners into society while the media, school, and peers are secondary agents of socialization (Ngqela and Lewis, 2012:90). The family plays a vital role in grooming children to be kind and loving towards other children, particularly those of different races. Even though children can differentiate among races at an early age, parents have the crucial responsibility to ensure that children respect the identity and culture of others.

2.7.2 Discriminatory attitude in schools

In post-apartheid South Africa, the government adopted a corrective approach to redress and transform racial inequalities within South African schools (Moorosi, 2020:645). However, these policies have not brought justice to other races; instead, they made it easier for the race that was superior during the apartheid era to rule. According to De Villiers (2021), teachers' attitude in historically White schools that now welcome learners of all races is that they 'see no colour'. However, contrary to teachers' kind intentions, this is viewed as a discriminatory statement because these teachers do see colour but do not want to act upon it as they are scared that they will be labelled as racists. Bush and Moloji (2007) identified the lack of attention to race in schools more than a decade ago and it remains a gap to date. Teachers and school leaders need to take responsibility and ensure that the implemented policies are practised and that they create a harmonious school environment for all learners. Policy efforts to equalize education opportunities for all South African children have been made by the South African government; yet, as Fiske and Ladd (2004) and Spaul (2013) observe, the post-apartheid government has never been able to match the expenditure on Black learners to that of White learners before the abolishment of apartheid. Several studies note that this disparity does not reflect higher rates of misbehaviour among Black children any schools have contributed significantly to denying Black learners' education by enforcing zero-tolerance discipline policies these discriminatory policies are unfair and one of the first steps to rooting out policies that discriminate against Black learners is to look at the data of racist policies in schools (Mensah, 2020).

2.7.3 The influence of the media

The influence of the media on people's perceptions is sometimes viewed as a disadvantage to learners. Children are capable of perceiving different races as early as birth, especially when growing up surrounded by the influence of the media. By the age of four, they can distinguish physical features between races, and at ten, they are already grasping abstract traits and attributes among racial groups (Lopez, 2020:2). Movies and television are the first windows to children outside world. Studies have concluded that children are unable to discriminate between television and the real world until they are about three or four years old (Kirkorian 2021:42). Movies and television programmes tend to be fictional, but for children, the worlds, and stories they depict influence their attitude and beliefs of reality. Therefore, when people of colour are consistently portrayed as villains or subservient to the White hero, children begin to perceive these typecast roles to be true in real life (Lopez, 2020:7).

A study by Mutton (2021:30) revealed that South African movies that were screened in one month depicted white people in power whereas Black people were in supporting roles. These movies may teach learners, especially as they never experienced apartheid, how to be racist towards a learner of a different race or skin colour. In limited instances, participants argued that the media was destroying learners' mentality as it influenced them to see racism as good behaviour due to little sentencing or punishment. In the discussion on racial discrimination in schools, the issue of media has been raised several times. In as much as media are viewed as tools to assist learners in being updated on current affairs, they have destroyed many relationships among high school learners.

The problem of the media is increasingly becoming an issue for learners of 14 to 19 years. Even though learners start watching television or reading newspapers from an early age, from the 8th grade they consider themselves as young adults. Cortez (2019) and Hank Greenspun of the School of Journalism and Media Studies argue that various media forms play a key role in perpetuating bias against people of colour, as the language used to depict communities of colour is often derogatory. Furthermore, Tzun (2020) supports Cortez and highlights that Western media which is a White supremacist institution is the root cause of racial discrimination among learners in schools as they practice what they see in the media.

Social media is one of the most popular online platforms for all adolescents of colour. The most recent surveys found that more than 70% of Black and Latina youth used at least one social media platform, with half reporting they used the internet almost constantly in 2018. A study by Van Dijk (2023) showed that various groups of learners discriminated against others due to what they had seen on social media or television. Movies such as *The Hate You Give* teach learners that White learners are always superior and need not fear the environment they are in. Parents and teachers should encourage their children and learners to watch movies such as *The Colour of Friendship* which is a good movie for children to watch as it understands race from a unique perspective.

In the discussion on race and racism, the issue of social media as a negative impact on learners takes centre stage. In as much as the world is revolving to new technologies and a modernised society, it cannot be ignored that social media can sometimes present false information to cover

embarrassing events. Social media is often used to entertain learners who know so much about technology, but over-exposure can cause harm to a child, especially if they are not guided and the material they watch is not monitored. The assertion associated with watching many movies that are associated with people of colour being victimized might trigger levels of violence in children when they are at school.

2.7.4 Being ‘colour-blind’

Being colour-blind has become an integral part of national and international conversations on race. According to Williams (2018), colour blindness is a racial ideology that posits that the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equal without regard for their race or ethnicity. Typically, teachers usually practise the attitude of colour blindness when they are teaching learners in class. Many learners find this statement extremely hard to understand as they can see that their skin colour is not the same due to racial differences. Occasionally, learners who feel attacked by this statement are those whose parents have taught them to be proud of their skin colour, whether it is Black or White. Sometimes learners may understand this statement to eliminate the colour of their skins. Asare (2017) states that the belief in colour blindness does not only amount to a dismissal of the lived experiences of learners of colour, but they pretend that racism does not exist so long as one ignores it. Furthermore, Kupungani (2020) supports Asare (2017) by highlighting that colour blindness means we are all just people and not see the history of violence that took place, and the trauma perpetuated in mixed/multiracial schools.

A study by Salisbury (2020) reveals that some teachers use a different approach to learners on how to adapt to colour blindness in the classroom. This approach obscures the deep-seated nature of structural racism when people talk about one race only: humanity. This denies and erases the lived experiences of learners who live with the daily effects of racism. As every learner is aware of different races, teachers should accept that there are children with different skin colours, and every learner should be taught to embrace this as well. To eradicate cases of racial discrimination among learners, teachers should stop using the term ‘I see no colour’ when teaching so that every learner will have a sense of belonging and be proud of who they are without being confused.

Teachers who say they ‘do not see colour’ deny themselves the opportunity of beautiful experiences in the classroom and relationships with their diverse learners (Ferlazzo, 2020). The aim of teachers is to teach learners and prepare them for a society or the world that is not colour blind and has a history of racism and they should understand how best to teach children to tackle negative comments about their skin (Ferlazzo, 2020). When a learner’s race is acknowledged, it sends a message that their race is not an issue. Ignoring it might make learners feel as though there is a problem, while ‘seeing no colour’ will not prevent racial discrimination among learners; instead, talking about it will assist in ways of dealing with diversity. Moreover, introducing programs that actually assist learners to know who they are is vital.

In school, teachers and other learners mostly influence learners’ behaviour inside and outside the classroom, but in society, they are exposed to many other influences. The violence that occurs in schools is derived from the behaviour that learners have learnt outside the classroom. It cannot be ignored that it is very rare to find someone outside the school using the term ‘colour-blindnesses Learners spend enormous amounts of time in school or on their way to and from school (Mdhuli, 2020:24). Since the learners spend 8 hours of their time in school that is a long time for them learn other behaviours and how to treat other learners with respect.

The idea of ‘colour-blindness’ is highly popular, especially among young people who believe racism is a problem for the older generation and will soon die out. According to Stafford (2015), a 2014 study that was conducted in partnership with MTV and David Binder Research, found that almost three-fourths of millennials believed that they should not see the colour of someone’s skin, as though it is a choice. 70% believe they have achieved this and are now actually colour-blind, and the same percentage shockingly believed that they made society better by not seeing race or ethnicity. According to King (2022), there is not much other research on the relationship between colour blindness and racism, however, it cannot be ignored that race must be noticed as it is an identity for a person and it defines their history and who they are.

2.8 Effects of Racial Discrimination on Learners

2.8.1 Psychological impacts of racism

Schools are intended to be a safe environment for learners where they can learn, socialize, and learn about other learners' cultures and histories. When learners are discriminated against at school, they do not consider that these actions have consequences for their grades. Furthermore, the outcomes of racism also affect the pass rate in a school. Racial discrimination leads to depression due to unfair treatment that the learners are receiving from other learners, especially learners of colour who are schooled in schools that were once White. Thus, some learners of colour fail or drop out due to the pressure they experience at school. Valente (2013:2) states that "discrimination can be any behaviour that makes the school an uncomfortable learning environment that makes it hard for learners to perform very well". Learners of colour who have been victims of racism find it difficult to perform well due to the uncomfortable environment that they are exposed to. It is difficult to concentrate in an environment where you know that you are not wanted. Many of the events that play out in South African schools can be classified as implicit racism. That is because racism in schools very often emanates from broader structural and institutional racism. This is less easy to recognize from the outside than instances of racist language or behaviour (Joorst, 2019).

Research has shown that teachers are often not supportive because they are also part of the race issue. Anderson (2019:20) states that "another difficulty that affects communication between Black learners and White teachers is the attitude by teachers, 'I don't see colour, as all I see are learners. He states that he spoke to many White teachers who proclaimed this attitude of colour blindness and argues that "this attitude makes solving communication differences impossible". White supremacy in multiracial schools thus continues to be a problem in South Africa, especially where White learners are still being prioritized compared to Black learners. In 2022 there were many cases of Black depressed learners and many more marched to the Department of Education because they were tired of being mistreated. In 2022, Metz (2022) reported that a student had committed suicide because she was being bullied for being of a different race.

The Department of Basic Education is not taking this matter seriously enough; hence, they always suspend wrongdoers for two weeks and re-instate them back like nothing happened. Learners of colour who study at multiracial schools are more prone to racism because the system of transitioning is difficult, especially when there are cases of racial discrimination in schools of mixed races monthly. "Many former Whites-only schools also show little flexibility

in accommodating the identities and worldviews of learners from other race groups” (Joorst, 2019, n.p.). This attitude can shadow the future of a young Black learner who wants to have a better education and progress in life without feeling as if the justice system and the Department of Basic Education are failing them. Anderson (2019) reported that a Black learner had been stopped several times by the police to do racial profiling, and at the school gate, they just did screening for that reason. He was always late for his first period and could not concentrate in class. This is an example of Black learners who drop out or fail a grade because they cannot adapt to a class, and they are missing a lot of information. Almost half (49%) of the participants in another study said they believed racism was the biggest barrier to academic attainment (Weale, 2020). Another impact of racism on children is that it jeopardizes their prospects for the future. The youth are the next generation, but racism among young people leads to more anti-social behaviours and raises the likelihood of children getting involved in criminal activities. It also hinders their educational opportunities in middle and high school. Racism thus poses a significant problem in numerous elementary, middle, and high schools as it negatively impacts the education of children, which is detrimental to the future of our nation.

2.8.2 Poor academic performance

A study conducted by Pinheiro (2006:130, cited in Mduli, 2018:27) avers that racial discrimination has been flagged as a reason for absenteeism, lack of motivation for academic performance, and school dropout. The impact of racism in school has not been as extensively researched as racism in education. However, it is acknowledged that the perpetrators and victims of racism obtain lower marks academically. Therefore, one outstanding fact about violent learners and antisocial behaviour is the weak academic performance of the victims (Singh and Steyn, 2014:84). Some learners who perform badly at school have been abused by other learners and they lose motivation to even try, because their ability to concentrate is affected. Racial discrimination can lead to lower academic achievement for minority students due to a lack of support and resources. Furthermore, discrimination can also lead to lower self-esteem and motivation, which will negatively impact academic performance (Brown, 2020:47).

A recent study suggests that the stress of racial discrimination may partly explain the persistent gaps in academic performance by some non-White learners, Black and Latino youth, and their White counterparts (Anderson, 2016). In South Africa, studies have shown that learners of

colour who are studying in former White schools commonly have lower grades, the reason being that when they report cases of racism they are not being heard. Perpetrators are also suspended for a week or two and then they are back to school. This leads victims to abscond for prolonged periods, while some quit school or transfer to other schools that will accept them. On the other hand, learners who abuse others remain at school and proceed with their work (Mdhuli, 2018:28). Another study also found that the cumulative effects of racialized macroaggressions in schools harm the emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of learners of colour and hinder their academic and social lives (Castillo, Koob, Olson, and Quispe 2017:1).

High rates of exposure to racial discrimination can adversely affect the mental health of learners and hinder their motivation to participate in school activities. For instance, in South Africa Life Orientation is offered in grades 10-12, and learners must participate in physical activities and learn about social issues. Failure to obtain good grades in this subject may cause a learner to fail if they also fail another subject. Another factor that impacts learners is that the transition from primary to high school can be challenging, especially for those who have never been in a multiracial school. These learners become vulnerable to racial discrimination and drop their grades (Bottiani et al, 2020:1020). Even though learners might develop strategies to reduce racial stressors, this process has consequences for their academic success. The researchers in one of the studies documented how predominantly White schools functioned as hostile spaces for African American and Caribbean students. In both settings, students were racially stereotyped by their peers and teachers as academically inferior and/or having behavioural problems (Chapman and Bhopal, 2019:1117).

One research study found that 70% of Black learners experienced racial discrimination and 40% of those experiences were perceived as disturbing learners' academic performance (Bettain et al, 2020:1021). The above statistics suggest that most learners who drop out of school may do so not because they are not capable of performing academically, but possibly because of victimization by their peers. Weir (2016) agrees that racial discrimination is one of many factors that contribute to the achievement gap, therefore it is a dynamic that cannot be ignored. Moreover, it is necessary to give recognition to the history of racism in potentially harmful learning environments of Black learners, and it is critical to examine the risk and protective factors that influence the development of positive academic attitudes and beliefs

(Morris, Seaton, Lida and Johnson, 2020:2). Learners' learning capacity can easily be disturbed, especially when they are in high school where they hope to choose appropriate subjects and obtain good grades to qualify for tertiary level. Therefore, if their performance is bad, their chances of going to university are limited. It is, however, also true that some learners perform exceptionally well even when they are victims of abuse. But this does not mean that their background and history must be ignored.

2.8.3 Suicide

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among high school learners aged 14-18 years after unintentional injuries, and this phenomenon is a major challenge globally (Stephenson et al., 2020:47). In support of Stephenson et al. (2020:47), Dwangu (2023) avers that high school learners aged 14-18 are prone to suicidal attempts and successful suicide. Suicide is often committed by learners in multiracial schools and is particularly prevalent among learners who were ostracised or teased by others because of their skin colour. According to Alabi (2022), suicide constitutes the fourth leading cause of death among learners and young people aged 15-19 years. Students in higher education represent a significant subset of this group.

A study conducted by DeLara (2019:2380) involving over eight hundred Australian secondary school students found that racism had a significant mental health impact on young people who experience abuse, including:

- ongoing feelings of sadness, anger, depression and being left out • headaches, increased heart rate, sweating, trembling and muscle tension.
- a constant fear of being verbally or physically attacked.
- not wanting to go to school
- having little or no trust in anybody apart from family.

These impacts can reduce learners' ability to study and achieve their goals for the future. Racism also affects people's general well-being when they are denied equal access to jobs, services, and education.

Shalubane, Ruiters, Khoza, and Van den Bome (2023) state that South Africa has a high rate of suicides in high schools. Learners who committed suicide were under a lot of pressure and lived in fear of engaging with teachers when facing racial discrimination. Several cases of learners committing suicide because of racist comments have been reported and they have received the

media's attention. According to Dunnigan (2020), a learner from Alabama committed suicide after she had been racially victimized by learners from her school in 2018.

Suicide was therefore the only escape for learners who were victims of racism in high schools.

2.9 Reporting cases of racial discrimination in schools

In most cases, learners avoid reporting incidents of racism as they will be labelled snitches or teachers' pets and be mocked. Mdhuli (2018) states that some cases may be considered too trivial to warrant reporting, while others may attract stigma when reported to the school principal or teachers. Furthermore, sometimes the victim may also fail to report acts of racism in fear of revenge attacks. In most cases, learners do report such incidents, but principals often do not report the case to the authorities to preserve the reputation of the school. In South Africa, there is a growing trend of learners in primary and high schools who do not report cases of racial discrimination as they assume that these are not very pertinent or warrant being reported (SACE, 2011:12).

2.10 Strategies to address racial discrimination in schools.

2.10.1 Drafting an anti-racist policy.

The history of systematic racial discrimination or apartheid has long ended, which means the ending of segregation. Whites, Africans, and all races are now allowed in all schools in South Africa. However, the Department of Basic Education has been facing a serious challenge due to cases of racial discrimination reported in some schools across the country. Modisane (2020) avers that cases of racial discrimination are increasing in schools, estimating that, annually, more than five schools per province report cases of racial discrimination. Although these incidences only represent 0.0003% of the 21.7 million learners in South African public schools in 2020, this author states that it is a significant issue that requires immediate attention, and the researcher agrees that only one child that is racially mocked is one child too many. The Department of Basic Education has implemented several strategies to promote racial integration. One requirement is that all governing bodies must draft an anti-racist policy that must be adhered to by staff, parents, and learners.

