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The impact of living at home on progression and performance in U.K. higher education's ethnic minorities: a focus on British Pakistani students.

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Abstract

The increasing participation of students from a non-traditional background has placed heightened focus and attention on the support structures and mechanisms within UK Higher Education institutions. Increased scrutiny has been placed on the performance and progression of students from ethnic minority backgrounds. As part of this research the author examines the role of culture and ethnicity in the progression and performance of British Pakistani commuter students.

 The author undertakes a global perspective, investigating how different countries support students from an ethnic minority background. As part of this investigation, we provide a framework placing culture and ethnicity at the epicentre of progression and performance in British Pakistani students. Thus, using a quantitative approach with a correlational research design we analyse the records of over 35,000 student records over a sixteen-year period, measuring their performance and progression through the lens of the framework.

Our findings displayed that British Pakistani students underperform in both progression and performance , even when they enter Higher Education with the same grades as their White counterparts, especially in the circumstances where the British Pakistani students are labelled as *commuters* (i.e. living at family home when enrolled in a higher education institute). Thus, our main contributions is the development of a reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework that puts the onus on studying the culture and ethnicity of British Pakistani students to identify what sub-factors influence the underperformance; the second contribution from this research aims to eradicated use of umbrella terms, such as BAME and British Asians, when researching students from an ethnic minority background as each ethnic minority consists of their own issues and pressures.

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Dedication and Acknowledgements

These past four years, for me, have been the journey of a lifetime. I thank Allah Almighty in enabling me to finish what was started and for all the success I have been blessed with.

This thesis is dedicated to my lovely parents; everything I have achieved has been because of the sacrifices they have made to provide me with the life I have now and, for that, no amount of words or gratitude will ever be sufficient. This achievement will be more for them than for me, and I hope this makes them proud. I also want to thank my sister, Aruba, who has not only been insanely supportive but also the provider of comic relief in many situations.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1. Research Aim and Objectives

"Diversity is an aspect of human existence that cannot be eradicated by terrorism or war or self-consuming hatred. It can only be conquered by recognizing and claiming the wealth of values it represents for all."

Aberjhani, Splendid Literarium: A Treasury of Stories, Aphorisms, Poems, and Essays

"Pull a thread here and you'll find it's attached to the rest of the world."

Nadeem Aslam, The Wasted Vigil

The quotes above identifies how powerful it can be to not only acknowledge diversity, but also to understand the values of different cultures and ethnicities, as that is the true wealth of a nation. It also brings to light the contemplation that celebrating or studying cultural differences does not mean that we are not all connected, but more so that we are connected through our differences. This brings forward the premise of the current research, which is to understand and examine the cultural and ethnicity of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education, and to establish that there are significant differences between ethnic minorities' cultures that cannot be ignored; rather, they must be acknowledged in order to provide targeted support for the ethnic minority groups.

Thus, the research aim of this thesis is to critically assess the performance, integration, and progression of British Pakistani commuter students in U.K.'s higher education.

The research objectives for this thesis are outlined in the Table 1.1. below:

Research Objectives	
Research Objective 1 (RO$_1$):	To examine the role of ethnicity and culture in British Pakistani students' performance in U.K.'s higher education.
Research Objective 2 (RO$_2$):	To define the role of ethnicity and culture in British Pakistani students' progression in U.K.'s higher education.
Research Objective 3 (RO$_3$):	To assess the impact of living at home, as an expression of British Pakistani culture, on the students' progression and performance.
Research Objective 4 (RO$_4$):	To propose a HE framework to study and understand progression and performance of British Pakistani students.
Research Objective 5 (RO$_5$):	To provide a recommendation for best practice in the progression and performance of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education.

Table 1.1 Research objectives of the current thesis.

1.2. What is Higher Education?

De Moura Castro & Levy (2015) noted that 'higher education' is a widely contested term with 'university' having multiple interpretations in different societies and countries, yet the difference is hardly ever disputed in the open. The term higher education refers to tertiary education (or postsecondary education) and is the latter part of a system that identifies further education as the first part; higher education qualifications may take a minimum of three to four years at degree level to complete (Cowley & Williams, 1969). The purpose of the degree is to prepare an individual to undertake work and research in professional fields; many degrees represent the individual as a specialist in the subject area and are recognised worldwide. Higher education also provides the individuals with a unique skill set that enables them to pursue a career in their chosen professional field by showcasing them to employers (Manning, 2000; Brown, 2010). All higher education institutes are officially recognised by the state's higher education authority; the authority also provides a framework for the higher education institutes to adapt to in order to meet the requirements of being a higher education institute. In United Kingdom, higher education consists of universities, colleges, university colleges and private collages where students can attain

qualifications that include diplomas of higher education and higher national certification, bachelor's degrees (undergraduate level) and master's degrees (postgraduate level); the educational authorities such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) work closely with the Department of Education to set and maintain academic standard, assure and enhance academic quality as well as to manage expectation in higher education (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2014).

1.2.1. The Role of University

The proper role of university has changed along with the needs of the society over the years and has been widely debated as to what it is and what it should be. The debate is still valid today as the characteristics of society have changed, just as the higher education has (Zomer & Benneworth, 2011). Delanty (2001; 2002) explained the four academic revolutions in the sociological history of universities. He explained that the Humboltian University model is closely associated with working for the betterment of society by conducting research that is globally beneficial without any bounds while simultaneously teaching students in the same manner. Delanty (2002) noted that the Civic University model is closely linked with the society's industrialisation, with the expansion of academic disciplines becoming increasingly ostensible as academics become specialists in their own fields. The third model, Mass University, is often affiliated with magnanimous surge in student population (focusing on non-traditional students such as women, working-class backgrounds and ethnic minorities) (Delanty, 2002). Finally, the Virtual University is representing the post-modernism in higher education where universities are perceived as reflexive and disciplinary boundaries (from the Civic period) are broken down to increase globalisation (Delanty, 2002).