However, a survey that was conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (2005) indicated that almost 60% of learners stated that their schools did not have a policy or programme to eliminate racism, nor one that was successful. From the outset, it was understood that a study of present-day racial integration in schools would first have to acknowledge racism as a structural feature of society and understand it in its historical context. The writers of the above report support the view that racial inequality in schools is not merely an aberration nor an excrescence but is structurally linked to wider social relations and the economic, political, and social fabric of society. They also posit that racism is not merely about cultural ignorance or misunderstanding but aver that present-day racism in schools in South Africa has to be understood concerning its history and contemporary political and economic disadvantages and patterns of inequality in society.

Anderson (2016) argues that the anti-racist policy in schools is not enough if the Department of Basic Education protects the perpetrators from the police and merely suspends them for a few weeks. Due to this problem, programs on racial integration and diversity are failing to teach learners about equality, whether in multiracial or non-multiracial schools. The Department also uses the strategy to work with the SAPS to spread awareness that racial discrimination is a serious offence. In this context, Peyton et al. (2019:110) state that, due to the lack of support and communication between the police and the school, the police can't make any arrests. Instead, such cases are always under investigation while the perpetrator is still at school.

According to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (2019), The National Action Plan (NAP) to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance has been implemented by the government to address the issue of racism. This researcher contends that, given that the ills of unfair discrimination and inequality are human made, we have the means to completely eradicate these ills from our country. Avoiding the situation or not acting to apprehend the perpetrators can result in escalating cases of racial discrimination because learners will see that there is no justice for the victims. One essential step in addressing racism in schools is to create safe spaces for open and honest discussions on racism, particularly for those who experience racism daily. Schools should find ways to create safe spaces for people (including learners, teachers, and ground staff) who experience racism to talk about their experiences without fear of being judged or facing damaging consequences.

2.10.2 Community involvement

The community is the support system of learners who are still growing and seeking guidance, and it is where they need strategies aimed at building their confidence and promoting peace. Many schools have contributed effortlessly to promote diversity and create a safe environment for learners to learn despite their racial differences. Therefore, involving the community in preventing racial discrimination against some learners will assist in ensuring that learners will embrace the colour of their skin. Malatji (2019) states that schools can have fewer cases of racial discrimination if they are an integral part of the community. Adelman and Tylor (2006) and Pennefather (2008) agree that schools should collaborate with the community towards disciplining and teaching learners about the importance of diversity to promote an inclusive and harmonious environment in schools.

Several nations have adopted the technique of involving parents and the community in establishing a school ethos. According to Mdhuli (2020), parent-teacher associations in North America embrace the role of the community to support learners by means of umbrella bodies with a national outlook. These associations play a vital role in monitoring schools and intervening in a way that is appropriate and that promotes diversity.

2.10.3 Parental involvement

In South Africa, positive behavioural support also aims to build a school environment that allows learners of different races to enjoy studying. This support emphasises prevention, teaching, and reinforcement to achieve meaningful outcomes regarding learner behaviours in schools (Malatji, 2019:73). In other countries, the involvement of parents and the community is also seen as a game changer because learners tend to listen to their parents rather than teachers because they often feel like teachers are siding with learners of other races.

Harrison (2020) highlights that parents can do many things to raise their children to understand racial discrimination and the importance of diversity. Furthermore, he discovered that, if parents and community members do not collaborate, then learners will think that racism does not matter or that it is someone else's problem. Engaging with learners about racism and racial discrimination can be challenging, and some parents worry that engaging with their children about this issue might confuse them. On the other hand, those parents and community members

who experienced racism themselves find it meaningful to engage with children about this issue (UNICEF, 2020).

2.10.4 Adhering to laws and regulations

The transition from apartheid to democracy and the end of the segregation of learners in schools was assisted by various laws that were implemented by the South African government. This government implemented the Constitution that entrenches the rights of everyone in all aspects of life (Megan, 2023:9). Most countries possess laws and policies that seek to avoid racial discrimination among learners in schools, as these are spaces where learners should differentiate between what is right and what is wrong and take responsibility for their actions. According to the Bill of Rights Chapter 2 section 9 in the South African Constitution, no one must unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, ethnicity, colour, or language. The right to education is affirmed in section 3(a), which states that learners should receive education without discrimination because of their race. However, the Department of Basic Education and schools often seem not to take these directions into account when disciplining learners who are racist.

Schools in South Africa must protect learners who are voiceless against racial discrimination, as stated in the Constitution and the Children's Act, the Schools Act, as well as Common law and Case law (Mollo, 2009:28, cited in Mdhuli, 2020:35). All laws relevant to education should be a foundation for learners to understand that racial discrimination and the violation of human rights in South Africa are against the law. Section 10 of the Constitution states that every learner is supposed to enjoy the right to human dignity in a safe and secure school environment. This means that learners must be protected and respected, be free from all forms of violence, and not be punished because of the colour of their skin (Mollo, 2009:30, cited in Mdhuli, 2020:38). Schools should disseminate these laws to each learner and their parents, especially in multiracial schools where racism is often prevalent among learners.

2.10.5 School initiatives to ensure racial integration.

To eradicate racism in schools, one approach is to instruct and train teachers and administrators on how to implement culturally relevant and inclusive practices (Jones, 2020). It is important that schools research which policies and programmes to establish as this will help them have clear direction and an effective response to racial discrimination. The implementation of

relevant policies and programmes will not only assist in preventing racial discrimination but will also teach learners that it is a crime to be racist.

2.11 Chapter Summary

The reviewed literature revealed racial discrimination's context and nature from national and international perspectives. The review affirms that racial discrimination among learners in schools is a global issue, and it is prevalent in South African multiracial schools despite the history, policies, and initiatives that have been implemented by the government after 1994. This highlights that there is an urgent need to raise awareness and address the current situation in schools. Many factors contribute to racial discrimination among high school learners, and one of the most important factors is the attitude of being 'colour-blind' that teachers adopt not to discriminate against the race of learners. However, this attitude fails to acknowledge learners' differences in terms of culture and background.

Racial discrimination affects the victims as it affects their thinking capabilities and hinders them from performing well. Internationally, various people of other races, for instance, Latinos, also experience racial discrimination, but it is not as severe as schools in South Africa as this country is still recovering from the past. South Africa has policies and legislations that protect and ensure the safety of learners in the school environment, but eradicating racial discrimination in schools may seem impossible due to learners' diverse environments and parental influences. To address cases of racial discrimination in schools, they should work closely with the SAPS to identify and punish those learners who are breaking the law. The next chapter will explicate the theories that underpinned the study to better understand the prevalence of racial discrimination among learners in high schools.

CHAPTER THREE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the three theoretical frameworks that were used in this study to understand the racially induced violent behaviour of learners against others in school. Theories are formulated “to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounded assumptions or predictions of behaviour” (Gabriel, 2008:44). The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theories that were used to explain racial behaviour among high school learners were the social learning theory, the ecological systems theory, and the racial trauma theory. These theories were suitable for this study as they assisted the researcher in unpacking various aspects of racism and understanding the phenomenon of learners’ tendency to discriminate against others. Gen Z and Gen Alpha had the privilege of being born during a time when they had the freedom to choose where they wanted to study. The ecological systems theory was used to explain how parents and teachers can play a role in educating children about the importance of diversity, while the social learning theory was used to unpack how and where these learners were acquiring racist attitudes. The racial trauma theory helped to explore the effects of racial discrimination on the mental well-being of learner victims.

3.2 The Social Learning Theory

3.2.1 History of the social learning theory

In 1977, Bandura, an American psychologist, posited the learning theory using the Bobo doll experience (Bandura and Walters, 1977). This experiment was conducted in 1961 using a toy clown that preschool-aged children had to observe to decide if they wanted to imitate it or not (Perumal, 2021:23). According to Memela (2013), Bandura’s perspective on social learning has for a long time provided a broad-band explanation for both desirable and undesirable behavioural outcomes. The social learning theory that was subsequently devised integrates stimuli, cognition, behaviour, and consequent reinforcement in an environment that is viewed as the cause of the behaviour.

Bandura does not view learning as a direct result of conditioning, reinforcement, and punishment, but rather argues that most human behaviours are learned through modelling, observational learning, and the imitation of the attitudes, behaviours, and emotional reactions of other people (Perumal, 2021:24). According to the social learning theory, a behaviour can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behaviour of others, especially those who are close to you. Social learning asserts that children's behaviour is mostly influenced by environmental factors and not only by psychological or cognitive factors (Memela, 2013:27). Thus, the behaviour and development of children are influenced by both environmental and psychological factors, resulting in the different behaviours that children manifest that can be either bad or good.

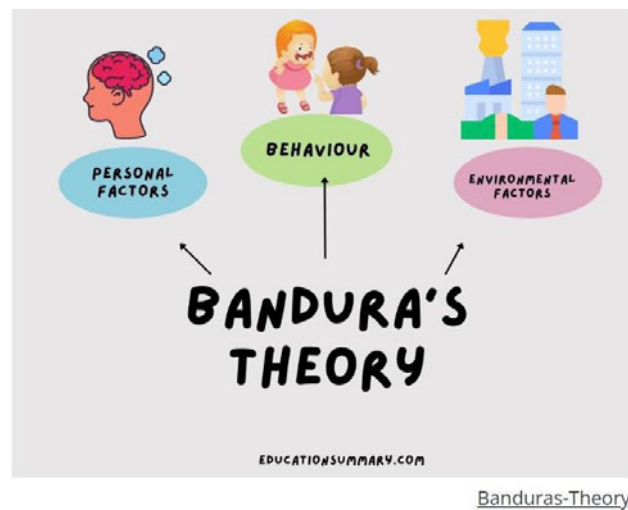


Figure 3.1: Factors that contribute to deviant behaviour.

Source: KCSIE: Teachers' guide, 2022

Bandura (1977) explains that three factors environmental, behavioural, and psychological processes have an impact on a person through interaction. For this reason, the theory focuses on modelling because learners observe others and then adopt new behaviours. To understand this behaviour change, Bandura claims that four steps need to happen for learning to take place: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Perumal, 2021:25). Figure 3.1 illustrates the components that are needed in the modelling process.

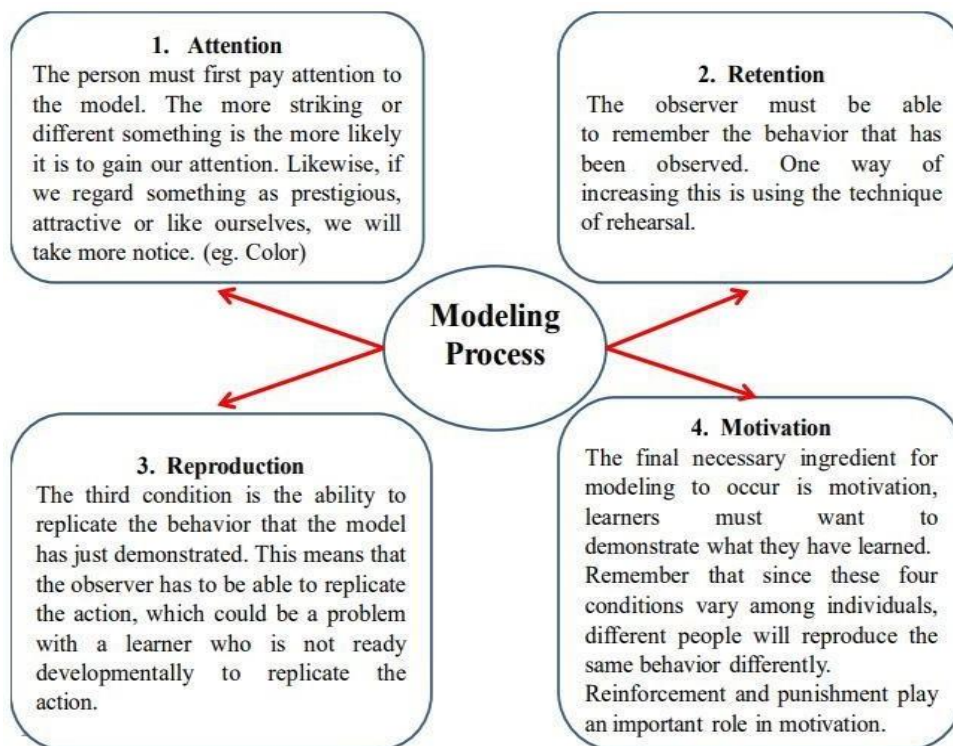


Figure 3.2: The four components of the social learning theory

Source: Nabavi, 2012

3.2.2 The components of the social learning theory

Attention: Children who are still in their adolescent stage like to pay attention to an act that is usually amoral or taboo in society. When a person engages in an attention process, she or he actively concentrates on a model to enact a particular behaviour, taking in the relevant information and distinctive features of the model's behaviour that will be used (Memela, 2013:28). Thus, when the child pays attention to a specific behaviour and concrete on the behaviour that is easy to emulate, they do so. According to Perumal (2021), children tend to imitate certain behaviours because not all behaviours are attractive to children. Furthermore, children pay attention to the person they are looking up to; for instance, a role model or a person they admire. When something or behaviour is attractive or striking in the eyes of children, it is likely to grab their attention and be emulated at a later stage due to retention (Nabavi, 2012:10).

Retention: In the process of learning a behaviour, the child needs to remember the behaviour that was observed. Perumal (2021) states that sometimes a behaviour that is observed can be forgotten, and this helps in preventing the imitation of that behaviour. This is the stage where

the child is being questioned or questioned themselves how much what they have observed is remembered. Retention and recall can generate behaviour using imagery and descriptive language, and this increases the chance that modelled behaviour will be reproduced.

Reproduction: Children daydream about what was observed and transform that observation into actual behaviour (Bouree, 2006). As mentioned in the retention stage, remembered images can be used to emulate what was observed. The mind can store memories, especially those that captured one's attention, and one is then able to remember these images at a later stage. Fitzgibbons (2023) supports the notion that, when a child has effectively paid attention to a behaviour and then modelled it, they have achieved the necessary skills and are able to imitate that behaviour again.

Motivation: Motivation is one of the driving forces that influences a child's behaviour to change. Once a child has been motivated and has seen the rewards, they can then change their behaviour and be the character of the person they observed. Bandura (1971) highlights that, during learning, people not only perform responses but also observe the different consequences following their actions. Hence, many people will observe and decide if the behaviour is punishable or not. If the behaviour that was observed is punished, then that behaviour may not be reproduced (Perumal, 2021:25). Hence, many people will sometimes weigh the punishment of behaviour that has been modelled, and positive reinforced behaviour will be produced instead of negative reinforced behaviour. There are three types of reinforcement: direct reinforcement, vicarious reinforcement, and self-reinforcement (Horsburg and Ippolito, 2018). Direct reinforcement is when the child is receiving rewards for their actions. This can occur as positive or negative reinforcement such as verbal encouragement. Vicarious reinforcement is when the child sees the person, they were imitating being rewarded. The aim of this is to encourage the child to imitate that behaviour. Self-reinforcement is when the child is self-rewards for a particular behaviour.

3.2.3 The limitations of the social learning theory

The social learning theory has been criticised for ignoring visceral nervous system responses and biological factors (Tarsono, 2018). This is because there are children who inherited these behaviours, and they were therefore not learned. Furthermore, his theory is criticised for using the Bobo doll in the experiment to explain how behaviours are learnt. It is assumed that the doll

was artificial, meaning that if an adult was acting forcefully towards a child, other children would not have repeated the behaviour. This suggests that children in the experiment were manipulated using a doll because they could have been playing with the doll and not imitating aggressive behaviour (Bouchrika, 2024). Additionally, Bandura's theory is criticised on the strength that violent behaviour is also learnt through social media and television. Some people learn good behaviour by watching television and parents then teach their children new skills and to differentiate between right and wrong (Bouchrika, 2024). Children then learn the importance of imitating good behaviour because most of the time cartoons emphasise the disadvantages of being a villain. However, when bad behaviour is consistently observed and internalised, particularly in the absence of parental monitoring, such behaviour will likely be emulated.

3.2.4 Application of the social learning theory to racist behaviour in schools

In the case of racial discrimination and behaviours in schools, the social learning theory explains why racial slurs and comments still occur even though we live in a democratic society. Behaviours are learnt through observing and imitating others, but current learners never experienced apartheid or wars because of racial conflict. This means that learners learn these behaviours from imitating the people around them or from television. Hjerm, Eger and Danell (2018) explain this by stating that there is a correlation between the environment and learners' deviant behaviour and that, during adolescence, the social environment plays a critical role in forging their attitude. Learning would have been exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had relied solely on the effects of their actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling. Thus, by observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are formed and, on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action (Bandura, 1977:22). This highlights that children do not see any problem in observing and modelling the racist behaviours of others because they look up to them. This does not mean that they learnt this behaviour from society or the environment they grew up in, as they commonly model what they see in the media and by observing people who were rewarded for their actions. Learners are vulnerable human beings and can do anything to entertain their friends at school or gain popularity, particularly by behaving aggressively, and when this occurs with impunity, other learners emulate this behaviour.

The social learning theory was therefore valuable in explaining the development of racist behaviour in learners. In this context, learners in multi-racial schools observe how their parents or other people treat different races in their societies, schools, or the media, and they then mistreat other races in turn because they perceive that these are inferior to them. According to Perumal (2021), even reactions to a violent situation can be learned because this would catch and hold learners' attention. Cases of racial discrimination that have been trending can be traced back to learners' environments where they noticed that White people were treated differently compared to Black, Coloured, or Indian citizens. Theoretically, if a learner never observes such behaviour, then the racist behaviour will never be learned. However, if such behaviours are observed, retention serves to remember those behaviours; for example, a learner who watched movies such as *Skin* and *The Hate You Give* will remember how Black learners were treated at school and try to reproduce what they have observed because to them learners of a different colour do not deserve to be in their school. Positive reinforcement will then determine whether the learned behaviour is continued. When the cases of racial discrimination among high school learners in schools were considered, there was not much negative reinforcement to curb this behaviour; thus, because they were only suspended for a few days and apologised to the victims, they were reinstated. If harsher punishments are meted out, then the number of cases of racial discrimination in schools will be curbed.

In the modern world, learners may erupt into aggressive behaviour even though it was not observed, but it occurs because they are emotionally charged and then decide to target those whom they perceive as less powerful, which is often a learner of another race. Memela (2013) argues that the social learning theory has its limitations concerning explaining certain behaviours that can manifest under certain conditions, arguing that a learner can commit a crime that s/he has never observed before. This suggests that there are other drivers of racism and that these phenomena need to be identified and explored in depth.

One of the primary strengths of the social learning theory is its ability to explain the differences in a person's behaviour or learning process. Wildemeersch and Jansen (2020) state that the social learning theory's strengths include its applicability to a wide range of behaviours, its ease of implementation in countering maladaptive behaviours, its ease of understanding, and its ability to integrate social and cognitive skills through practice and observation. This is because

it enables people to recognize proper behaviours for themselves via practice and observation, and these approaches are regarded as empowering.

3.3 The Racial Trauma Theory

The Racial Trauma Theory was introduced by Dr Robert Carter (2007) whose work focused on the traumatic stress and mental illnesses that people of colour and indigenous people (POCI) experienced. According to Comas-Diaz, Hall and Neville (2019), this theory illustrates how people of colour are exposed to race-based stress and how the stress impacts their mental wellbeing. The racial trauma theory thus focuses on the mental and emotional injury caused because of past experiences such as racial discrimination and hate crimes. Carter (2007) accentuates that the major contributing factor to the issue of racial discrimination and its effect on the mental health of its targets fails to acknowledge the emotional, psychological, and to some extent physical effects of racial discrimination on its targets. People who experience racial discrimination tend to be ignorant of how their experiences of racial discrimination could paralyze and psychologically damage them.

Carter, Johnson Muchow and Lyons (2016) propose that using the racial trauma theory will assist in identifying and assessing the possible impact of psychological and emotional anxiety due to racism. They identified sixty-six studies that had found that Black Americans had negative health mental outcomes due to exposure to racism, and 23 studies of Asians and 50 studies of Latinos with similar challenges (Carter, Johnson Muchow and Lyons, 2016:64). The effects of racial discrimination mostly impact those that directly experience it, because they are the primary victims. Clark et al. (1999) assert that racial discrimination is a stressor that negatively affects health. Furthermore, Bryant-Davis and Ocampo (2005) affirm that racial discrimination plays a significant role in the advent of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is evident in historical works and the literature on racial discrimination how victims were traumatised because of their past and how badly they were treated because of the colour of their skin. In recent studies, racial discrimination has been flagged as a key stressor and a significant factor in the manifestation of mental illnesses.

The racial trauma theory focuses on racism and how it impacts the individual's mental health. It examines racism individually, institutionally, and culturally. This theory emphasizes that racial trauma results from experiences of racism, discrimination, and oppression. Furthermore,

cumulative trauma occurs through repeated exposure to racism and historical trauma transmits intergenerationally from past racial inhumanity. According to Williams, Haeny and Holmes (2021:21), racial trauma can be defined as “the increasingly traumatizing effect of racism on individuals”. Racial discrimination encompasses both individual acts and systemic racism, and it often involves historical, cultural, and community trauma. A person who experiences trauma can have several responses due to how they are feeling and how severe the experience was.

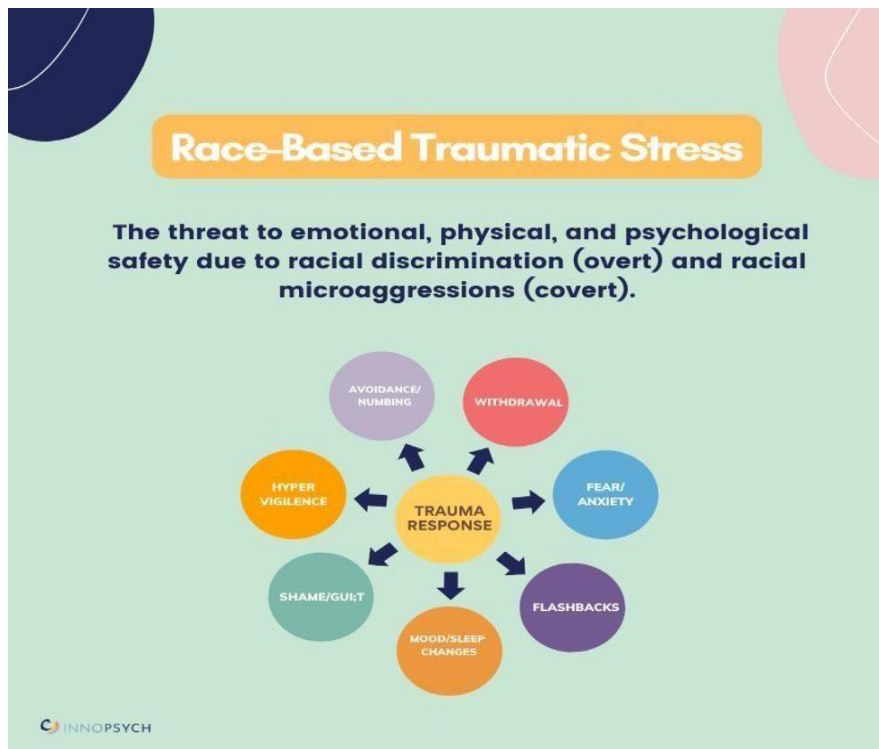


Figure 3.3: Trauma responses

Source: InnoPsych, 2023

Racial trauma, also known as race-based stress, involves experiences of danger linked to real or perceived racial discrimination. Examples of this trauma include facing threats of harm, experiencing humiliating events, being shamed, and witnessing harm inflicted on other people of colour and Indigenous communities due to actual or perceived racism (Comas-Diaz, Hall and Neville, 2019:1). Racial discrimination can be overt as it can manifest openly. Microaggression is covert as the behaviour occurs or manifests secretly. According to Chin and Wyatt (2023), racial microaggression is a form of discrimination that has been linked to depression symptoms and negative effects. Racial-based trauma is associated with depression, anxiety, and flashbacks, while racial discrimination has been linked to many negative mental health conditions. However, the interconnectedness of racial discrimination and PTSD

symptoms seems to be the most robust. According to Sibrava, Bjornsson and Carlos et al., (2019), African American and Latinx adults may develop PTSD more severely than White adults. PTSD is a highly dangerous psychological effect of trauma because if the victim is not treated, he or she could succumb to depression and suicide. PTSD can be seen as an umbrella term to discuss how racial discrimination impacts the victim.

Many researchers and practitioners have formulated psychological strategies to aid in recovering from racial trauma. These strategies encompass psychotherapy, group therapy, community initiatives, and ethno-political interventions (Bryant-Davis and Ocampo, 2006; Carter, 2007; Comas-Díaz, 2000, 2016). Unfortunately, racial trauma has both psychological and physical repercussions. Various symptoms of racial trauma, such as heightened alertness to danger, intrusive memories, nightmares, avoidance behaviours, distrust, and physical manifestations like headaches and heart palpitations, resemble those of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Despite these resemblances, racial trauma is distinct from PTSD. The process of healing from racial trauma is complex due to the fact that racial injuries occur within an ongoing socio-political framework. Additionally, existing definitions of trauma, traumatic stress, and treatment approaches are primarily rooted in European perspectives (HernándezWolfe, 2013). The experience of racial trauma for American Indians commenced with the arrival of Europeans in North America and continues to this day. Skewes and Blume (2019) explored the relationship between racial trauma and substance abuse among American Indians through a qualitative study involving tribal members on a reservation. Their findings revealed that racism was identified as both a trigger for substance use and an obstacle to recovery.

3.3.1 Limitations of the racial trauma theory

Despite its value, the racial trauma theory has several limitations. According to Cokley (2020), the theory fails to notice the structural and systematic aspects of racism because of its limited emphasis on personal pain. Certain aspects need to be considered when focusing on individual trauma. Additionally, the theory does not account for other identities that may contribute to experiences of racial trauma, such as gender, sexuality, and class (Hooks, 2014). Racial trauma may be influenced by a lot of aspects and the theory should consider expanding its discussions on that. Love (2019) asserts that the theory tends to stress more about individual healing, which may diminish social change and collective action. It is particularly important to work

collaboratively to achieve a common goal which is to help those who are impacted by trauma to heal; thus, one should not look at the problem individually.

3.3.2 Application of the racial trauma theory to the study

This theory was relevant to the study as it elucidated the importance of mental well-being and how learners who had been and those that had not been victims of racial discrimination were affected. Learners who experience racial discrimination are often at risk of experiencing PTSD and exacerbated trauma. Using this theory, the researcher was able to explore how racial discrimination affected learners' mental health, whether they were victims or not. This theory also attempts to answer the difference between racial discrimination and racial microaggression, which is an aspect that learners tend to experience, and this perpetuates racism and oppression. The application of this knowledge was therefore crucial in this study.

3.4 The Ecological Systems Theory

The ecological systems theory was developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1977). According to this theory, an individual's development is influenced by a series of interconnected environmental systems, ranging from the immediate surroundings (e.g., the family) to broad societal structures (e.g., culture) (Evans, 2024). Therefore, considering escalating racial discrimination incidences in schools, the ecological systems theory was used to describe how and why racial discrimination in schools is caused, what its root causes are, and how it can be prevented. The importance of this theory lies in the fact that it is aware that there is an interplay between different human, relational, group, and societal influences (Sibisi, 2021:1026). According to Ryan (2001), to study a child's development, one must look not only at the child and his/her immediate environment but also at the child's interaction with the larger environment.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) differentiates between five levels of dynamic interacting environmental systems that impact the developing child moreover, the ecological systems theory can be used to gain insight into how racial discrimination operates within different environmental contexts. For example, racial discrimination can impact individuals at multiple levels of the ecological system. At the microsystem level, interpersonal interactions within immediate environments (such as family, peers, and community) can perpetuate discriminatory beliefs and behaviours. The mesosystem may involve interactions between different microsystems where

discrimination can be reinforced or challenged. In the exosystem, policies and institutional practices that perpetuate racial discrimination can have a direct or indirect impact on individuals and communities. The macrosystem, which encompasses broader cultural norms and values, can influence the prevalence and acceptance of discriminatory attitudes.

Additionally, the chronosystem recognises that racial discrimination has historical roots and that it evolves so that it affects individuals and communities differently across generations.

By considering these different levels of influence, the ecological systems theory can help the researcher to understand the complex ways in which racial discrimination operates, and stakeholders and role-players can then devise interventions at various levels to promote equality and social justice.

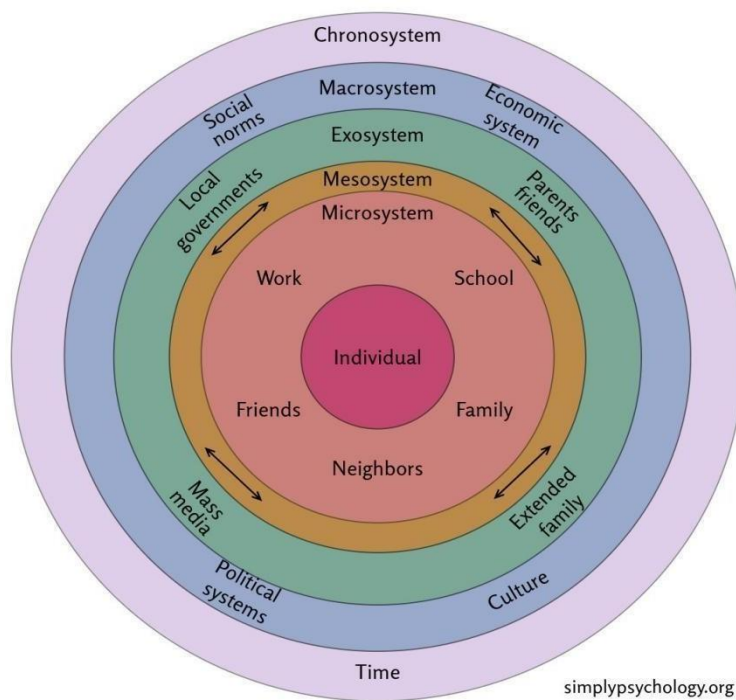


Figure 3.4: The ecological systems theory of human development

Source: Simplypsychology.org, 2024

3.4.1 The microsystem

The term micro refers to something very tiny or involving minimum quantities. In this theory, micro refers to an individual's immediate background, or the smallest system of influence, which is the close family (Sibisi, 2021). It also includes the home and school environments. According to Hun-Lee (2011), there are four types of microsystems that one should pay attention to when discussing the behaviour of the child: experiences in the family, experiences

with teachers, experiences with peers, and experiences within the school environment. In the context of racial discrimination among high school learners, factors about the experience in the family might include the family being racist because their neighbour is Black, or parents' common perception of and reaction towards Black people.

Hun-Lee (2001) found a dearth of empirical research on the effects of teachers' attitudes towards racial discrimination or the interaction between learners and teachers regarding racial discrimination behaviour in schools, and this situation has not improved. Some teachers' lack of moral authority has been associated with an increase in racial discrimination in schools where the learners are not allowed to be punished. Learners' attitudes in high schools are influenced by several factors: power dynamics, level of difference acceptance, coercion of public self, and pseudo-friendship networks (Ubisi, 2022:13).

Regarding racial discrimination in schools, learners tend to be under pressure to be famous and many thus behave in a manner that will make them acceptable to the learners in school because they fear rejection. The level of difference of acceptance refers to how much learners and their peer groups tolerate dissimilarity with other classmates, and this factor is an important predictor of bullying behaviour (Colouroso, 2003; Young and Sweeting, 2004). Finally, experience within the school environment refers to school climate in the sense that children experience and adapt to school settings and are influenced by them. School climate is also one of the most important social environments that influence children's behaviours (Gottfredson, 2001; Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 1985). This may impact how parents choose to raise their children within their immediate environment, particularly as many focus on personal achievements and self-reliance. On the other hand, in a society that values communal unity, children may be taught to prioritize the needs of the group over their own desires. This becomes visible in the microsystem where parents promote increased cooperative play and shared decision-making by siblings.

3.4.2 The mesosystem

This involves experiences at school, home, church, and in the neighbourhood. Like the microsystem, people play a role in constructing their own experiences (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 39). A mesosystem consists of social interconnections among various role-players, such as students, teachers, and peers. Once a child has entered an unfamiliar environment (e.g., school),

which is called a setting transition, the child becomes a primary link between the family and school, and this constitutes a mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, cited by Hun-Lee, 2001:7). In this study the mesosystem was deemed parents talking to the teachers in school and learners about the importance of diversity and respect for other races in the quest eradicate cases of racial discrimination. Several studies have verified that a lack of parental involvement in school significantly contributes to racial discrimination (Saleem, Anderson and Williams 2020:12). Children listen to and respect their parents because parents are known to be their role models, especially if the child grew up in an environment where it was only their parents who supported them.

3.4.3 The exosystem

The exosystem is much like the mesosystem in that it is made up of microsystems that interact with one another; however, in the exosystem, at least one of the microsystems cannot contain the person at the centre of this system (Crawford, 2020:3). According to Evans (2024), the exosystem incorporates other formal and informal social structures that do not directly interact with the child. Despite this, the exosystem still influences the microsystem. Regarding the study, the learners' toxic behaviour of racial discrimination was influenced by parents' workloads and their non-availability to attend school meetings. Parents who work long hours or overtime and those who do not live with their children do not spend enough time with their children for proper parenting, which results in them either over-enforcing or withdrawing from discipline (Sibisi, 2020:1029).