1.2.2. Functions of Higher Education

In 2011, Altbach published an article in Economic and Political Weekly that focused on the past, present, and future of the higher education, ascertaining that the main functions of higher education were to provide education, conduct research, and to contribute to the wider society that the

individuals involved operate in. Altbach (2011) had explained in the article that research and education were essentially linked, and need to be simultaneously carried out to achieve the purpose of higher education. Previously, in another article published by Altbach (2008), the author had emphasised the role education and research play in the advancement of a globalised society and that these functions' contributions are the dire need of the society for enrichment and empowerment. Similar inclinations were made by Professor Eric Thomas, President of *Universities UK* and Vice-Chancellor at University of Bristol, and by Professor Michael Arthur, Vice-Chancellor at University of Leeds, where they stated that higher education in the U.K.'s functions included generating technology and knowledge, as well as contributing positively to the society through development of able minds (The Higher Education Context, 2012). In 2015, de Moura Castro & Levy had also identified four functions of higher education, namely academic leadership, professional development, technological training and development, and general higher education.

Described as the most prestigious function by the authors, academic leadership refers to the ability of a highly prepared faculty to identify scholarly quality and be published be in internationally recognized journals that undergo a rigorous reviewing process; this function is fulfilled by using multiple resources that cost the institute both in physical and human resources. De Moura Castro & Levy emphasized that much of the bother with academic leadership is to identify the true leaders from the charlatans, a danger that often compromises the quality of higher education and wastes precious resources from the institutes. Professional development is described as giving students extensive and advanced formal education that prepares them for a specific job market. However, de Moura Castro & Levy claimed that professional development as less common than perceived and that is the reason increasing number of students engage in jobs not corresponding with their degree and training, often leading to high unemployment.

The newer higher education function amongst the four is technology training and development, hence its absence from the JICA report (Kanamaru, 2004). Previously only considered significant

during on-the-job training, technology training and development incorporates applied research and allows the students to be prepared for direct insertion in the job market. This function requires high-quality professional education with "rapid responsiveness" (de Moura Castro & Levy, 2015, p. 6) being crucial due to the fast-paced nature of technological challenges and developments. The final function identified by de Moura Castro & Levy is general higher education; defined as a type of mass higher education, general higher education refers to professional-level education that allows the students to develop analytical skills that can be useful in various possible jobs and roles. De Moura Castro & Levy noted that general higher education is the reason that alternatives to traditional higher education, such as distance learning, exist. De Moura Castro & Levy noted that this typology on functions of higher education is ever-changing and is open to improvement and debate, as it assists in improving policies and systems that define higher education. Márquez-Ramos & Mourelle (2018) agreed with de Moura Castro & Levy, stating that higher education's relationship with society evolves and varies over time, leading to altered functions every decade or so.

1.2.3.   Transition from Industrial Society to Knowledge Society

Birnbaum (1960) referred to industrial society as the era of mass production with an avid class difference between workers and factory owners. Birnbaum noted that industrial society was ruled by the elite class and the working class were discriminated against. Similarly, knowledge was considered only the right of the elite whereas the working class were only given technical information for mass production with no innovation expected from them. Kerr, Harbison, Dunlop & Myers (1960) used the term 'industrial society' to refer to an era when the technology being used was far more advanced than that of earlier societies and different research organisations had the task of specialising in technology advancements as well as manage innovation, such as research institutes and universities; yet, most of the manpower needed to run the industries required skills learned by the masses on the job with no expectation of innovation. The manpower was required to run the large-scale plants and machinery being used to power the different industries. Beck (1992) industrial society carried less risk than the successive knowledge society as any technology rolled out

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to the masses was increasingly tested to reduce risk; everyday innovation was not a concept commonly associated with the working class.

Towards the end of the 20th Century, trends in industrial society began to shift towards a knowledge society. Yapp (2000) highlighted that the transition from industrial society to a knowledge society did not occur overnight, but was, in fact, a process with opulent turbulence and organisational inertia. Yapp explained that this phase transition started with the implementation of technology in all aspects of professional and personal lives as well as the changing trends of what an ideal workplace should be; with businesses becoming more global and more accessible 24-hours a day, more people above 30 learning to engage with new technology and working from home becoming more common, the trends of entrepreneurism began. Yapp wrote that technology blurred the boundaries between different classes and different sectors, making it easier for anyone to innovate anything. To accommodate and adapt to this social shift, higher education institutes began to offer studies in innovation, entrepreneurship and technology (Fagerberg, Landström, & Martin, 2012), disciplines that were not considered traditional. And thus, the knowledge society emerged (Walby, 2011).

When describing a knowledge society, Yapp notes that there are certain values that may define such a society and could act the pillars that need to be built when the transition from industrial society occurs. These values include favouring social innovation instead of technological invention, a concept absent in an industrial society, and interdependence over independence, focusing on blurring the lines between traditional sectors and encouraging collaborations. Yapp also mentions "value-added with values" (p. 61), referring to companies focusing on missions other than just profits; Yapp outlines that companies now have to incorporate social responsibility into their values instead of the usual agenda on bottom line figures, an approach that was typical of the industrial society.

1.3. Why Is Higher Education Important?

Immerwahr (1998) reported that the public perception of higher education was going through an alteration, with most people beginning to think that only secondary education was not sufficient for a good job, making higher education a necessity. Brennan & Teichler (2008) noted that the importance of higher education is evident in the human and fiscal capital invested in the sector. Brennan & Teichlar's review of the literature made them highlight five themes that are connected to the importance of higher education.

The first theme Brennan & Teichlar mentioned is the "higher education and the needs of the knowledge society" (p. 260). Tomlinson (2008) referred to higher education as "crucial for the economic development" (p. 49) of a society that is extremely knowledge driven and demands that every individual has access to the same opportunities. Bertolin (2018) noted that the transition towards a knowledge society and globalisation has made higher education highly relevant and of integral importance to meet the needs of the society and the economy. Bertolin also referred to various governments' higher education policy implementations as a sign that higher education is imperative to "prioritize careers and articulated knowledge" (p. 123) in knowledge society and economy. For Kasworm (2011), the importance of higher education in relation to the needs of the knowledge economy lie in the fact that the new era of globalisation has made higher education a pivotal contributor in making of leaders; Kasworm wrote that higher education prepares individuals to be "skilled creators and innovators of knowledge and products for our society" (p. 104) which is imperative in the changing social and technological landscape. Snellman (2015) explained that one of the main reasons for the knowledge society's dire need of higher education is the creation of knowledge, making it the epitome of innovation and development. Snellman highlighted that even though higher education is quintessential to the needs of a knowledge society, this shift in traditional role of higher education has increased pressure on universities to constantly be in a cycle of innovation and production, challenging them in economic terms.