3.4.4 The macrosystem

The macrosystem is defined broadly as the overall culture and societal structure that impacts children. Crawford (2020) states that the macrosystem creates a pattern of interaction between and among the micro-, meso-, and exosystems. According to Rogers et al. (2021), the macrosystem differs from the previous ecosystems as it does not refer to the specific environments of one developing child, but it encompasses the already established society and culture in which the child is developing. Political and economic factors are just some of the societal factors that have an impact on violent behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:40).

In the current study, the societal factors that were explored were inequality and apartheid in South Africa due to the political segregation of schools during the apartheid era. Under the

apartheid system, South African schools became exceptionally violent due to the fact that the education system favoured White schools as the key beneficiaries, while Black schools were the most disadvantaged (Smith and Foster, 2002:74). The education system was racially demarcated into four politically categories: The House of Assembly for Whites, The House of Representatives for Coloureds, The House of Delegates for Indians, and The House of General Affairs for Blacks (Smith and Foster 2002:74). The economic factor this study explored was economic inequality, because when apartheid ended in 1994 and democracy commenced, most Black schools did not have the resources that were needed to provide a good quality education, and this resulted in White learners still excelling when Black learners were enrolled in their schools. Moreover, in the economic context, Burton (2008:3) warns that common community protests for basic services, such as housing provision, teach learners to be violent if they want their needs to be met.

3.4.5 The chronosystem

This is the final system in the ecological systems theory. The chronosystem focuses on time and changes over time. The chronosystem incorporates the dimension of time into Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, emphasizing how individual and environmental factors change over time and influence development (Zaatari, Wafaa and Maalouf, 2022:4). This system recognizes the importance of historical events, life transitions, and personal experiences at different developmental stages, e.g., changes in family structure, societal norms, and technological advancements can profoundly affect individuals' development across their lifespan. Therefore, by considering these temporal factors, the ecological theory provides a dynamic framework for understanding human development throughout their lifespan.

Black learners who enter multiracial schools at a late age experience change. As South Africa transitioned from an apartheid regime to a democracy and Black learners entered former White schools, their lives were significantly impacted, even though they had not experienced apartheid. Being exposed to History as a subject, their lives were influenced as many learnt of the injustices of the past for the first time, which could have engendered violent behaviours.

Before apartheid ended, Black schools were poorly constructed while White schools were not, and this left Black learners with a sense that they did not belong in those schools. As democracy dawned, previously segregated South African schools opened their gates to all races. This

transformation allowed learner populations of different racial groups to share the same school. However, the success and achievements that have been evident in these schools are still sometimes ruined by racial tensions among learners (Wilmot and Naidoo, 2011:28).

3.4.6 Limitations of the Ecological Systems Theory

As much as the theory has been influential in the development of the child, it has been criticised for the lack of focus on diversity. The theory focuses on those who are middle-class and Western families and does not take into consideration the experiences of children from other cultural backgrounds (Hayes, O'Toole and Halpenny, 2022). Furthermore, the theory has been criticised for overshadowing the active role of the child and how they want to develop. Additionally, the ecological systems theory might not adequately account for how structural injustices and power disparities influence children's prospects and experiences (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017).

3.5 Chapter Conclusion

Racial discrimination will remain a major phenomenon unless it is rooted out. It has been practised in the past and even today there are challenges surrounding race in schools because of certain factors or individuals who do not want to obey the laws that were implemented to bring peace in schools among learners. This chapter explained the three theories that were used to understand racial discrimination in schools in great detail. The study setting was a multiracial high school in the 21st century. It was explained that the social learning theory focuses on the causes of racial discrimination, while the ecological theory highlights that for learners to be obedient and stop being racists, their parents, school, and teachers should work together to eradicate this conception. According to the social learning theory, behaviour is learned through observation and modelling, whereas the racial trauma theory looks at the effects of racial discrimination on learners. It was illuminated that the factors that contribute to racial discrimination are primarily entrenched in the socialization of learners as members of a vibrant society which includes the home, school, church, and a plethora of other social contexts.

CHAPTER FOUR RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and the methodology that was employed to understand racial discrimination in a high school involving teachers and learners. According to Neuman (2003), research methodology is a tool that transforms social research into scientific information; hence, it is critical in making decisions about the research processes that should be used to answer the research questions. Case studies are very insightful, and they often provide a detailed understanding of why people behave the way they do. In this study, the focus was on learners who manifested a racist attitude towards others and on how this behaviour affected the victims and teachers. The data collection instruments are fully explained in this chapter and a description of the participants is presented. This chapter also highlights the importance of ethical considerations, especially as this study engaged participants who were still minors.

4.2 Research Design

A research design is a procedure for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting the data generated in research (Creswell and Clark, 2007:58). In other words, it is used to resolve pertinent or key research questions. The problem that propelled this study was based on the observation that multiracial schools are still plagued by incidences of racial discrimination. The research design can be considered as the glue that holds a project together; hence, it is an overall plan for connecting research problems with pertinent empirical data (Islamia, 2016; Boru, 2018). When selecting the research design, the researcher was conscious that there was little information on racism in schools compared to the racism phenomenon in the broader educational sphere. It was therefore appropriate to adopt an explanatory research design as the study sought to understand why racism was still so prevalent and to answer the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions that would elicit appropriate answers. According to Sileyew (2019), explanatory research looks for causes and reasons and provides evidence to support or refute an explanation or prediction. It is conducted to discover and report some relationships among distinct aspects of the phenomenon under study.

An explanatory research design was thus used to help the researcher understand the causes and the nature of persistent incidences of racial discrimination in a multiracial school. The study

was allowed to recruit high school learners and teachers in a former Model C school which had adopted a multiracial approach to education. The participants comprised both teachers and learners.

4.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a way of viewing the world and understanding how the research problem should be understood and addressed. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that a paradigm contains the researcher's assumptions about how an investigation should be performed (i.e., the methodology), his/her definition of truth and reality (i.e., ontology), and how the investigator will come to know that truth or reality (i.e., epistemology).

The paradigm selected to guide this research was the interpretivism paradigm. According to this paradigm, researchers assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed realities) occurs only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments (Myers, 2008). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), the interpretivism approach is important for the researcher as a social actor to appreciate the differences that exist among people. Moreover, such studies usually focus on meaning and may employ multiple methods to reflect on distinct aspects of the issue under investigation. In brief, researchers choose a research paradigm to understand the common beliefs and agreements that have been shared among experts in the targeted discipline (Ebohon, Obas and Ajayi, 2021).

This study used the interpretivism paradigm to understand the racist behaviour of some learners. Selecting teachers as participants also allowed an exploration of their understanding of their authentic beliefs and knowledge about this matter. It was assumed that every teacher would understand this issue from a different perspective, particularly as some were of mature age and were born during the struggle, whereas others were still young and therefore their understanding and knowledge had been constructed more recently.

4.4 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research allows the analysis of data generated from direct fieldwork, observations, in-depth open-ended interviews, and written documents. Qualitative researchers engage in naturalistic inquiry and study real-world settings inductively to generate rich narrative descriptions and construct case studies. Inductive analysis across cases yields patterns and

themes, the fruit of qualitative research (Patton, 2005). Francis (2011:121) defines qualitative research as “an investigation to analyse, identify, track, and examine the attitudes, motivations, and behaviours of individuals.” The researcher conducted individual semi-structured interviews with the participants to understand the racist phenomenon from the perspectives of teachers and learners in a multiracial school in the Durban area since the qualitative approach identify the attitudes and motivations of why learners are racists towards each other.

The study focused on shedding light on the persistent prevalence of racial discrimination incidences among high school learners in this multiracial school, and to understand why these learners had not acquired an understanding of the importance of embracing different races in one school. It is noteworthy that this investigation was conducted almost 30 years after the abolishment of apartheid, yet racism was still prevalent in the school under study.

4.5 Study Area and Target Population

This study was conducted in a multiracial school in the Durban area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. KwaZulu-Natal has the second largest population of all nine the South African provinces with an estimate of 11,3 million people (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This school multiracial school had become notorious as one of other similar schools for the prevalence of racial discrimination incidences among its learners, to the extent that it had captured the media’s attention. The school is situated in an eastern suburb on the Bluff. The Bluff is a coastal suburb that forms part of the port of Durban. The school is a Section 21 school, meaning that it receives some funding from the Department and is responsible for ordering stationery, textbooks, paying water and electricity accounts, and undertaking the school’s maintenance. It is also a fee-paying school, which means that parents are mandated to pay school fees unless they are released of this duty under certain conditions.

A population is a complete set of people with a specialized set of characteristics, and a sample is a subset of that population (Banerjee and Chaudhury, 2010: 60). A target population is a set of people with similar or distinctive characteristics that the researcher is looking for when selecting people to participate in the study. In this study, the target population was the learners of different races in one multiracial school in Durban. The teachers were also part of the research data as educators are commonly the first respondents in any incident at school,

particularly racial discrimination. Permission to engage the underaged children was obtained from their parents in writing.

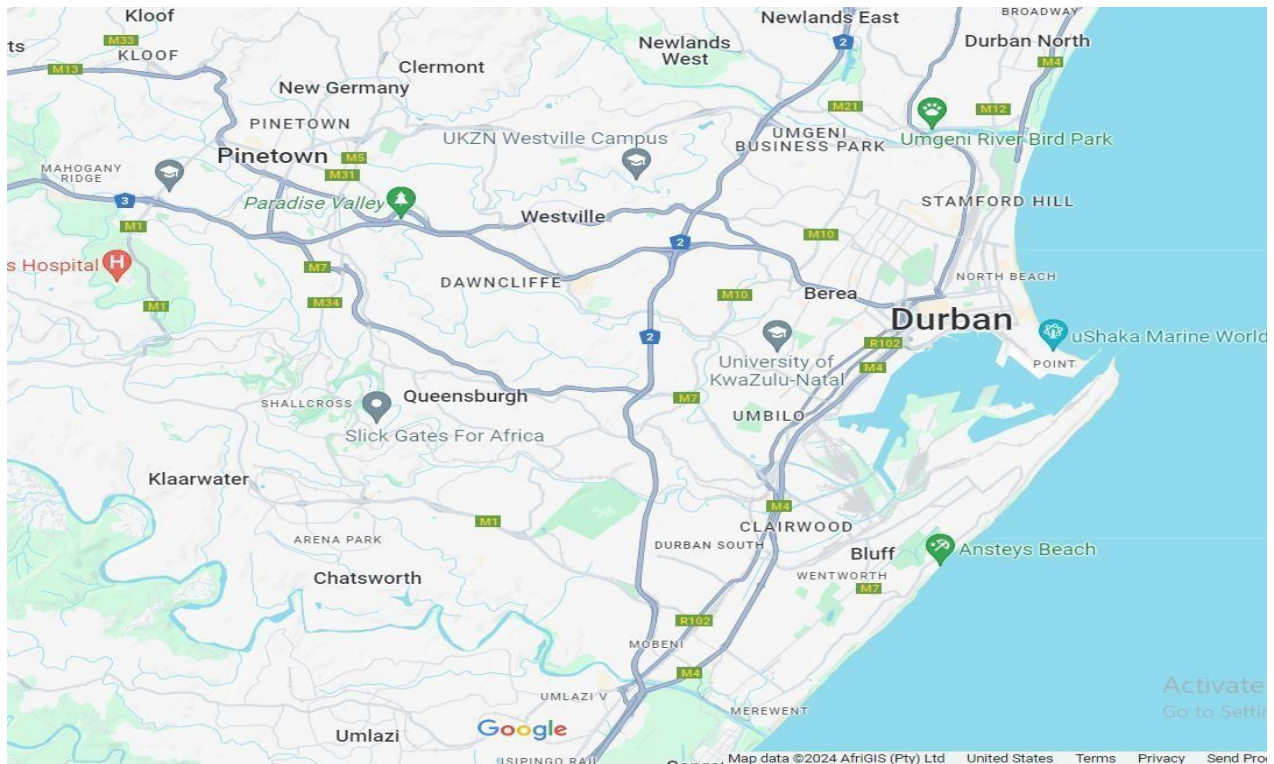


Figure 4.1: Map of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal

Source: Google Maps, 2024

4.6 Sampling and Sampling Techniques

Selecting an appropriate sampling method reduces the rigours of information gathering and ensures the generation of quality data. Bhardwaj (2019) argues that sampling is one of the most important processes as it determines the accuracy of the data and findings. This study uses purposive sampling, which is a non-probability method of participant selection. It is a technique that uses units that share the same characteristics that the researcher needs in a sample. This sampling method was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to engage with subjects who could identify with the objectives of the study due to their knowledge and experiences, furthermore, the use of purposive sampling in this study was used because it can provide access to experts who have knowledge about racial discrimination since the learners of this school come from a diverse background. A sample of seventeen participants was recruited, 11 learners and 6 teachers. Recruitment is the identification of potential participants for a research study and giving them information that might entice them to agree to be a part of the research study (Manohar, MacMillan, Steiner and Arora, 2018). Once the gatekeeper's letter had been received

from the Department of Basic Education, the researcher went to the selected high school to produce the letter and obtain the principal's permission as well. The principal referred the researcher to available potential participants. Teachers who had dealt with cases of racial discrimination were identified by the principal and recruited, and they randomly selected learners to participate in the study. Only potential learner participants who were willing to participate were included in the study until the sample size was met.

Table: 4.1: Participants sampling size.

Pseudonym	Grade	Race	Age	Years of teaching
Faye	10	Coloured	17	N/A
Lilibeth	11	White	17	N/A
Luthando	11	Black	17	N/A
Emily	11	Indian	16	N/A
Busisiwe	12	Black	16	N/A
Kaira	12	Indian	18	N/A
Mickey	10	Coloured	16	N/A
Berry	10	White	16	N/A
Neelam	10	Indian	16	N/A
Buhlebezwe	10	Black	16	N/A
Nadia	12	White	18	N/A
Ms Hlalele	N/A	Black	N/A	5 Years
Mrs Stuart	N/A	White	N/A	14 Years
Mrs Zulu	N/A	Black	N/A	11 Years
Ms Ramparsad	N/A	Indian	N/A	7 Years
Ms Chetty	N/A	Indian	N/A	9 Years
Ms Ngubane	N/A	Black	N/A	2 Years

4.7 Thematic Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is an accessible, flexible, and increasingly popular method of qualitative data analysis. According to Smith and Gerdion (1985), thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning, or themes,

across a data set. By focusing on meaning across this data set, the thematic analysis allowed the researcher to see and make sense of the participants' collective meanings and experiences. Identifying unique and idiosyncratic meanings and experiences found only within a single data item is not the focus of thematic analysis. Hence, the thematic data analysis method is a means to identify what is common in the perceptions and experiences of a topic and to make sense of these commonalities. Thematic analysis was used in this study as a qualitative data analysis method with the support of semi-structured interviews to provide rich data and can be easily analyzed using thematic data analysis. The researcher chose thematic analysis as it will address the research questions which is 'how, and why' racial discrimination is unfolding among high school learners in a democratic society.

Following the steps as directed by this process entailed the following:

Becoming familiar with the data: The researcher familiarized herself with the data soon after collection. The first step was to read and re-read the transcripts before proceeding. At this stage, it was useful to make notes and jot down early impressions. The researcher firstly listened to the recordings, the use of language was English, therefore, there was no translations. The researcher searched for patterns and familiarized herself with meanings and patterns.

Generating initial codes: As soon as the researcher had become familiar with the data, preliminary codes were identified. These were pieces of information that were interesting and relevant to the study. Coding was therefore the identification, marking, and labelling of pieces of text or content that were meaningful and would answer research questions (Kampira, 2021:10).

Searching for Themes: A theme is a pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data and/or research questions. As Braun and Clarke (2006) explain, there are no fixed rules about what constitutes a theme as it is characterised by its significance to the research topic, the key questions, and the objectives of the research. Hence, the codes were scrutinised, and potential themes were identified as they emerged from these codes.

Reviewing Themes: During this phase, the researcher reviewed, modified, developed, and honed the themes that have been identified in step 3. Questions were posed such as: *Do they*

make sense? At this point, it was determined that all the data had been gathered that were relevant to each theme. The researcher did this by using the ‘cut and paste’ function in the word processing package. The researcher analyzed whether the themes are related to the codes and generated thematic data.

Defining and naming themes: This was the last step in the refinement of the themes. The aim was to identify the ‘essence’ of what each theme was about (Braun and Clarke, 2006). For instance, what were the data under each theme saying? If there were subthemes, how did they interact and relate to the main theme? How did these themes relate to one another? In this process, findings in the literature and the tenets of the theoretical framing were also integrated with the data.