Brennan & Teichlar (2008) referred to "higher education and the achievement (or prevention) of equity and social justice" (p. 260) as the second theme when overviewing the importance of higher education. Brennan & Naidoo (2008) noted the concept of higher education's role in creating social equity and justice lacks a clear definition, however, the one provided by Zaijda, Majhanovich & Rust (2006) defines it as the act of contributing to the creation of a more "equitable, respectful, and just society for everyone" (p. 13). Orfield, Marin & Horn (2005) emphasised that higher education is the strongest force a nation can use to encourage social and racial equity, as well as social change; the authors note that the grandness of higher education is only truly understood when it is made accessible to everyone in the society. For Gale & Tranter (2011), the true importance of higher education lies in the sector's ability to provide "recognitive justice" (p. 29), meaning higher education can lead minorities and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds towards social inclusion, social justice and social equity. On a similar note, Singh (2011) wrote that assertion of social justice by higher education is now more important than ever as we go through "challenging times" (p. 481); however, Singh also pointed out that a more difficult predicament is to actually decide what constitutes as social justice in higher education as the perspectives can be affect by "political ideology, normative principle, and social policy and strategy". But Singh highlights that it is better to be at a crossroads on the issue than to not think of the issue at all, noting that higher education plays the all-important role of making the issue of social injustice and inequity stand out and be acted upon.

The third theme on the importance of higher education as mentioned by Brennan & Teichlar (2008) is "higher education and its communities: interconnections and interdependencies" (p. 260). Jongbloed, Enders & Salerno (2008) wrote that higher education works as a cultivating ground for the talent that is utilised by its various stakeholders, such as the communities, governments, and organisations; these relationships carry the economic and social functions of higher education. Enders (2004) explained that higher education institutes have to make sure that they make strong ties with the right communities to build connections and dependencies, as well as manage the

economic expectations of knowledge societies that demand constant and relevant research for a successful economy. Jongbloed, Ender & Salerno noted that, in recent times, higher education has placed immense importance on the process of "identifying stakeholders, classifying them according to their relative importance, and, having done that, establishing working relationships with stakeholders" (p. 304). De Boer, Enders & Leisyte (2007) emphasised that higher education's importance in a knowledge society can be majorly credited to the fact that it allows for communities and sectors to connect and depend on one another, blurring traditional subject lines and encouraging collaborations in all fields.

Moving on now to consider "steering and governance of higher education" (p. 260) as the next facet of higher education's importance, as written by Brennan & Teichlar (2008). Ferlie, Musselin & Andresani (2008) noted that the importance of higher education's governance and steering is deep rooted in the discipline of public policy management, meaning it is of utmost importance to the knowledge society that the governance of higher education be learned and inherit in order to adequately understand and transform policies. Brennan & Teichlar emphasised that the governance of the higher education systems is what makes the previously mentioned facets of higher education's importance possible. It can be argued that every nation has their own way of steering and governing their higher education systems, but it is imperative for that nation's upcoming generation to learn the importance and techniques of the system in order to sufficiently keep the system afoot (Enders, 2004). Enders (2004) focused on the fact that the steering and governance of higher education is of unequivocal importance to the knowledge society as it allows for the cycle of research, innovation and application to continue unperturbed.

The final theme of higher education's importance, as noted by Brennan & Teichlar (2008), is "differentiation and diversity of institutional forms" (p. 260). Diversity is and differentiation has been promoted in higher education as part of contemporary developments to increase the types of institutional forms offered (Squires, 2007). Van Vaught (2009) noted that Brennan & Teichlar (2008)

were referring to systematic diversity in higher education to be of immense importance to the knowledge society as it highlights the differences in "institutional type, size and control found within a higher education system" (Van Vaught, 2009, p. 1). Van Vaught emphasised that it is just as important to look at differentiation and diversity between institutions as it is within an institution. Scott (1987) wrote that differentiation and diversification addresses the issue of inclusion and equity in the higher education, as it makes sure that the system is accessible by people with various resources, a concept reiterated by Lepori, Huisman & Seeber (2014). The different systems that are operative within the higher education system ensure that majority of the population in today's knowledge society can access the research and innovation, as well as contribute to it (Squires, 2007).

1.4. Higher Education Systems

1.4.1. Elite

Elite higher education system is a term defined by Doherty & Pozzi (2017) as a system that uses the logic of "social selectivity by dint of high fees or academic selectivity by dint of enrolments conditional on academic excellence" (p. 4). Trow (2007) noted that elite higher education systems aim to shape the mind and character of a ruling class in order to prepare them for elite roles. Williams & Filippakou (2010) wrote that elite higher education systems highlight Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic capital" (p. 5) where high status universities tend to offer places to a rather homogenous group of students based on their social class and meritocracy, although the latter may be a secondary point of evaluation if the social class is considered suitable. Williams and Filippakou noted that Bourdieu's (1993) notion of symbolic capital analyses the reputation and power that accompanies the individual and is often perceived a synonymous as with prestige, honour, fame and standing, elements that imperatively characterise the elites. Van Zanten (2014) explained that the exclusiveness of elite high education systems partially rests on its responsibility to prepare their students for political and economic power positions who, once graduated, are able to alter the milieu of the social structure through their decisions (Feeney, Hogan, & O'Rourke, 2017).

According to Espenshade & Chung (2005), the student recruitment process in elite universities can be subjective to the legacy the student may bring with them; this may result in a homogenous student population being created. Boliver (2015) noted that elite universities are more likely to attract and have students from "more advantaged social class backgrounds and private schools" (p. 614), making the population in these universities as less diverse than the other higher education systems. Boliver's research on UK's elite higher education system highlighted University of Oxford and University of Cambridge as "highly distinct and clearly representing an elite system of universities in the UK" (p. 623) while significantly serving much more "socioeconomically advantaged student bodies" (p. 622) and are "significantly more academically selective" (p. 622) in their admission process. Oliver & Kettley (2010) also noted that universities in an elite higher education system, such as University of Oxford and University of Cambridge, are dominated by students from "a small cadre" (p. 737) of independent and elite schools, and the universities' efforts to gain equity in the student body (through bursary schemes and outreach programmes) go in vain as they are unable to reach the target for lower socio-economic status students.