Authoring the report: Usually, the endpoint of research is a written report, which is commonly a journal article or dissertation. Therefore, by employing vivid and captivating extract examples that were linked to the themes, the research questions, and the literature, the researcher translated her analysis into an interpretable piece of writing, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The researcher recorded the detailed viewpoints of the participants verbatim and arranged these in line with the research questions.

4.8 Methods to ensure Trustworthiness

A study is trustworthy if the reader of the research report judges it to be so. Trustworthiness is further characterized by credibility, which corresponds with the positivist concept of internal validity, dependability, which relates more to reliability, transferability, which is a form of external validity, and confirmability, which is an issue of presentation (Gunawan, 2015:10). It is important in research that a researcher ensures that the study is trustworthy and authentic. To make sure that this approach would be trustworthy, Lincoln and Guba's (1999) model of trustworthiness were applied. The four constructs of dependability, transferability, credibility, and confirmability were addressed as proposed by this model as follows:

4.8.1 Dependability

According to Stahl and King (2020), peer debriefing or peer scrutiny are solid communication habits that create trust in dependability. De Wet and Erasmus (2005) argue that research is reliable when its methods are transparent, advanced, and peer-reviewed, while Trochim and

Donnelley (in Kumar, 2011) state that dependability has to do with whether a researcher might obtain the same results from two separate examinations on a similar topic (Pillay, 2022:51). The researcher ensured that the literature review was comprehensive and that the findings are stated unambiguously in this report to address the importance of dependability. The participants responded frankly and were under no threat or coercion, and their responses were transcribed and are presented verbatim. Furthermore, the participants responded voluntarily during the interviews. The researcher did not put pressure on the participants to adapt their views to suit the study, but listened to their opinions and understood that these would be the same responses should another researcher conduct the interviews.

4.8.2 Transferability

According to Gunawan (2004:69), transferability is a form of external validity, which is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to another situation the researcher obtained rich and detailed data through the purposive sampling technique, appropriate methodological approaches, and how they were applied. The researcher can state unequivocally that the data can be transferred to similar groups of individuals, subjects, and contexts.

4.8.3 Confirmability

Stahl and King (2020) state that the use of confirmability in a study has a small and circumscribed intent within qualitative research, especially concerning emergent design positivism. To attain confirmability, the researcher ensured that the responses by the research participants were supported by accurate and thorough comparisons with the literature and the theoretical framing of the study (Pillay, 2022:53). Important that theory is also integrated with the data. The interpretations were derived from data that had been elicited from the participants' verbatim responses. The findings that emerged from the interviews were therefore not made up or manipulated in any way by the researcher.

4.8.4 Credibility

Credibility is concerned with internal validity to validate the research findings and ensure the correct interpretation of the participants' original views (Gunawan, 2015:10). According to Stahl and King (2020:26), credibility addresses the question: "How congruent are the findings with reality?" Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most

principal factors in establishing trustworthiness. The current researcher spent time with the study participants at the school to better understand the prevalence of racism and whether it took a toll on them physically, emotionally, and academically. It was important to collect rich data, therefore field notes were taken in conjunction with the generation of interview data. The interviews were recorded using a trustworthy cellular phone and were transcribed verbatim to validate the analyses of the data in the absence of the participants.

4.9 Data Collection Method

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information variables of interest and answering stated research questions in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer the key research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Craddick, 2003). The researcher elicited both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected using semi-structured individual interviews that were guided by open-ended questions to gain insight into the real prevalence and nature of racial discrimination in the school under study. Secondary data were collected by perusing various online sources, scholarly articles, and books. The participants were individually interviewed in the school hall during breaks and the interviews lasted 30-45 minutes each. The researcher chose semi-structured individual interviews because this is a sensitive topic some learners and teachers might not feel comfortable to share their views in a focused group discussion.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

4.10.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct the research study and to involve learner participants from the selected high school under certain conditions. A gatekeeper's letter was then obtained from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education. The researcher then sent an email to the principal asking for permission to conduct the research at the school, and permission was granted. As learners who were minors would be involved, consent was obtained from their parents/guardians in writing. The study's purpose and methodology were explained (Henning, van Rensburg, and Smit, 2004) and the participants were ensured that their involvement would be voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time should they so wish. A trauma counsellor was procured should anyone feel uncomfortable or traumatized. A social worker was available during the interview sessions.

Voluntary participation means that all research subjects are free to choose to participate without any pressure or coercion (Nelson et al., 2011:8). All the participants were therefore informed that their participation would be voluntary, and they were not forced or coerced in any way. They were also assured that if they did not want to reveal any sensitive information, this would be respected.

4.10.2 Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy

Confidentiality and anonymity are research ethical principles that help in providing informed consent to participants assuring subjects of the privacy of their data. As required by research bodies and organizations, every research process has to incorporate ethical principles to meet the credibility requirement (Kang and Hwang, 2023:1). To keep the data confidential, all notes and recordings were stored in a locked drawer and will stay in the supervisor's office for three years before being destroyed. No names will be revealed to anyone.

Kaiser (2009) argues that when conducting qualitative research, one of the most difficult issues is protecting participants' anonymity while simultaneously providing rich and detailed accounts of the social life and realities they exposed. Thus, the researcher ensured that the participants did not use their real names but pseudonyms to protect their identities. Prior to exposing any information, the researcher also obtained the participants' permission to avoid conflict (Akaranga and Makau, 2016). This ensured trust between the researcher and the participants. Moreover, no harm befell the participants, and no blame for racism was cast on any of the learners as the researcher merely sought to understand their experiences and find solutions to curb racism in schools.

4.11 Limitations of the Study

At first, some participants, especially the learners, felt 'ambushed' and were reluctant to share their views on racial discrimination in their school. This reluctance was caused by their fear of being labelled 'sell-outs' and 'snitches' if they spoke out about how their school and even the Governing Body tended to react to cases of racial discrimination. The researcher managed to ensure the participants of their confidentiality and anonymity, and all felt comfortable to participate in the study even though it dealt with this very sensitive issue. Trust developed between the researcher and the participants, and they offered frank responses to the questions

that were posed. Another limitation was that learners of some races were hesitant to participate because they thought that some questions might be offensive; nonetheless, the researcher ensured them that no uncomfortable and biased questions would be asked or, if they felt that questions were biased, they were free not to answer or withdraw from the study.

4.12 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter outlined the importance of choosing an appropriate methodology when collecting data. The study was in the described study area and the sample recruitment technique was described, affirming that a suitable sample size had been achieved for a qualitative study of this nature. The researcher affirmed that relevant, detailed, rich, and unbiased data had been collected using semi-structured one-on-one interviews and that the findings emanated from the thematic analysis process. Furthermore, the ethical considerations that were adhered to and the limitations of the study were elucidated. The next chapter will present and interpret the analysed data.

CHAPTER FIVE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five is the pillar and heart of this research report as it addresses the research questions and objectives and elucidates whether there is a correlation between the literature and the findings that emanate from the analysed data. The data were elicited using semi-structured interviews that involved both teachers and learners at a selected high school located on the Bluff, Durban. The study aimed to identify factors that contribute to racial discrimination among learners and to understand teachers' attitudes when they claim that they 'see no colour' in their multiracial classrooms. While the findings revealed new insightful information, it was clear that teachers might be causing conflict among learners of different races by using this statement. However, it was also clear that the teachers in this school united learners of different races to ensure that they would live up to the South African slogan of a 'rainbow nation' by guiding them to acknowledge the past and allowing all learners to come to terms with this country's history.

This study was successfully guided by the following research questions:

- What is the nature and extent of racial discrimination in the selected high school?

- Why does racial discrimination still exist among learners in this South African high school?
- What are the effects of racial discrimination in the selected high school?
- How can racial integration be promoted in the selected high school?

Data were collected using individual semi-structured interviews. The participants were selected based on their unique characteristics, particularly race and grade, while years of experience were also considered in the context of the teachers. Overall, there were 18 participants (n=18) and this sample comprised 12 learners and 6 teachers. The interviews were conducted in English and were voice recorded, and these recordings were transcribed verbatim. The themes that emerged from the data set were identified using thematic analysis. The thematic analysis allowed the researcher to identify patterns and themes and to interpret the data meaningfully (Aishwarya, 2024). The discussion that follows is underpinned by the aim and objectives of the study while the nature, causes, and effects of racial discrimination are explored. Another focus is ‘colourism’ in the classroom and the existence of available support structures in the school to enhance the impact of racial integration.

5.2 Participants’ Demographic Details

The participants were selected based on the characteristics presented in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2. All the teachers and learners were female, and pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

5.1 Teachers' Demographic Details

The tables below summarise the teachers’ and learners’ profiles:

Table 5.1: Demographic characteristics of the teacher participants

Name (pseudonym)	Race	Years of Teaching
Ms. Hlalele	Black	5 years
Mrs. Stuart	White	14 years
Mrs. Zulu	Black	11 years
Ms. Ramparsad	Indian	7 years
Ms. Chetty	Indian	9 years
Ms. Ngubane	Black	2 years

Source: Researcher’s summary

Table 5.2: Demographic characteristics of the learner participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Race	Age	Grade
Faye	Coloured	17	10
Lilibeth	White	17	11
Luthando	Black	17	11
Emily	Indian	16	11
Busisiwe	Black	16	12
Kaira	Indian	18	12
Mickey	Coloured	16	10
Berry	White	16	10
Neeelam	Indian	16	10
Buhlebezwe	Black	16	10
Nadia	White	18	12
Jade	Coloured	18	12

Source: Researcher's Summary

5.3 The Extent of Racial Discrimination in the School under Study

Transitioning from apartheid to a democratic society has been a game-changing experience for South Africa, especially as learners of all races can now study in any school despite the colour of their skin. However, it is concerning that, after 30 years of democracy, racism is still prevalent in South African schools, specifically in multiracial schools (Mpisi and Alexander, 2024). The literature reveals that dozens of South African schools have recently experienced incidences of racial discrimination (Karrim, 2020). However, some schools tend to believe that racial discrimination among learners does not exist because of the democratic policies that South Africa has implemented.

When the participants were asked what their understanding of racial discrimination was, 3 out of 18 were not sure if their definitions were correct, whereas the rest had a relatively similar understanding of this phenomenon. These participants shared the view that racial discrimination is when someone is mistreated or mocked because of the colour of their skin. The participants' definitions focused on verbal and not physical abuse. The following view that was shared by Mrs Zulu exemplifies the common view the participants held:

“I think, in my opinion, racial discrimination is when people from different races treat each other differently based on the fact that they are from different racial groups, and normally that entails negative treatment towards each other.”

Mrs Ngubane said:

“[It is] being unfairly treated based on skin colour or culture; also, being victimized based on the colour of your skin.”

Ms Hlalele stated:

“Uhm...not treated equally among the different races, where there is a race that is superior to another...it is just not being treated well by another race.” Emily, a learner, defined it as follows:

“It is when you have certain stereotypical views about a certain race, and you think all the people of that race fit those characteristics.”

According to Hong et al. (2022), racial discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly or differently due to the colour of his or her skin, which means that the victim is a member of another race. Overall, the participants had a clear understanding of what racial discrimination is. Some participants who showed their understanding of racial discrimination also reflected on the fact that it continues to spread, whereas others did not understand the term ‘racial discrimination’ but were familiar with ‘racism.’ The latter participants were hesitant to respond, but they did state that it was particularly important to understand the terms and their differences before responding to any questions.

5.3.1 Experiences of Racial Discrimination Among Learners

For over two decades, some learners have been vociferous about their struggles in multiracial schools as they felt as if they were not wanted because of the colour of their skin. In one such study, 40% of the participating learners reported experiencing racial discrimination in their school (McGowan, 2019). It seems inevitable that learners who study in multiracial schools are at a higher risk of experiencing racial discrimination than those in single-race schools, and this is because of this country’s history of segregation. Cases of racial discrimination were cited in the current study. For instance, some learners of colour complained that they were never taken seriously. Buhlebezwe stated:

“Yes, one of my classmates made fun of my hair. She said my hair looks dry and I should just cut it or wear it down it because most Black girls struggle to maintain their hair and we are ruining the image of the school with our dry hair.” Lilibeth said:

“Yes, and I am proud to be an Afrikaner. I have been exposed to racial discrimination in this school. It was Heritage Day 2023, and I was wearing my Afrikaans attire and the learners in this school called me ‘Apartheid’.” Busisiwe stated:

“Yes, my Black friends and I were standing outside the school premises waiting for our transport when two White and one Coloured girl approached us and told us that this uniform does not suit us, we should find a school that has a uniform that has colours that match with our colour skin. And we were shocked because we knew these girls from class, and they were always friendly before.” Berry mentioned the following:

“In class, they always call me names like ‘colonizer,’ and I do not like that.”

One statement above is supported in the literature where it is mentioned that Black learners’ hair, more particularly their hairstyles, are often an issue in schools. Many who wear their hair in the afro style are forced to tie it down ‘to look presentable’. Armani (2022) mentions that, in 2016, a school protested in favour of Black girls to be allowed to wear their hair as they liked (such as afros) and not to be told what to do because their hair was deemed their ‘crown’ and no one should take this right away. Various scholars stress the issue of hair when they refer to racial discrimination in schools, arguing that rules about hair remind learners of apartheid even though they did not live in that era (United Nations Human Rights, 2023). The findings above also revealed that White learners were also exposed to racial slurs by Black and Coloured learners, but the literature states that such examples are limited.

It was surprising that racial discrimination was not only mentioned by the learners but by some teachers as well. When the teachers were interviewed to explore if they had witnessed any cases of racial discrimination, Ms Ngubane stated:

“During break time a Black learner was buying snacks from the vending machine, then a White learner came to her and said she did not belong in the school, she had to move from the vending machine as this was her school.” Mrs Zulu said:

“Yes, a group of Black learners were sitting on a school bench, then a group of Coloured learners claimed that it was their territory. They mocked the Black girls and called them names.”

Ms. Ngubane emphasised that when hearing the learners uttering such words, she wondered if they viewed teachers of different races in the same way, because it was evident that some resented Black people. Although some teachers claimed they had witnessed incidences of racism among the learners, there were others who did not share the same sentiment. Ms. Chetty stated:

“As a history teacher, I have seen a lot of improvement in this school. Most learners used to complain about racism but now we see a lot of transformation.” Mrs. Stuart said:

“In this school we hardly have cases of racial discrimination, because we teach our learners to be kind to one another and they have not reported any cases this year or in the last two years.” Ms. Hlalele said:

“I don’t usually pay attention to what is happening in the school [among the learners], so I think there are no such cases because I see many learners making friends with learners of other races.”

The findings thus suggest that the learners and very few teachers were aware of incidences of racial discrimination, while most teachers did not share the same sentiment. This may be attributed to covert racist issues among learners or the fact that the teachers were trying to protect the image of the school. Conversely, it could also be attributed to normal teenager conflicts that are often ‘a storm in a teacup’ as none of these incidences escalated and had to be investigated at the top level, even to the point of involving parents and/or the Department.

A noteworthy finding is the impact of hair and hairstyles in terms of the issue of racial discrimination. The learners exclusively mentioned this issue. If it had been a major or pervasive issue, the teachers, as the custodians of school rules and the school’s Code of Conduct, would have referred to this as an issue of racial divide. Some mention of hairstyle as a dividing issue is mentioned in the literature, such as where Bizumungu (2021) and The Guardian (2020) emphasise that racial discrimination related to learners’ hair is more prevalent in schools than any other features that distinguish Black/Coloured from White learners. Black learners’ insistence on wearing their hair in an afro hairstyle.

5.3.2 The targets of racial discrimination

When the participants were asked which race was mostly affected by racism in the school, incidences occurred mostly between White and Black learners, but Coloured-on-Black incidences were also mentioned. Moreover, 5 of the 12 participants mentioned that the targets were Black learners, while 7 mentioned that White learners were the targets of racial slurs. This contradicts the findings in the literature. According to Izraelle et al. (2023), Black learners are most often targeted in racial slurs and attacks, while White learners are the least targeted group. The current study thus adds a new dimension to the racial discrimination phenomenon in schools as it could affirm that White learners were also (and often) targeted in incidences of racial discrimination by Black learners.

Noluthando mentioned the following:

“White learners in this school [are mostly targeted]. I think it is because they are few compared to other races in this school.”

Mickey said:

“...I have seen most of my Black friends suffering from racial discrimination in this school and every month there is always something said to them that is racist.” Jade stated:

“It’s both Black and White learners because with us Coloureds we are like split into half, so they do not victimize us that much.” Buhlebezwe averred:

“Well, it is a former White school...so it’s obvious that Black learners are the victims. I have been in this school since grade 8 and Black learners are treated badly by other learners, especially after school.”