1.4.2. Mass

Trow (2007) defined mass higher education systems as a structure concocted to allow for the transmission of skills that prepares the students for a broader range of elite roles in the technical and economical fields. Mass higher education system differs from the elite system in the institutional characteristics it displays, with the mass system being slightly more diverse than the homogenous elite system. Mass higher education system also grants admission to students with delayed entry, unlike the elite system that flourishes on uninterrupted education until the degree is obtained. Scott (2002) noted that mass higher education system can be seen as "specialists in vocational terms" (p. 3), focusing on the students becoming highly skilled workers. Scott (2016) also highlighted that the concept of mass higher education is what allowed for social forces to push for expansion of higher education to include a more diverse student body. Trow (2007) pointed that while elite education systems tend to have 0-15% of the country's student population, mass higher

education systems usually house 16-50% of country's student population. Daniel (1993) noted that the mass higher education system arrived in the UK in early 1990s but was already well-established in USA and Canada; Daniel highlighted that such a system helps to "cultivate personal autonomy and thus empower individuals to recognise and build upon their own skills and interests" (p. 198). By the end of the twentieth century, mass higher education system had become a norm globally (Altbach, 1999). Altbach pointed out that many elite higher education systems still in operation face a growing pressure to expand and to diversify their homogenous student body. Stephen, O'Connell and Hall (2008) explained that students in a mass higher education system tend to seek out opportunities to be mentored, in order to prepare them for high-profile industrial roles. Schuetze & Slowey (2002) noted that the dramatic change from elite higher education system being the norm to mass higher education system happened with insignificant strategic planning, but the change it ensued in the student body of the institutions was significant. Furthermore, Schuetze & Slowey added that this change in the student body was visible when the perception of higher education changed from a being privilege to a right, leading to the student demographics becoming more diverse than before.

1.4.3. Universal

The third type of higher education system from Trow's (1970) typology is the universal higher education system. Trow (2007) explained the universal higher education system as university education being accessible by the whole population while adapting to intense social and economic changes. Pliner & Johnson (2004) noted that the use of a universal higher education system has further diversified the student body and has given individuals the social acceptability to delay higher education after finishing secondary school, a concept that was not entirely acceptable in the mass higher education system. Pliner and Johnson highlighted that a universal higher education system was deemed more desirable "from an ethic of inclusion", making the student body less homogenous (like that of the elite higher education system). Burgstahler (2008) explained that the application of a universal design makes the higher education system more inclusive for staff and students alike. Kezar and Eckel (2002) noted that one of the main reasons for the adoption of a universal higher

education system was the array of challenges faced by the industry that were unparalleled to any other point in the history of higher education, such as the concept of, and increase in, non-traditional students in universities. It is often assumed that the universal higher education system's popularity is largely due to the agenda of "widening participation" (Hubble & Connell-Smith, 2018), especially in the United Kingdom. Keneley & Jackling (2011) wrote that "perceptions of differing cohorts of students" (p. 606) are embedded in the very fabric of the universal higher education system. Keneley & Jackling also added that the diversity of the student body in a universal higher education system prepares the students for the labour market that also reflects a similar diversity in the current day and age. A universal higher education system exists to provide access to students that identify as 'non-traditional' (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000), a term that is discussed in detailed later in this section.

1.5. Widening Participation Agenda

Where the transition of higher education systems from elite to mass to universal is discussed, especially in UK, it is commonly presumed that the most apparent cause of the change is the widening participation philosophy adopted by UK's government in 1999 (Hubble & Connell-Smith, 2018). Hubble & Connell-Smith explained that the concept of widening participation revolves around taking extensive steps to ensure that students from under-represented groups have opportunities to get into higher education. The basic definition of underrepresented groups, according to Hubble & Connell-Smith, includes "students from disadvantaged backgrounds and lower income households" (p. 4) as well as any under-represented groups that may otherwise face barriers entering into higher education. Osho (2018) highlighted that widening participation does not only include students from low socio-economic backgrounds, but also encompasses students who identify as "care leavers, living with a disability, from families where there is no previous history of parental higher education, from under-represented groups (e.g. black minority ethnic students), returning to learning as mature students, and from low participation in higher education neighbourhoods" (p. 1). Osho also advised

that individuals who identify with one or more of the categories mentioned above as "statistically less likely to go on to higher education" (p. 1). Hubble & Connell-Smith noted that the purpose behind the widening participation agenda was to remove barriers, and to educate individuals so that they can progress further and have better graduate outcomes as well as employability.

The widening participation agenda gained political momentum in the early 2000s due to two controversies that were targeted at the selective admission process of elite higher education systems in the UK: the Laura Spence affair and the University of Bristol admissions controversy (Archer, 2007). The Laura Spence affair occurred in 2000 when an "academically excellent" (Clare, 2001, p. 1) student (Laura Spence) from a comprehensive school in the North-East of England was rejected by University of Oxford's Magdalen College "despite gaining five A grades in her A-levels" (Lipsett, 2008, p. 1); a predicament that was highly criticized by the comprehensive school's principal and led to the then-chancellor, Gordon Brown, accusing elite higher education systems (such as the University of Oxford) of social injustice, saying that Laura Spence was rejected because she belonged to the North-East (Ryle, Ahmed, & Bright, 2000). The University of Bristol admissions' controversy had similar circumstances where independent schools accused the University of favouring students from working-class background, while rejecting students from middle-class background, to appease the government's widening participation agenda (Smithers, 2003); the University retaliated that it has a high rejection rate as it is received "about 39,000 applicants for 3,300 undergraduate places each year" (BBC News, 2003) and that the rejections have nothing to do with the widening participation agenda. The incident still led to many private schools across the country boycotting the University of Bristol for several years (Smithers, 2003). These two political controversies brought the widening participation agenda to the frontier, displaying the two parallel outcomes the higher education institutes of UK might face. But along with the agenda, these controversies also bright forward the chance for students from under-represented groups to get a higher education degree that may lead to a better lifestyle and employability chances. Archer (2007) explained that the widening participation agenda has a dual perspective of diversity: "it is elided with 'choice' in the

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context of institutions (institutional diversity), and is used to signify 'equality' and/or 'social inclusion' in relation to students (student diversity)" (p. 636); meaning that students from under-represented groups should have the choice to apply to the institutions of their liking without the fair of bias in their mind, and if they succeed then they should be able to identify with the diversity of the student body.

Callender & Mason (2019) reported that in 2002 students deterred from following the higher education path due to the fear of debt; however once the authors compared the findings of 2002 to the finding of a survey done in 2015, they discovered prospective students were more slightly more in favour of taking out student loans in 2015 than they were in 2002, in order to enter higher education, especially the ones from the low socio-economic backgrounds. This slight change in attribute may be attributed to the widening participation agenda that was being implemented in schools and institutions alike. Yet, Chowdry, Crawford, Dearden, Goodman & Vignoles' (2013) research highlighted that students from low socio-economic background face barriers to higher education entry due to poor performance in secondary school, which in turn leads to low higher education participation; the authors noted that implementing the widening participation agenda in higher education might be intervening too late in the process, explaining that their "findings are consistent with the need for earlier policy intervention to raise HE participation rates among pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds" (p. 431). Similarly, different under-represented groups that face barrier to entry in higher education may be in need of earlier-policy interventions but for some groups, such as single parents returning to higher education, it may be all the more difficult to intervene as the classification for that group does not usually occur at the secondary school level (Jones, 2018); however, it is possible to promote the widening participation agenda from an earlier level to encourage the mindset that anybody can apply for (and achieve) a higher education degree (Jones, 2018).

1.5.1. Who Attends Now?

U.K.'s incline towards becoming a majorly mass higher education system began with the transformation of polytechnic institutes to universities in 1992, leading to a wave of funding encouraging higher participation rates from under-represented groups (Mayhew, Deer, & Dua, 2004). Barr & Crawford (2004) explained that at the time the decision to double the university places available was taken in 1988, the UK had only 15 per cent of its school-leaving population entering higher education, "the lowest in the entire developed world" (p. 185). Hence, the policies created made sure that there was fairly more access to higher education in UK than there has been in the years before. Barr & Crawford noted that the necessity of a mass higher education system arises from the fact that UK (like any other nation) is highly dependent on a highly educated work force for economic prosperity. This need led to the transformation of the higher education system from elite to mass; the challenge that the UK government faced was making sure anybody who wanted to go university had access to funds that could make that happen. The government at the time of implementation noted that when students take out loans to access higher education, it will take at least 20 years for any loan repayments to bring in any extra money (Barr & Crawford, 2004). Marginson (2016) wrote that there are many reasons for a mass higher education system to be adopted and widely promoted, including "state policies, economic development, aspirations for social position, global factors, and combinations of these" (p. 243). Marginson further added that any government's move to mass higher education systems has underlying political and economic explanations, with government policy and funding at its forefront.

1.6. Traditional versus Non-Traditional Students

1.6.1. Traditional Students

A large proportion of the literature on student characteristics is based on a linear comparison between traditional students and non-traditional students (Dill & Henley, 1998; Bye, Pushkar, & Conway, 2007; Devlin, 2017; Chung, Turnbull, & Chur-Hansen, 2017; Holton, 2018). The definition of

a traditional student provided by Dill & Henley (1998) asserts that a traditional student may be described as an individual who did not have a gap year before starting university and does not have multiple roles, i.e. they are only a student and have not been allotted additional roles such as parent or employee. Bye, Pushkar & Conway (2007) described traditional students as being 21 years of age or younger, who have followed "an unbroken linear path" (p. 141). It should be noted that both of the above definitions of traditional students have stemmed from research in the United States of America and Canada. Research conducted in Australia outlines that traditional students are typically considered to be aged between 18-22 years, hail from a middle-class background and reside on campus (Devlin, 2017; Chung, Turnbull, & Chur-Hansen, 2017). However, research in the United Kingdom adds an additional factor when classifying students as traditional: did the student's parents attended university? Research conducted by Holton (2018) highlights that traditional students hail from middle-class backgrounds (same as Australia), have had no gap between their college and university (same as USA, Canada and Australia), live on campus (same as Australia and USA) and, additionally, have parents that have also attended university.

The factor of parents attending university is mostly unique to the research done in the United Kingdom as it does not appear as a trend in research done elsewhere. Holdsworth (2006), Pimlott-Wilson (2011)and Holton (2018) noted that traditional students are more likely to follow in their parents' footsteps by choosing similar disciplines and completing their university education, meaning they are not highly at risk for dropping out of university. Chung, Turnbull & Chur-Hansen (2017) noted that this may be due "cultural resources passed down by parents who have been university educated" (p. 78), a nod towards Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and cultural deprivation (Lenoir, 2006) (Wagner & McLaughlin, 2015). The other factor common amongst traditional students of UK have in common with those of USA, Canada and Australia is that they live away from their parental home (Holton, 2018). Patiniotis & Holdsworth (2005) explained that the tradition of living away from parental home whilst at university is considered particularly important in British culture so much so that universities are often selected by students on basis of the quality

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of life on campus. Traditional students may view leaving their parental home and living in campus accommodation as a route towards independence and adulthood (Bynner, Elias, Mcknight, Pan, & Pierre, 2002).