According to the literature, 16,3% of Black learners are more likely to experience racial discrimination than 1,5% of White learners (Wong et al., 2022:5). This may be attributed to the fact that Black learners are often still expected to study in schools in the townships while White learners may feel that their schools have been ‘invaded.’ However, as interracial schools have been functioning for almost 30 years now, current learners in these schools have never experienced racially segregated schools; hence, the argument of a sense of ‘invasion’ is moot.

When the findings were analysed, the researcher discovered that even though this is a multiracial school with an all-White history, Black learners were not the only race that experienced racial discrimination, as the literature proposes. As both national and international literature is silent on incidences of Black-on-White racism in schools, it was hard to

corroborate this finding with citations in the literature. However, it should not be ignored that White learners are also exposed to racial discrimination in multiracial schools, as was affirmed by the current study. In this context, Emily’s comment is significant as she was an Indian participant and might also have been exposed to racial slurs and rejection:

“Studying in this school is difficult and one should just aim to complete one’s Matric and then leave.”

Berry also alluded to racial discrimination against White learners:

“It is White because take a look at my case. I have often been called ‘Apartheid’ and when I reported it, I was not taken seriously.” Neelam added another insightful argument:

“White learners [are targeted] and maybe that might be one of the reasons we are left with few Whites in the school as they choose to study where they will not be discriminated against.”

Nadia referred to bullying as a form of discrimination in the following statement:

“We are also racially bullied by our classmates and, as much as it hurts, we often laugh about it because we are trying to avoid giving the bully the power.”

The findings suggest that, as much as the literature only refers to the high percentage of Black learners that experience racial discrimination by White learners, one should not forget that a small percentage of White learners also attend multiracial schools, and they do not report such hurtful incidences because, as Berry mentioned, they will not be taken seriously. They know that the school staff will never side with them or protect their identities because they are labelled as racists because of their past.

5.4 Factors that Contribute to Racial Discrimination

Several factors that contribute to racial discrimination were identified by the participants. These included factors such as heritage or culture. This theme unfolded when the researcher was analysing the data in response to the objective aimed to identify the factors that contribute to racial discrimination among high school learners in a multiracial school in Durban. This theme is also underpinned by the social learning, and ecological systems theory that aligned with this objective.

Table 5.3: Factors that contribute to racial discrimination among learners.

Factors	n=18
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Social and community 12
factors (socialization, media
and representation, parents,
teachers, and community)

6

Historical factors (slavery
and segregation)

Source: Researcher's summary

The participants mentioned several factors that they felt contributed to racial discrimination among learners. More than one participant mentioned some factors.

5.4.1 Social and community factors that impact learners' behaviour

When asked to identify the factors that contribute to racial discrimination, most participants identified social factors. Gambling Research and Exchange Ontario (2018) defines social factors as those factors that include both interactions among individuals and the factors that influence their collective sense of harmony. Sibisi (2021) the role of the community where students live and socialize often with older community members who are no longer enrolled in school should be investigated to understand violence in schools from a wider angle than just the school itself. The community is where high school learners often engage in unmonitored social interactions and where they learn many social behaviours that are transferred into the school environment. Learners are social beings, and the majority are highly active on social media where they are exposed to 'influencers' from their community and across the world. Additionally, young people are adept at mimicking a behaviour that is attractive in their eyes without weighing the consequences. The following factors were mentioned:

5.4.1.1 Media exposure

As the demand for technology has increased worldwide, so have racial slurs that are posted on the internet. Many of these have violated the dignity of targeted learners simply because of the colour of their skin. Many children are raised to be glued to television screens where they watch films and programmes that perpetuate racial discrimination among ethnic groups. For example, the White actor plays the hero role while the Black actor is in a supportive role or the villain.

This becomes a problem when children begin to take what they see on television to the streets (Gondola, 2016). Evidence of the influence of Hollywood, Chinese, Indian, and South Korean films on children can be seen in the manner in which child offenders socialized, behaved, and conducted themselves, and these offenders generally imitated their heroes on television or in films (Grossman and DeGaetano, 2009, cited in Sibisi, 2021). Racist language and images abound in social media in the form of memes and fake identities where they often promote racist ideologies (Lamerichs et al., 2018, cited in Fernandez and Farkas, 2021). In the film, violence is perpetrated by ‘good’ individuals who rarely face the consequences of their crimes (Lichter, cited in Sibisi, 2021:864). These ‘heroes’ then teach learners to be racist, which is exacerbated when there are no harsh consequences for their actions/behaviour. In South African schools, learners who expose others to racist remarks may be suspended for seven days and none are expelled. A teacher participant, Ms. Chetty, said:

“...If there were no social media learners would not think that one race is superior to the other. Yes, they might learn from history, but not in the way that it is being shown on social media.” Mrs. Stuart stated:

“In my fourteen years of teaching, I have noticed that racism is happening in schools because of the movies that they watch. Most learners would do something terrible to other learners and when you ask, they will tell you that they saw it in a movie.” Luthando highlighted the following:

“Social media platforms, especially Facebook, [are the culprit]. In my previous school, learners used to copy things that were done by other schools to discriminate against other learners because of their skin colour. More especially, if you were Coloured, they once had this trend of putting pencils in their hair to see if they belonged in a group of Black or White people.”

The chronicles presented above enlighten the fact that social media often encourages racist behaviour. Media violence also reinforces the perception that aggression is an appropriate response in situations of conflict (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006). When such pro-violence attitudes are normalised, it leads to increased aggression (Möller and Krahe, 2009). The warning is therefore noticeably clear: As social media platforms and a lack of supervision increase, racial discrimination and violent behaviours will also increase. The social media platforms that children are exposed to, without supervision, allow them to hide their identities and use fake names. Farkas et al. (2018) support this finding as they state that companies like

Facebook and Twitter are in hot water to ensure the anonymity of attackers. In this context, Lilibeth stated the following:

“It is easy to be racist towards other learners if you know their names on Facebook because you can just create a fake account and post bad things about their race.” Busisiwe shared the following:

“When I was in primary doing grade 7, there were these three Coloured girls from my class who created a fake account on Instagram and commented in Zinhle’s posts that she was trying so hard to be White and she had to stop talking the way she did. It was so bad, and they were caught because one of the girls came forward and reported what they had done.”

Nadia mentioned the following:

“Also...there is a movie ‘The Hate You Give’ where Black learners are schooling in a township and if you are Black and schooling in the suburbs, they assume you are a sellout.”

The findings affirmed that racism was prevalent in the school environment, and such incidences were mostly attributed to the ease of anonymity and the influence of social media platforms. It is noteworthy that the participants did not view racism predominantly as a White-on-Black phenomenon, but as an interracial scourge that affected and was perpetrated by learners of all races against others of all races. This finding is a significant deviation from the White-on-Black view of racism that has hitherto been perpetuated in the literature.

The social learning theory was useful in explaining this finding. This theory asserts that behaviours are learnt through the example and influence of others (Koutroubas and Galanakis, 2022:315). This explains why social media influences learners to be racist because they see that there are no severe consequences for racist behaviour. Films, both good and bad ones, often portray Black learners as the targets of racism who seldom receive justice. As a result, learners continue to imitate and observe what is being done by others on social media. The literature reveals that social media can promote good behaviour; however, it can psychologically confuse children in cases of identity construction, mood, and academic functioning (Shankleman et al., 2021). Learners often use media because there are no restrictions and, in this century, young children are allowed to have phones at an early age. In the digital realm, race and racism are social network spaces where racism can manifest in a disturbing way (Daniel 2013, cited by Farkas, 2021). Social media contributes to racism

through various applications (apps) such as Snapchat and Instagram. Where learners have access to mock other learners because they know that these apps can be anonymous, posting a status without evidence of which learners is doing that.

5.4.1.2 Family and Community

According to Davis (2020), babies from three months old can distinguish faces by colour and at three years are fully aware of different races. This means that parents should not make racist comments in front of their children because they might notice and react to other children at school. The family is the most influential in the socialising context during childhood and throughout adolescence and plays a critical role in modelling adolescents' behaviour. According to Gasa (2010), the family is the most powerful component in modelling behaviour and moderating other factors that may raise the likelihood of school violence, such as poverty, school absenteeism, and peer pressure. In this study, five participants mentioned that the home and the community were factors that contributed to a racist attitude.

Ms Hlalele stated:

"...the home, because racism is taught. No one is born racist; for instance, if you look at kids in their infant stages, they get along but as soon as they grow up then they tend to follow what has been showed to them by their parents." Faye mentioned the following:

"I think the influence of where you grow up in the community, such as your parents, grandparents, friends that you are around. I think they definitely influence your perspective on people of any race or any area. It definitely can be self-conflicting." Mrs. Ramparsad highlighted the following:

"Home, because some learners you can tell that, okay, this thing [attitude] comes from home because they even do it to teachers by giving bad attitude and not wanting to be punished by teachers who are African. You can tell that they have been taught at home to disrespect people of a different colour skin."

According to the literature, children develop beliefs and behaviours by mimicking those that are important to them (Sinclair, Dunn and Lowery, 2005:284). Although children are born with unbiased innocence, the environment they are born into begins to frame their worldview, from the people they live with to the people they see only on-screen (Lopez, 2020:1). Thus, children's attitudes and interaction with other learners in school and their opinions on different races are shaped at home.

Litchy stated:

“I think its parents and also the way that children are brought up - their morals and their belief system is intertwined. Some people will tell their children things that African people did this and did that, yet they do not tell the full story why White people caused apartheid and how they separated each culture to live on their own. Now they are teaching their learners about the harmful side of certain races. Therefore, it always starts at the home and obviously, these children will extend it to other people that are in their school; so, they will manipulate other children to think this race is inferior and that race is superior.”

According to Sibisi (2021), the ecological systems theory posits that children’s closest environments have the most direct influence on their behaviours in the microsystem, which is composed of individuals or groups of individuals in their immediate settings (the home and school) and those with whom they interact. The findings suggest that some learners need their parents’ guidance to avoid racist behaviour because in the microsystem children are always close to their parents and they trust their parents before they trust their neighbours.

5.4.1.3 Teachers contribute to racial discrimination.

The role of teachers was highlighted as a factor that contributes to racial discrimination. The verbal abuse perpetrated by teachers has been flagged as a generic form of violence in schools. Some educators might call learners undesirable names, use vulgar words, or swear, make inappropriate comments about learners’ parents, and be rude to learners (Mncube and Netshitangani, 2015, cited in Sibisi, 2021:159). School should be a second home for learners as they spend approximately 8 hours at school learning and socializing, and therefore this environment is influential in shaping their behaviours (Nabavi, 2012). Learners also observe violent behaviours in society that emanate from various figures who are their role models (Sibisi, 2021). One learner mentioned that teachers always say they love every race, but their actions are racist and prove to other learners that they deem a certain race superior. Three participants referred to this perception.

Buhlebezwe stated:

“...Teachers indirectly contribute to racial discrimination among us, it’s just that they are not aware.” Faye said:

“In this school, the teachers prefer being close to other learners of their race, and when you try to become friendly with her, she just brushes you off.” Neelam offered the following insight:

“I think teachers, because they usually make jokes about our race and then other learners do it as well, but they are not aware that they are exposing us to other learners.”

Teachers are supposed to be the secondary parents of their learners in school. They should teach their learners to embrace their identities and fight against racial discrimination. However, as the findings unfolded, teachers were also part of the problem as they reinforced racial discrimination among learners and created a gap for learners of one race to be racist towards others. This finding is supported by the literature, which states that teachers are also influenced by societal beliefs and racial biases. This is a significant problem in the classroom, as Marco Learning (2023) argues that teachers tend to discipline learners whose skin colour is different from theirs more severely than those who are of the same race.

5.4.1.4 Racially ‘colour-blind’ classrooms

According to Ferlazzo (2020), the notion that teachers ‘see no colour’ in their classrooms is moot. When the latter author posed the question of whether teachers seeing ‘no colour in the classroom’ has any impact on the prevalence of racial discrimination among learners, some participants viewed it as both positive and negative. Tatum (1999) states that being ‘colour blind’ means the teacher does not consider the racial identity of all the learners. In the current study, Ms. Ramparsad supported the latter statement. Ms. Chetty also agreed with this view:

“Yes, because that is a dangerous statement to make, even though you are trying to help somebody of a certain skin colour you can’t just regard that it’s not part of their identity.”

Ms. Hlalele disagreed in a sense, as she stated:

“No, as teachers we should not see any colour. This is for all the learners to know that no race is superior to the other. Therefore, as teachers, we should not see colour.”

Mrs. Zulu agreed with Ms Hlalele:

“No, because we are the same. No one is different from the other; we are all the same. It brings a sense of unity to the learners.”

Mrs. Stuart said:

“...I can't say yes or no, because sometimes as teachers we say things just to make the learners feel special. However, in this case it can make learners feel as though we are avoiding the issue of addressing race.”

These responses by the teachers suggests that saying they ‘see no colour’ is not meant to disregard the background or race of a child, but to make learners (possibly those mocked by others) feel special. However, when the learners were asked the same question, they argued it was said because teachers wanted to protect their jobs and not be seen as racist.

Being ‘colourblind’ in the classroom dissuades people from acknowledging their own biasness and encourages them to ignore the experiences of others (Jones et al., 2023:30). The learner participants in a sense agreed with this statement, as they argued that saying that meant that teachers did not acknowledge them and did not want to talk about racism. Faye expressed her feelings by narrating an incident that happened to her in class:

“It does because although they say they see no colour, they do in their actions because they will choose White or Coloured girls or the quieter and well-spoken girls to represent because they feel as though the raw Coloured girl will not be a perfect fit.”

Berry said:

“The teachers in my opinion do see colour...I feel like they say it so that they do not get into trouble, but they do.”

Lilibeth stated:

“Learners respect each other because of what teachers say to them in front of others. In my opinion, this statement does contribute to racial discrimination and maybe they are scared that once they see race, others will feel inferior and ask questions.”

A key finding of this study is that teachers feel the need to accommodate learners by maintaining a ‘colour-blind’ position, while learners may feel that these teachers are hiding the truth and avoiding the topic of racial discrimination as it might make other learners feel invisible or compromised. Apoet, Nayyirah Waheed (2013:139), authored a poem about racial colour blindness in which she states:

“Never trust anyone who says they do not see colour. this means you are invisible to them.”

Race is part of one’s identity even though it is not everything that makes a person who she is. At the end of the day, one’s skin colour is part of one’s identity. The literature asserts that people use racial colour-blind statements to convince themselves that they have reduced the chances that others will perceive them as racist (Karmali et al., 2019:1033).

In summary, the findings that emerged in this section revealed that, while some participants viewed racial colour blindness as a positive attribute in the 21st century, some understood it as a means to avoid acknowledging the diverse identities of others.

5.4.2 Historical factors

A country’s beauty and power are determined by its history. South Africa has a long history of racial discrimination and despite the 30 years of democracy and its claim as a rainbow nation, cases of racial discrimination among learners have persisted, and may even have escalated covertly as people are cautious to raise this issue in fear of being labelled racist themselves. Mkhize (2012) argues that, in South Africa, exposure to violence has been linked to anti-social behaviour, including a cycle of abuse in which victims are more likely than their non-victimised peers to commit further acts of violence, particularly in the context of racial discrimination. The participants argued that this country’s history is a factor that contributes to racial biases among learners.

Emily stated:

...I think history plays a major role in teaching us as learners how we should be treating each other.” Berry said:

“The past... I think we should not be taught about what happened in the past because we then try to copy what our ancestors did to other racial groups, and when I tell people this, they always think I am racist because I am White and speaking from a privileged position.”

Luthando agreed with the two former learners:

“As a Black learner studying in a multiracial school, I would say apartheid, because if we were not separated from the beginning then we would not see race as something to differentiate ourselves with...because seeing what White people did to our ancestors is

not nice. Sometimes you even feel like a sellout if you are friends with White learners because you think about all they have done in the past.”

Learners who fall victim to persistent racial discrimination find themselves emasculated as they often feel that no one can rescue them from the vicious cycle of racism. Being taught the history of our country in the classroom was viewed as unpopular as the learners above argued that it tended to contribute to racial discrimination as it called up memories of division and discrimination and segregation, and this was hurtful even to modern-day teenagers. They argued that avoiding such hurtful memories would contribute to integration and good relationships among the various race groups. Additionally, History textbooks portray racism as the belief that one race is superior to others. To avoid this philosophy, History teachers then often downplay or overlook racism (School of Education, 2016). History that is taught in schools should therefore present a balanced view and the teachers should clearly explain to learners that what happened in the past should not define their future.

5.5 The effects of racial discrimination on learners

The participants highlighted two aspects that racial discrimination affected most profoundly, namely their mental health and their academic achievements.