1.6.2. Non-traditional Students

The elements that define a student as being non-traditional vary within the literature, much like the definition for traditional students. Schuetze & Slowey (2002) explained that under the context of equality of opportunity in the higher education industry, non-traditional students can be described as those belonging to certain ethnic minorities, working class backgrounds, immigrants and, in some particular cases, women. Schuetze & Slowey (2002) noted that "for a complex range of social, economic and cultural reasons" (p. 327), these groups were previously discounted and often underrepresented in higher education. Research studies conducted in Australia by James (2000) defined non-traditional as being from indigenous background, non-English speaking background, rural background, isolated background or lower socio-economic status. Gilardi & Guglielmetti (2011) addressed the variations in the definitions for non-traditional students by dividing it into three different approaches: the first approach focuses on the age of the student; the second approach focuses on the background of the student, and the third approach emphasises the risk factors associated with dropping out. The third approach is by far only evident in literature from USA, as the authors highlighting it are associated with The Ohio State University. The risk factors of dropping out defining non-traditional students include part-time work, full-time work, delaying entry in higher education, financial independence, and presence of a spouse as well as the lack of a high school diploma. These risk factors associated with dropping out have been formally adopted by U.S. Department of Education to identify non-traditional students (Gilardi & Guglielmetti, 2011) (Wyatt, 2011).

Bye, Pushkar & Conway (2007) noted that motivation varies in any individual as age progresses, therefore any non-traditional students who are older than traditional students will also experience

varied motivations than those of traditional students. The authors noted that non-traditional students who are in full-time or part-time employment may also have a degree of variation in their motivation to be in university, but it does not vary as much as the difference between traditional and non-traditional students. Carney-Crompton and Tan (2002) highlighted that mature students who enter university go through a self-selection process, meaning they would not opt for the experience unless they had strong intrinsic motivation. Murphy and Roopchand (2003) suggested that traditional students' intrinsic motivation is more likely to be associated with extra-curricular activities in university (for example, socialising), which also makes it one of their main motivations for entering higher education in the first place. Murphy and Roopchand explained that this occurs because traditional students, having followed a linear path, face a significant shift towards adulthood and responsibility when they start university, whereas non-traditional students are more adaptable towards the academic challenges.

For the context of this research, British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education are considered non-traditional students as they hail from an ethnic minority and immigrant background, the criterion set out by Schuetze & Slowey (2002) in their research on non-traditional students. The factors identified by Gilardi & Guglielmetti (2011) also denote British Pakistani students as non-traditional as they arrive in higher education from backgrounds that is likely to not include parents that have attended university.

1.7. Implications

Laing & Robinson (2003) highlighted that UK universities previously hosted low student dropout rates due to their "selective entry policies, low levels of participation, low student-staff ratios and the tutorial system" (p. 175); however, the introduction of the widening participation agenda led to the growth in the number of non-traditional students in higher education institutes. The authors noted that this dramatic change in the demographics of the previously homogenous higher education system saw an increase in the student withdrawal rates, with a greater proportion of the

dropouts being non-traditional students. Roberts (2011) propositioned that the widening

participation agenda has not deterred the elite higher education institutes' efforts to recruit

students from middle-class, leaving the post-1992 universities (in the UK) to accommodate higher

number of students identified as non-traditional which, in turn, leads to those universities "also

having the highest non-completion rates" (p. 184).

While discussing the relationship between increase in non-traditional students and higher drop-out

rates, Gilardi & Gugleilmetti (2011) explained that although much of the literature marks non-

traditional students as presenting a higher risk of dropping out, there is insufficient data behind the

phenomenon. The authors noted that the effort on part of the higher education institutes is

paradoxical as they encourage the enrolment of non-traditional students in the higher education

system but "do not seem to be concerned about understanding their needs and circumstances" (p.

34), maintain the perception that the higher education institutional system is "designed for a very

different type of student" (p. 34). Wylie (2005) had previously noted that the research into non-

traditional students is paramount, now more than ever, as "the majority of students in higher

education are now non-traditional" (p. 2) in one variable or in a combination of variables.

1.8.   Overview of Thesis

From here onwards, the research will be focused on delivering the research aims and objectives (as

outlined in Table 1.1.). The argument is the research is based around the role of culture and ethnicity

in British Pakistani students' progression and performance in U.K.'s higher education, which done by

constructing this research thesis in the following manner:

- Chapter 2 will provide a review of the literature, scoping from the historical background of

    theories in student progression and performance to the research on ethnic minorities'

    performance and progression in other ethnically diverse countries. The purpose of this

    chapter is to provide a historical and global context of the research already done on the

    progression and performance, and to set the scene for the next chapter.

- Chapter 3 of this thesis introduces a reconceptualised model that can be used for the understand the examining of the role culture and ethnicity play in the progression and performance of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education.

- Chapter 4 gives the elaboration on the methodological approach of this thesis, with sections on the research approach, the variables involved, the ontological and epistemological position of the research, and a snapshot of the statistical analysis that will be conducted on the data set.

- Chapter 5 discusses the findings from the data analyses, while holding discussions on the significance of the results achieved.

- Chapter 6 provides a conclusion of the thesis, with a recap of the chapters, a revisit to the research aims and objectives (and their fulfilments), as well as contribution to knowledge and further recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1.   Introduction

This chapter focuses on the key studies pertaining to the topic of progression and performance of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education. However, as there are extremely limited studies for the British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education itself, the literature review provides a global academic view of the studies conducted in several countries that are noted to be ethnically diverse, focusing on the studies of performance and progression conducted on those countries' ethnic minorities. The aim of the chapter is aligned with the aim of the overall research, which is to note how culture and ethnicity affect the progression and performance of British Pakistani students.

The chapter starts with a historical background of the students' progression and performance studies, moving on from there to focus on the development of the theoretical models of in the subject area, with a subsection on the models' theoretical roots. The chapter then continues to provide a typology of the theories commonly found in student progression and performance, after which the focus shifts to the major student progression and performance theories in the literature. Further on, the chapter conducts a global literature review of theories on ethnic minority students from U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and U.K. Towards the end, the review highlights the gap in the literature for ethnic minority students in the U.K. Finally, the chapter focuses on the British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education, with a movement towards a model of understanding for the progression and performance of British Pakistani students.

2.2.   A Historical Background of Student Progression and Performance Studies

Even though student progression was deemed of great importance by educators and educational institutions to the formal education system since its conception (Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012; Seidman, 2005; Tinto, 1993), systemic studies and the generation of theoretical models on student

retention and attrition did not occur until the beginning of the 1970s (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyon, 2012). Table 2.1 displays the nine eras in which the development of the student retention studies was chronologically divided into nine eras by Berger *et al.* (2012); the eras are also divided into two categories, where the first category groups together all the eras before the 1960s, owing to the fact that most of the work from those eras lacks a "systematic approach towards student retention" (Aljohani, 2016, p. 2). The other category in the table includes the last five eras (beginning from the 1960s until the present), during which period, Berger *et al.* (2012) argue that student retention has become a universal and systematic concern leading to the development of theoretical studies.