5.5.1 Mental health

Learners need to have good mental health as this helps them to achieve optimally in school. Mental health is also important if learners want to participate in school activities, socialize, manage change, and communicate positive actions and thoughts (Bhugra and Sartorius, 2013:3). Conversely, mental health problems can negatively affect learners' school performance and lead to withdrawal and even suicide. Drawing from the vicarious experiences of participants in earlier studies, it was evident that the consequences of racial discrimination were like a slow poison, particularly as affected learners never realised that their mental wellbeing was being compromised. This was particularly true among Black learners who were encouraged to be strong.

Poor mental health can be associated with various disorders that affect the behaviour of young people and their socialization processes. Earlier studies have shown that many learners who experienced racial discrimination were depressed, and some scholars have argued that depression and depressive symptoms have increased in recent years (Gillings School of Global

Public Health, 2021). Depression can cause harmful effects in the body; for instance, losing weight and experiencing heightened emotional vulnerability. Andersen and Teicher (2008) state that girls are twice more at the risk of depressive symptoms compared to boys. The longterm effects of racial discrimination can significantly result in mental illness. Racially induced trauma is also an ongoing individual and collective form of harm that can occur due to exposure to racial abuse (Comas-Diaz et al., 2019:2). The participants were concerned that racial discrimination could cause mental illness and related symptoms.

Lilibeth stated:

“I often feel tired, and my head will be aching...I slept a lot during that time, and when my parents asked what was wrong, I would just tell them I had a long day.”

Jade mentioned the following:

“Some learners would bunk classes because they are embarrassed about what has happened to them.”

Berry shared the following experience:

“In my case, I was constantly scared and numb because they had previously called me “Apartheid” for wearing my Afrikaans attire on Heritage Day and I haven’t told my parents that I was depressed last year because I didn’t want to see them hurt.”

The literature reveals that suicide is often the result of depression caused by racial discrimination. According to Dwangu (2023), learners 14-18 years old are prone to suicidal attempts because of racial discrimination. The above literature supports the insightful point that was raised by Nelaam and Lilibeth that learners who are depressed often tend to stay at home and lock themselves in their rooms. Noluthando also reflected on her experience and mentioned that she was depressed and had to lock herself in her room because she could not face abusive learners. Depression is often not taken seriously due to the perception that learners are strong and can overcome any challenge. However, this was not the case, as the participants revealed.

Luthando stated:

“In my experience, I just felt like sleeping all the time and eating... I did not want to go to school to see the faces of the learners who depressed me because they did not even apologise, even after I had confronted them.”

Neelam stated:

“Some learners, when they are depressed, may commit suicide. They do not share with others what happened because they are scared to be judge for having a weak mentality.”

Lilibeth referred to the dangers of depression:

“It’s so funny how, as learners, we take time to understand the dangers of depression and how it affects our mental health. Being depressed is not about wanting to sleep or forgetting thing but it’s also about having suicidal thoughts.”

The findings revealed that these youthful participants understood that racial discrimination affected their mental health. They were also aware that learners sleep a lot to avoid feeling pain and that some might even think of or commit suicide. When learners experience racial discrimination, their mental health is deeply impacted (Anderson, 2020). The narratives of the participants were corroborated by the racial trauma theory, which posits that racial discrimination can severely traumatise victims. The learners were therefore aware of the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as they understood that such learners might isolate themselves and withdraw from fun and other school activities. This theory argues that PTSD is often responsible for the change in victims’ behaviour. When young people experience persistent anxiety and their mental health is disturbed, they are at risk of engaging in erratic behaviours and some even commit suicide. They are traumatised by the racial hatred and rejection they experience, and this may impact them for the rest of their lives .

5.5.2 Academic achievement

The participants stated that learners who are exposed to racial discrimination may drop their grades because they lose focus, and many do not submit their work on time. According to the literature, 40% of learners who experienced racial discrimination stated that their experiences had been disturbing and had led to poor academic motivation (Bottiani et al., 2020:27). The current study revealed that the pervasive negative effects of racial discrimination were similar to those described in the literature. Most participants referred to their own or others’ similar experiences, and most stated that classmates who were racially taunted tended to drop marks. Some participants explained how racial discrimination affected school performance.

Emily stated:

“There is a learner in my class who dropped from being the class achiever to being the lowest achiever. She opened up to me, saying that it was because other girls had made fun of her accent when she first came to this school.” Kaira said:

“Most learners stop attending [class] and bunk classes to avoid the person who discriminated [against] them, and they do not write their tests, and they fail exams.”

The literature supports the findings that racial discrimination leads to absenteeism, lack of motivation for academic performance, and school dropout (Mduli, 2018:27). Although the impact of racism in school has not been as extensively researched as racism in education overall, it has been acknowledged that the perpetrators and victims of racism obtain lower marks because their level of concentration is compromised, and many become emotionally exhausted. Mickey said:

“...I think when you are emotionally drained you just lose focus on everything you do because you are still thinking about what they have said about your skin colour and how you do not belong in this school. You then forget about your schoolwork.” Luthando stated:

“In my case, I would just bunk my Afrikaans class as I was the only Black girl and few Coloureds. I just felt like I did not belong there and had to change schools in the middle of the term previously.”

Learners are highly vulnerable to the harmful effects of racial discrimination that can impact their lives entirely. Exposure to racial discrimination can discourage learners from fully participating in school activities, and this in turn impacts affected learners' marks. Some fail or are not accepted into a university which causes trauma and strain. According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2016), learners can suffer long-term effects due to trauma and their performance in class is often disrupted. Some learners seek and find strategies to survive and heal, but if victims do not receive proper treatment, they can be permanently damaged and even suffer from PTSD.

5.6 School-Based Interventions to Support Learners

The findings revealed that there were no support structures for learners and teachers affected by racial discrimination in the school under study. When the participants were asked to identify any support structures that were available to racially abused learners, 12 out of 18 mentioned

that there was no such support. Only four of the participants stated that there was a school counsellor who assisted them after traumatic experiences or events.

Most participants were aware of the school counsellor, but they emphasized that he mostly dealt with cases such as child abuse or domestic violence, and they were not sure if he would also counsel learners who had been victimised by racial discrimination experiences. Jade mentioned that some teachers and learners were often confused and perceived the counsellor as a person who only dealt with bullying, but that was far from the truth. The following narratives reflect the participants' views on support structures for learners exposed to racial discrimination.

Nadia stated:

"I do not think there are any..." Emily

stated:

"I'm not really sure...but I know there is a school counsellor, but I don't think he has anything to do with racial discrimination. He deals more with problems at home. As far as I know, there are no support structures [for the victims of racism]." Buhlebezwe similarly stated:

"In this school, we have no support structures. As much as we have Mr. X, he is only here to help with issues at home and he hardly comes to school."

The above information revealed that some felt that the school did not have support structures for the victims of racism, arguing that this lack led to some learners and teachers suffering emotionally. Faye affirmed this notion as follows:

"We have no support systems. They do say we should go through channels like the head of a grade, or the other teachers above that person and then the principal. But we did that, and nothing happened."

Mrs. Ngubane similarly stated:

"The issue will be addressed according to the hierarchy: the head of the class teacher, the head of the grade, then it moves up to the principal then to necessary counselling and rehabilitation for both parties, but other than that there are no support structures. Hence, some learners feel powerless and have no faith in the elimination of racism."

These responses exposed the lack a specific support structure to deal with racism in the school. Even the school counsellor was perceived as a person who attended to other matters and did

not address cases of racism. With reference to the ecological systems theory, it is advisable that parents and teachers, as the individuals closest to the learners in the school system, should provide support by encouraging open discussions with learners about diversity and inclusion. If teachers become familiar with the framework that was used in the current study, their insights will help learners understand racial discrimination and how to counteract it. By focusing on strategies to encourage racial integration, teachers and the SMT can contribute to supporting learners and changing their negative perceptions of people of different races.

5.7 Recommendations by the Participants

The findings uncovered the reality that racial discrimination was still a factor in the lives of the learners in the school under study, although there were also some indications of improvement. Racial discrimination affects learners in several ways, and the participants honestly shared some of their experiences by reflecting on how it affected their work and relationships. They were asked to suggest how racism could be addressed, and their recommendations may inform other multiracial schools and policymakers to ensure that certain measures are put in place to curb incidences of racial discrimination in schools while supporting affected learners and teachers. The recommendations were the following:

Ms. Chetty:

“I think the Department of Basic Education and the school should work together to implement policies that will make these learners understand the seriousness of racially discriminating against another person. Not only the learners but the teachers as well, because there are teachers who are racist, and they are only pretending [not to be] because they are at work.”

Jade suggested the following:

“The school needs to have a unit that will educate learners about different races and how we can love one another without disregarding their culture.”

Luthando suggested the following:

“As a Black learner studying in a previous White school, I would suggest that the school should have programs that show how Black people also survived apartheid without being taught that Black people were only slaves. I am sure there is some

valuable information or things that Black people did in the past. We must be taught about those things and then maybe other races will respect us.”

Ms. Ramparsad stated:

“From my years of teaching, I would say...we should not avoid the topic of race as teachers. Some teachers just want to teach learners in a sense that they are all the same; I mean, we are all the same, but our races are different, and our skins react differently to certain products. Therefore, teachers must allow learners to embrace their differences and identities.

Kaira recommended the following:

“They [racists] should be arrested and have criminal records, as this will open their minds. I am saying this because learners are racist. After all, they know that nothing will be done to them as they will only be suspended for a few days, [and this punishment] does not consider the other learners who were racially discriminated [against]. Also, the Department of Basic Education should have policies that punish such learners.”

These recommendations were informative and insightful because they delved into how both teachers and the school can do better to support learners of different races. Ms Ramparsad's suggestion was to allow learners to embrace their identities, which means the teachers should see colour but in a manner that does not make any learner feel inferior. Luthando also suggested something similar to Jade when they raised the point that they should not be looked down upon because of their race but should be respected for who they are. Ms Chetty and Kaira recommended that the Department of Basic Education should have policies that punish learners who are racist, arguing that this will teach them to respect people of other races.

The findings above are in line with the literature. For instance, 60% of the learners in an earlier study mentioned that there were no policies or programs about diversity in this country (South African Rights Commission, 2005). The Department of Basic Education must therefore ensure that they protect the victims of racial discrimination by providing school psychologists and social workers who can counsel, and support affected learners. The participants mentioned that the school had a counsellor, but they thought that his focus was on domestic violence. The challenge was that he came to school only once a month, while instances of

racism occurred virtually daily. This situation suggests that affected learners might never be supported, and one implication is that some may suffer from the consequences of racism at school for the rest of their lives.

5.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings that emerged from the data. A key finding was that the learners perceived that racial discrimination had persisted since the school became multiracial, while the teachers were unaware of such incidences. The study also discovered that some issues had been noted by learners, while teachers tended to turn a blind eye to the struggles of learners who were either covertly or overtly exposed to racist slurs and abuse. Additionally, it was found that although a colour-blind attitude in the classroom might have been well intended, it did affect some learners negatively as they believed that their identities were not recognized. Factors that continuously contributed to racial discrimination were also highlighted, and it was discussed how these factors negatively affected learners of all races, White learners included. The latter was a finding that could not be traced for corroboration in the literature. All the participants appreciated being part of a school that was transitioning because they were learning a lot and believed that racism in schools might one day be eradicated.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION, REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes this dissertation and therefore presents a brief overview of the key findings. The study aimed to understand the causes of racial discrimination among high school learners in a historic White school located on the Bluff in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The findings revealed that racial discrimination in this school was perpetuated by numerous factors, including the role that teachers played when they averred that skin colour was not visible and hence did not matter in their classrooms and the school. Reverse racism was also revealed as White learners were viewed as the predominant group that was exposed to racism. This was attributed to two factors: learners of colour were now the majority groups in the school, and these learners resented the history of White domination in the school.

6.2 Conclusions Connected to the Findings

The methods that were used in this qualitative study assisted in achieving the following research objectives, which were to:

- Determine the nature and extent of racial discrimination in the selected high school.
- Identify the factors that contribute to the continued prevalence of racial discrimination among learners in the school under study.
- Identify the effects of racial discrimination in the selected high school on targeted learners and teachers; and
- Establish ways of promoting racial integration in the selected high school.

6.2.1 The nature and extent of racial discrimination in the school under study

To address this objective, the study contemplated the prevalence and frequency of racial discrimination incidences among learners. The subjects were girls of different races and grades in one school. The data were collected using in-depth one-on-one interviews that were guided by semi-structured questions. The sample comprised of 18 participants: 6 teachers and 12 learners. The findings revealed that racial discrimination in this historical White school was not only experienced by Black, Coloured, and Indian learners, but by White learners as well. Incidences of racism occurred more frequently between Black and White learners and seldomly involved Coloured and Indian learners, yet Coloured learners were not exempt from racism nor from behaving in a racist manner. The Indian race group was not often flagged as the victims or culprits of racist slurs, yet one Indian learner commented that it was not pleasant to be schooled in this environment and that it would be best to complete one's schooling and get out.

Moreover, several learner participants felt that they were victims of racism, yet their voices were not heard due to the teachers' 'colour-blind' attitude. All the learners deemed the prevalence of racism surprising as they did not expect this phenomenon to rear its ugly head in a multiracial school. The participants also raised the issue that even teachers played a role in perpetuating racism among learners of different races due to their unwillingness to recognise racial differences and realities. It was clear that the school, as the learners' second 'home', had no effective measures to curb racist slurs and to teach learners of different races to be tolerant and respectful of those with different skin colour, instead of resenting them.

6.2.2 Factors that contribute to racial discrimination.

The participants highlighted four factors that, in their view, contributed to racial discrimination among learners. These were:

- family (background) and society
- teachers
- social media (Facebook, TikTok, etc.)
- history (apartheid)
- colour-blindness in the classroom.

Family was highlighted as one of the key factors that contributed to racial discrimination. This may be attributed to the fact that learners are raised at home and spend much time within their respective societies, and these spaces are where they learn and adopt various basic practices and behaviours. The participants shared how these learnings contributed to racism in the school and referred to their experiences to illustrate the points they made. These patterns that emerged could be explained by the application of the social learning theory, which posits that people learn distinctive behaviours in the home and society and then emulate them at school.

Being 'colour-blind' in their classrooms is an attitude that many teachers in multiracial schools apply. Although the intention behind this attitude is not to harm anyone, the participants and the literature propose that teachers who use this term should explain clearly what they mean. This is because learners do identify with a particular race and this needs to be acknowledged. When the term is used without explanation, some learners feel that their identities are not recognized and that the teacher is shying away from discussing the topic of race, particularly acknowledging theirs. According to the teachers, they used this statement to make learners feel united and to ensure that no race would be deemed superior to others. One of the participants

mentioned that, because teachers were scared of losing their jobs and being labelled as racist, they declared they viewed all children the same, thus avoiding questions and accusations from parents and society. According to the findings, White and Black teachers predominantly used this statement to protect their learners, whereas the Indian teachers argued that using it would not create a sense of comfort and unity among learners. Their argument suggests that acknowledging colour and race in a classroom does not necessarily mean one is causing conflict or elevating one race above others, but simply that one wants all learners to embrace their respective races, acknowledge their roots, and find the direction in which they are going. This will help learners to identify and understand the importance of race. However, shying away from the reality of diversity may be confusing and disturbing for learners, as some participants averred.

6.2.3 Effects of racial discrimination on learners

Another objective aimed to explore the effects of racial discrimination on learners. The findings revealed that learners' mental health might be at risk should they be racially victimized daily. The participants, learners may become suicidal when persistent racism leaves them with no hope for the future, particularly when they have become the targets of racist slurs and behaviours in a former White school such as the one under study. Some participants stated that they would withdraw into their rooms, sleep most of the time, and ignore everyone, including their parents because they felt rejected and confused. The participants agreed that being victimized because of the colour of one's skin was draining and exacerbated feelings of anxiety and depression. The literature avers that young people's mental health must always be positive, as this reduces the risks of poor sleeping patterns, fatigue, and a weakened immune system. This was echoed by the participants, who mentioned that depression caused poor eating habits and a weakened immune system.

The effect of persistent racism on learners' cognitive abilities was also highlighted by the participants. They argued that exposure to racism resulted in impaired memory and concentration and agreed that affected learners tended to perform badly in their studies. Some would lock themselves in their rooms while others became tardy and bunked classes, leading to low academic performance, diminished flexibility, and limited critical thinking skills. It was averred that some targeted learners had reached a point where they changed school's mid-term because they felt rejected and had no faith in the multiracial school system. However, the

findings also revealed that some learners became immune to the pain of victimization. These young people then managed to overcome adversity, and many found a sense of resilience by sustaining the attitude that racial victimization did not affect them.