Era	Period
Retention Prehistory	1600s – mid-1800s
Evolving towards retention	Mid-1800s – 1900
Early developments	1900 – 1950
Dealing with expansion	1950s
Preventing dropout	1960s
Building theories	1970s
Managing enrolment	1980s
Broadening horizons	1990s
Early twenty-first century	Current and future trends

Table 2.1 Eras of development of studies on student retention *(Aljohani, 2016)* (adapted from Berger at al. *(2012)*).

2.3. Development of Theoretical Models of Student Progression and Performance

Prior to the 1970s, there were several attempts made to study the phenomenon of student attrition, as seen in the work of Campbell & Fiske (1959), Summerskill (1962), Marsh (1966), Marks (1967), Bayer (1968), Panos & Astin (1968), and Feldman & Newcomb (1969). Yet, the principal focus of these studies was on the individual students' characteristics, instead of on the way they interact with their higher education institution's environment. Terms such as a student's characteristics, shortcomings, and personal attributes were used by were utilised by Berger *et al.* (2012), Habley *et al.* (2012), Spady (1970; 1971), Tinto (1993; 2006), with Berger *et al.* stating that previous studies were grounded in the psychology of student retention, rather than in the sociology of it. Similarly, Spady (1970) pointed out that these studies lacked empirical and theoretical coherence, concluding that the student retention literature prior to 1970 had an absence of any analytical explanation.

The 1960s and 1970s focused predominantly on the systematic studies being conducted to conceptualise student retention frameworks (Aljohani, 2016), most of them working around the notion of student-college relationship. From then onwards, Spady's (1971) work gave way to a new era of student retention studies, as the author pioneered the first sociological student retention model in his work 'Dropouts from Higher Education: An Interdisciplinary Review and Synthesis'. Spady introduced the notion that two systems are in function at any higher education institution: academic and social. Spady further added that there are at least two factors influencing each system in a student's decision to depart from the higher educational institution: "grades and intellectual development in the academic system, and normative congruence and friendship support in the social system" (Aljohani, 2016, p. 3). After Spady's work was published, the term 'retention' began to be used for how students persist in the higher educational environment, with an increased focus on the concept that higher education institutions have a certain degree of responsibility and influence in students' decision to depart from higher education (Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012). Since then, several theoretical models and student retention studies have been engineered, with the development of Tinto's Institutional Departure Model (1975; 1993), Bean's Student Attrition Model (1980; 1982), the Student-Faculty Informal Contact Model (Pascarella, 1980), Astin's Student Involvement Model (Astin, 1984), the Non-traditional Student Attrition Model (Bean & Metzner, 1985), and the Student Retention Integrated Model (Cabrera, Nora, & Castañeda, 1993).

2.3.1. Theoretical Roots of Student Progression and Performance Theories

According to the Spady, Tinto, and Bean, the inspiration for their work take its theoretical and conceptual roots from three main conceptual theoretical sources: the suicide theory by Durkheim (1951) from sociology, Van Gennep's (1960) theory on the rites of passage in tribal societies in social anthropology, and Price's (1977) concept of labour turnover in human resources.

Majority of the models and theories on the psychology and the sociology of student retention developed post-1970 have their roots in Durkheim's (1951) work names 'Suicide'. Durkheim

explained that the act of suicide can be associated with the lack of intellectual and social integration into the social life of the individual's society. This became the linking point observed in some of the earlier student retention models by Spady (1970; 1971) and Tinto (1975) catering to similarities between student attrition behaviour and suicidal behaviour. Even though Tinto (1993) reasoned that, even though an individual's departure from a higher education institution is not inevitably alike to being a failure, there are similarities within this process and the process if suicide as in both behaviours the individual is voluntarily withdrawing from a particular society. This view of adapting the suicide theory to the student retention phenomenon was first pioneered by Spady in 1971.

However, the more famous and increasingly cited student retention model from Tinto (1993) partially relied on Van Gennep's (1960) work on the rites of passage in tribal society, from the field of social anthropology. Van Gennep explains that the transmission of relationships between succeeding groups occurs in three stages: separation, transition, and incorporation. Using Van Gennep's theory as a skeleton, Tinto (1993) explained that rites of passage can be observed in the longitudinal process of student persistence in higher education institutions. Tinto argued that the student in higher education institutions first 'separate' themselves from their previous communities in order to be able to adopt new norms and behaviours, whilst letting go of the old ones. Tinto explained that these students then 'transition' and move towards incorporating themselves in their new community and its norms. In third stage, the students then 'integrate' themselves after separating from their old communities and successfully adopting the norms of the new societies in their higher education institutions.

The final theoretical foundation of the student retention studies is derived from the research of Price (1977) and Price & Mueller (1981) on employee turnover, first adopted by Bean (1980) in his Student Attrition Model . Aljohani (2016) explained that employee turnover in working organisations can be defined as "the degree of individual movement across the membership boundary of a social system" (Price, 1977, p. 4). Bean (1980) adopted the same analogy, stating that the employees and

students leave for the same reasons; in both situations, variables determined by the organisations have a significant impact on the satisfaction of students and employee retention. Bean explained that although student do not have the 'pay' variable affecting their satisfaction levels, but it is instead replaced by Grade Point Average (GPA), practical value, development, and institutional quality, elements that can be considered predictors of same equivalence in higher educational institutions.

2.4.   Typology of Student Progression and Performance Theoretical Models

For decades, physiological views were heavily relied upon in student retention research, with special emphasis on the role of personality, motivation, and abilities of individual students (Tinto, 1993). Berger *et al.*, (2012), Habley *et al.* (2012), Spady (1970; 1971), and Tinto (1993) noted that the focal point of these studies was on the personal attributes and shortcomings of the students, with many being labelled as psychological studies. Yet, once the new trends in the student retention field began emerging in the 1970s, the theoretical models in student retention research have since been classified in the literature under numerous categories based on the perspective being studied, including "psychological, sociological, organisational, environmental, interactional, and economic" (Aljohani, 2016, p. 3).