6.3 School-Based Interventions

Schools must have support structures that learners who feel victimized by diversity and cultural clashes may access. In the current study, the learners and teachers had differing views on the availability of support structures in the school. Most learners averred that there were no support structures available to racially victimized learners, as they argued that Mr X was the only counsellor at the school and that he dealt exclusively with issues associated with child abuse and domestic violence. On the other hand, the teachers argued that the school counsellor would address racial issues among learners should such incidences be referred to him. However, one teacher stated that no incidences of racism had been reported in two years. This raises the question of how and why teachers were aware of racial discrimination among learners and how they knew that some learners were suffering the effects of racist slurs.

6.4 Recommendations

The participants raised the concern that the Department of Basic Education did not appear keen to solve the matter of racial tensions in the school. It was argued that learners found guilty of racist attacks and slurs should be expelled and not merely suspended for a week. They argued that such learners should be excluded from academic activities for a prolonged period because, if there are no consequences for racism, these learners will continue victimizing others knowing that they will receive a light suspension and be back at school where they may continue as normal. This recommendation emphasizes the importance of the role of the Department of Basic Education in protecting victims and curbing incidences of racism in schools. Strategies and measures should be implemented to encourage learners to be tolerant and respectful of people of other races.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that teachers tended to step away when learners argued, and one participant recommended that teachers pay more careful attention to learners' behaviours and relationships and intervene appropriately when they notice unacceptable behaviours and attitudes, both in classrooms and on the school premises. Teachers should thus be observant and address learners whose behaviour to learners of other races changes for the worse.

6.5 Limitations of the Study and Future Recommendations

As the study was delimited to one school and involved only 18 participants, it is impossible to generalize the findings to similar schools across the South African landscape. This implies that the study should be emulated in other schools to plot similarities and differences, thereby extending the data and findings to more schools to explore and understand the patterns exposed by this study in more depth. Additionally, involving more schools will harvest rich data to confirm or refute the finding that White learners in multiracial schools are more exposed to racial victimization than their Black, Coloured, or Indian counterparts.

The study was also limited in terms of the scope of the various races who were involved and whose views were explored. Only three learners per race were interviewed, and this limited scope prevented the researcher from gaining an extensive understanding of the prevalence of racial discrimination among learners in this multiracial school. Should the scope of future studies be extended to more learners and more schools, the findings may reveal a much clearer picture of the prevalence of racism, or the level of its eradication, across South African multiracial schools. It is thus recommended that at least three schools be accessed in different areas, including historically White schools, urban multiracial schools, and independent or private schools. The data that will be elicited will enhance scholarly understanding of the similarities and differences among these schools and will assist the Department of Basic Education in implementing practical measures to curb racial discrimination in all its schools. Furthermore, future studies should include officials from the Department of Basic Education and members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) to enhance understanding of the extent of the problem, to identify cases of racial discrimination that made it to court, and to highlight the lessons that were learnt from such incidences.

6.6 Chapter Conclusion

This study revealed that, regardless of the many positive transformations in the South African education system, there are certain aspects rooted in its history that will take time to heal. Scholars, educationists, and many members of the public agree that the citizens of this country must embrace their respective races without feeling intimidated or inferior. This study proposes that a good starting point will be the eradication of misunderstandings between teachers and learners who may be covertly exposed to racism so that all learners' voices will be heard. To

achieve this ideal, specific measures must be put in place by SMTs, classroom teachers, and policymakers to ensure justice in all schools for all learners. Racial discrimination is a scourge

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule - Teachers



Interview Schedule (Teachers)

Demographic questions

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Race:
4. Language:
5. Job description:
6. Years of teaching:

QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of racial discrimination?
2. Have you ever encountered any cases of racial discrimination? If yes, how did you handle the case/s?
3. What do you think are the contributing factors to racial discrimination among learners?
4. Are there any challenges do you face in disciplining learners that perpetuate racial discrimination?
5. Do you know what racial integration is?
6. Do you think the statement used by teachers in a classroom “I see no colour in learners” has any impact in the existence of racial discrimination among learners? If Yes/ No why?

7. What support structures are available for teachers and learners to deal with the trauma induced by racial discrimination?
8. In your opinion, what do you think can be done to curb or teach learners about the importance of race?
9. Generally, is there anything you would to say regarding racial integration?

Appendix B: Interview Schedule - Learners



Interview Schedule (Learners)

Demographic questions

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Race:
4. Grade:
5. Language:

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about this school, how is it like studying here?
2. In your opinion, what is racial discrimination?
3. Have you ever been exposed to racial discrimination? If yes, did it affect your school performance in anyway?
4. Which race do you think is mostly affected by racism and why?
5. In your opinion, do you think teachers are responsible for racial discrimination among learners and why?
6. What do you think are the contributing factors to racial discrimination?
7. Do you think the statement used by teachers in a classroom “I see no colour in learners” has any impact in the existence of racial discrimination among learners? If Yes/ No, why?

8. What do you think are the challenges faced by the learners who experienced racial discrimination?
9. What support structures are available for teachers and learners to deal with the trauma induced by racial discrimination?
10. What do you understand by racial integration?
11. In your opinion, do you think racial integration can reduce the incidences of racial discrimination? Why?
12. In your opinion, what do you think can be done to curb or teach learners about the importance of race?
13. Generally, is there anything you would to say regarding racial integration?

Appendix C: Informed consent guardian

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC) APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research Date:

Dear Parent of a prospective participant

I am currently conducting a study titled: Racial discrimination among high school Learners. A case of a selected high school, Durban. The school of your child was selected as it fits the criteria of this study and the objectives, and your child was purposively selected to participate as she meets the characteristics of the study. I therefore, humbly request your permission to allow your child to take part in this study

The aim and purpose of this study is to understand racial discrimination in the 21st century among learners in multiracial schools with the specific focus on what causes racial discrimination among them as they are a new generation and South Africa is a rainbow nation. The study is expected to enroll 20 participants. The participants will be selected based on their ethnic groups and the teachers will assist in selecting the learners that will participate in this study. This study will take approximately 10-15 minutes, the study is not funded by any organization.

The study may involve risks and/or discomforts, such as emotional distress as some may have indirect experience it, however, should the child feel uncomfortable they will be informed that they can leave the interview at any given time, and if they want to talk to a psychologist one will be provided. We hope that the study will shed a light in schools and the department of basic education in understanding that racial discrimination is a pandemic that needs to be paid attention to before the number of cases are high.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at (provide contact details) or the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Please note that:

- Your Child's confidentiality is guaranteed as their inputs will not be attributed to them in person but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 10-15 minutes
- Any information given by the child cannot be used against them, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this academic research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- The child has a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. They will not be penalized or held responsible in any way for taking such an action.
- The child involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- This research is based solely for academic purposes and the researcher will present the research findings to the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled Racial discrimination among high school learners. A case-study of a selected high school, Durban. Researcher is Fernanda Munguambe.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (provide details).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

If you are agreeing for your child to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether, or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio Equipment		
.....	
Signature of parent	Date	
.....	
Signature of witness	Date	

**Appendix D: Etiese Goedkeuring UKZN GEESTESWETENSKAPPE EN
SOSIALE WETENSKAPPE NAVORSINGSETIEKE KOMITEE (HSSREC)
AANSOEK OM ETIESE GOEDKEURING Vir navorsing met menslike deelnemers
VORM INGELIGTE TOESTEMMING**

Inligtingblad en toestemming om aan navorsing deel te neem Datum:

Geagte Ouer van 'n voornemende deelnemer

Ek is tans besig met 'n studie met die titel: Racial discrimination among high school Learners. 'n Geval van 'n uitgesoekte hoërskool, Durban. Die skool van u kind is gekies aangesien dit aan die kriteria van hierdie studie en die doelwitte voldoen, en u kind is doelbewus gekies om deel te neem aangesien sy aan die kenmerke van die studie voldoen. Ek vra dus nederig u toestemming om u kind toe te laat om aan hierdie studie deel te neem

Die doel en doel van hierdie studie is om rassediskriminasie in die 21ste eeu onder slankers in veelrassige skole te verstaan met die spesifieke fokus op wat rassediskriminasie onder hulle veroorsaak aangesien hulle 'n nuwe generasie is en Suid-Afrika 'n reënboognasie is. Die studie sal na verwagting 20 deelnemers inskryf. Die deelnemers sal gekies word op grond van hul etniese groepe en die onderwysers sal help met die kies van die leerders wat aan hierdie studie sal deelneem. Hierdie studie sal ongeveer 10-15-minute neem, die studie word nie deur enige organisasie befonds nie.

Die studie kan risiko's en/of ongemak inhou, soos emosionele nood aangesien sommige dit indirek kan ervaar, maar sou die kind ongemaklik voel sal hulle ingelig word dat hulle die onderhoud op enige gegewe tydstip kan verlaat, en as hulle wil praat t 'n sielkundige sal een voorsien word. Ons hoop dat die studie 'n lig in skole en die departement van basiese onderwys sal werp om te verstaan dat rassediskriminasie 'n pandemie is waaraan aandag gegee moet word voordat die aantal gevalle hoog is.

Hierdie studie is eties hersien en goedgekeur deur die UKZN Geestes- en Sosiale Wetenskappe Navorsingsetiekkomitee (goedkeuringsnommer).

In die geval van enige probleme of bekommernisse/vrae kan u die navorser kontak by e-pos: (217078446@stu.ukzn.ac.za of selfoonnommer [REDACTED]). My studieleier is dr Nomakhosi Nomathemba Sibisi sy is geleë in die skool vir sosiale wetenskappe, Howardkampus, Durban in die Universiteit van KwaZulu-Natal haar kontakbesonderhede is: e-pos (SibisiN@ukzn.ac.za) telefoonnommer: 031 260 2460.

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEACRH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001 Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA TEL: +27 31 2604557 -Fax: 27 31

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za Neem

kennis dat:

- Jou Kinders se vertroulikheid word gewaarborg aangesien hul insette nie persoonlik aan hulle toegeskryf sal word nie, maar slegs as 'n bevolkingslidmening gerapporteer sal word.
- Die onderhoud kan ongeveer 10-15-minute duur
- Enige inligting wat deur die kind gegee word, kan nie teen hulle gebruik word nie, en die versamelde data sal slegs vir doeleindes van hierdie akademiese navorsing gebruik word.
- Data sal in veilige berging gestoor word en na 5 jaar vernietig word.
- Die kind het 'n keuse om deel te neem, nie deel te neem of op te hou om aan die navorsing deel te neem nie. Hulle sal nie gepenaliseer of verantwoordelik gehou word op enige manier vir die neem van so 'n aksie nie.
- Die kinderbetrokkenheid is slegs vir akademiese doeleindes, en daar is geen finansiële voordele betrokke nie.
- Hierdie navorsing is uitsluitlik vir akademiese doeleindes gebaseer en die navorser sal die navorsingsbevindinge aan die Universiteit van Kwa-Zulu Natal voorlê.

.....
.....

TOESTEMMING

Ek is ingelig oor die studie getiteld Rassediskriminasie onder hoërskoolleerlinge. 'n Gevallestudie van 'n geselekteerde hoërskool, Durban. Navorser is Fernanda Munguambe.

Ek verstaan die doel en prosedures van die studie.

Ek het die geleentheid gekry om vrae oor die studie te beantwoord en het antwoorde tot my bevrediging gehad.

Ek verklaar dat my deelname aan hierdie studie heeltemal vrywillig is en dat ek enige tyd kan onttrek sonder om enige van die voordele waarop ek gewoonlik geregtig is, te beïnvloed. Indien ek enige verdere vrae/bekommernisse of navrae met betrekking tot die studie het, verstaan ek dat ek die navorser kan kontak by (verskaf besonderhede).

As ek enige vrae of bekommernisse het oor my regte as 'n studiedeelnemer, of as ek bekommerd is oor 'n aspek van die studie of die navorsers, kan ek kontak met:

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Gewillig

Nie Gewillig nie

Oudio Toerusting

.....

.....

Handtekening van deelnemer (ouer)

Datum

.....

.....

Handtekening van Getuie

Datum

Appendix E: Informed Consent for Teachers

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC) APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research Date:

Dear Prospective participant

I am currently conducting a study titled: Racial Discrimination among High School Learners—a case of a selected high school, Durban. The school you are teaching at was selected as it fits the criteria of this study and the objectives, and you are purposively selected to participate as you meet the characteristics of the study and as a secondary guardian to learners at school. I therefore, humbly request your permission to take part in this study

The aim and purpose of this study is to understand racial discrimination in the 21st century among learners in multiracial schools with the specific focus on what causes racial

discrimination among them as they are a new generation and South Africa is a rainbow nation. The study is expected to enroll 20 participants. The participants will be selected based on their ethnic groups. This study will take approximately 10-15 minutes, the study is not funded by any organization.

The study may involve risks and/or discomforts, such as emotional distress as some may have indirect experience it, however, should you feel uncomfortable you will be allowed to leave the interview at any given time, and if you want to talk to a social worker one will be provided. We hope that the study will shed a light in schools and the department of basic education in understanding that racial discrimination is a pandemic that needs to be paid attention to before the number of cases are high.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at email: (217078446@stu.ukzn.ac.za or cellphone number [REDACTED]). My supervisor is Dr Nomakhosi Nomathemba Sibisi she is located in the school of social sciences, Howard Campus, Durban in the University of KwaZulu-Natal her contact details are: email (SibisiN@ukzn.ac.za) phone number: 031 260 2460. The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za phone number: 031 260 3587.

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEACRH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan

Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

TEL: +27 31 2604557 -Fax: 27 31 Email:

Please note that:

- The interview may last for about 10-15 minutes • Any information given by you cannot be used against them, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this academic research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.

- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate or not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized or held responsible in any way for taking such an action.
- The involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- This research is based solely for academic purposes and the researcher will present the research findings to the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.
- If you agree to participate, please sign below and a separate sheet will be provided for signatures.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled Racial discrimination among high school learners.

A case-study of a selected high school, Durban. Researcher is Fernanda Munguambe.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (provide details).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan

Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

If you are agreeing for your child to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether, or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

Willing
Audio Equipment

Not Willing

Signature of participant

Date

of witness

Date

-----Signature

Appendix F: Gatekeeper's Letter



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 392 1063

Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Ref.:2/4/8/79

Miss F Mungambe

██████████

GERMISTON
0001

Dear Miss Mungambe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "**RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS. A CASE STUDY OF A SELECTED HIGH SCHOOL**", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 27 June 2023 to 31 July 2026.

7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu -Natal Department of Education.

UMLAZI DISTRICT



MR GN NGCODO
Head of Department: Education
Date: 28 June 2023

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

Appendix G: ETHICS APPROVAL



10 May 2024

Fernanda Mungambe (217078446)
School of Applied Human Sc
Howard College Campus

Dear F Mungambe,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/0006741/2024

Project title: Racial discrimination among high school learners. A case-study of a selected high school, Durban.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 30 April 2024 to our letter of 04 April 2024 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.

This approval is valid for one year until 10 May 2025

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)
/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Naidoo

APPENDIX H: PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITOR

3 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
4215

27 November 2024

DECLARATION OF PROOF-READING

TO:

The University of KwaZulu Natal
Research Ethics Committee
Private Bag X54001
Durban
4000

Sir/Madam

I, Nicolina D. Coertze, declare that I meticulously perused the academic manuscript referred to below for language editing and proof-reading purposes. I identified and corrected linguistic and stylistic inaccuracies to the best of my knowledge and ability. Using the *Word Tracking* system, I kept track of the changes that I made. I also offered additional annotations for consideration by the author should she deem it necessary to address areas that I considered might need attention. I declare that I adhered to the general principles that guide the work of a language editor and that I remained within my brief as had been agreed with the author of the manuscript.

Details

TITLE:	Racial discrimination among high school learners: A case of a selected high school, Durban
NAME OF CANDIDATE:	Fernanda Munguambe
STUDENT NUMBER:	217078446
PROPOSED QUALIFICATION:	Master of Criminology and Forensic Studies
DEPARTMENT:	School of Applied Human Sciences Discipline of Criminology and Forensic Studies
TERTIARY INSTITUTION:	University of KwaZulu-Natal

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

(MRS) N.D. COERTZE
LANGUAGE EDITOR

Cell: [REDACTED]

DISCLAIMER: The Editor was not responsible for the final presentation of this manuscript. It was the author's/supervisor's prerogative to format the manuscript and to make additional changes after editing without referring the document back to the language editor.

APPENDIX I: TURNITIN REPORT

ABSTRACT.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

8% SIMILARITY INDEX	7% INTERNET SOURCES	2% PUBLICATIONS	4% STUDENT PAPERS
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PRIMARY SOURCES

1	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	1%
2	wrap.warwick.ac.uk Internet Source	1%
3	univendspace.univen.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
4	academic.oup.com Internet Source	<1%