Nonetheless, there are several disagreements amongst scholars on the classification of the perspectives demonstrated in theories of student retention. For example, Habley *et al.* (2012) explained retention studies as part of the cultural, sociological, economic, psychological, and organisational spectrum of perspectives, whereas Tinto (1993) noted that sociological, economic, and organisational theories are part of the environmental perspective. Tinto also elaborated that environmental theories tend to emphasise on the role of factors that are apart from the students' psychological (individual) characteristics; however, sociological and psychological perspectives are often the two broader categories under which majority of the student retention models can classified. Aljohani (2016) explained that psychological theories view student attrition as a weakness

or shortcoming of the students themselves, whereas the sociological theories attribute student attrition to the wider context of academic institutions and the society in which the students operate. Tinto (1993) has openly criticised the psychological perspective in many of his publications, including the criticism of models produced by Astin (1984) and Bean & Eaton (2002). Tinto's theoretical frameworks can be often classified under sociological perspectives, with Habley *et al.* (2012) noting that the sociological theories have been the dominant paradigm in student retention studies for more than forty years.

The literature on student retention also identifies two other perspectives: organisational and interactional. The organisational perspective "focuses on the impact on student retention of the organisation of the tertiary institution, such as the administrative system, facilities, resources and number of faculty" (Aljohani, 2016, p. 5). Tinto's renowned Model of Institutional Departure (1975; 1993) is classified under the interactional perspective, as it is built on the interactions that students have with their academic and social environments and what (from these interactions) may lead individuals to withdraw from higher education.

2.5.   *Major Student Progression and Performance Theories*

After the brief historical review of the evolution of the studies in student retention in higher education and their theoretical roots, let us now got through six of the most-cited student retention models in the literature. These models are presented in a chronological order in this section.

2.5.1.   The Undergraduate Dropout Process Model (Spady, 1970, 1971)

In 1970, Spady published the Undergraduate Dropout Process Model of William (1970; 1971) (Figure 2.1.) and that became the first formally recognized model in student retention studies. Spady's model focused on five main variables, which the author stated contributed to student retention in higher education: academic potential, normative congruence, grade performance, intellectual development, and friendship support. Spady explained that these five variables contribute immensely to the social integration and are considered to be directly linked to the students' decision

to leave higher education before completing their degree. The theory was further studied and Spady stated that academic performance plays a more substantial role in student retention in higher education.

The pioneering work by Spady was published in two consecutive years in which the author revised the presented model on undergraduate dropouts, which has since become the foundation for the upcoming retention studies. Spady's model was also the first to adapt Durkheim's (1951) Suicide Theory concept when talking about social integration. Spady's aim was to target the gap in student retention literature by explaining the interaction between the student and their environment in the higher education institution. Aljohani (2016) explained that "this interaction is the result of the exposure of individual students' attributes such as dispositions, interests, attitudes and skills to the influences, expectations and demands of the different components of their institutions including courses, faculty members, administrators and peer" (p. 5). According to Spady, a student's decision to withdraw or stay at the higher education institution is influenced by two core factors in the each of the two systems: friendship support and normative congruence in the social support system, as well as the intellectual development and grades in the academic system. In 1971, Spady tested these assumptions with a study sample of 683 students who has started studying at the University of Chicago in 1965, a study that proved the validity of the theoretical model.
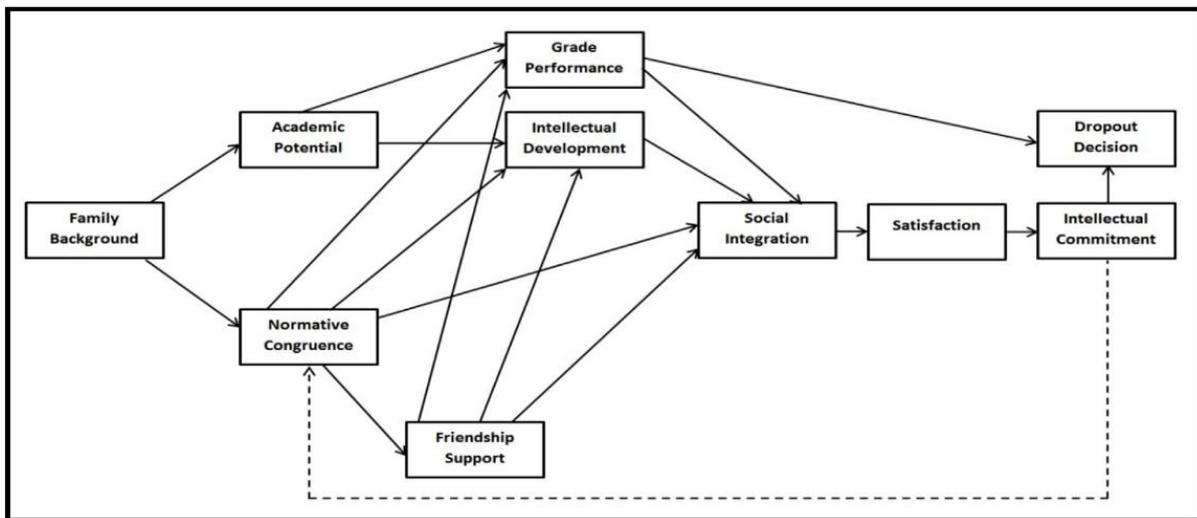
Figure 2.1 The Undergraduate Dropout Process Model (Spady, 1970, 1971)

2.5.2. The Institutional Departure Model (Tinto 1975, 1993)

In 1975, Tinto published the Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure (1975) (Figure 2.2.).

Tinto's model explained that student attrition was dependent on academic integration as well as

social integration. Tinto further explained that successful students may feel more motivated to

complete their degree and have more adamant career goals, expanding that the students' decision

to dropping out of university happens over a period of time in which they process and determine

how committed they are to the institute (academic integration), to their career goals, and their

current social lifestyle (social integration). Tinto's model also elaborates on three pre-entry

attributes that determine the student's academic and social integration: pre-university schooling,

family background, and individual attributes.
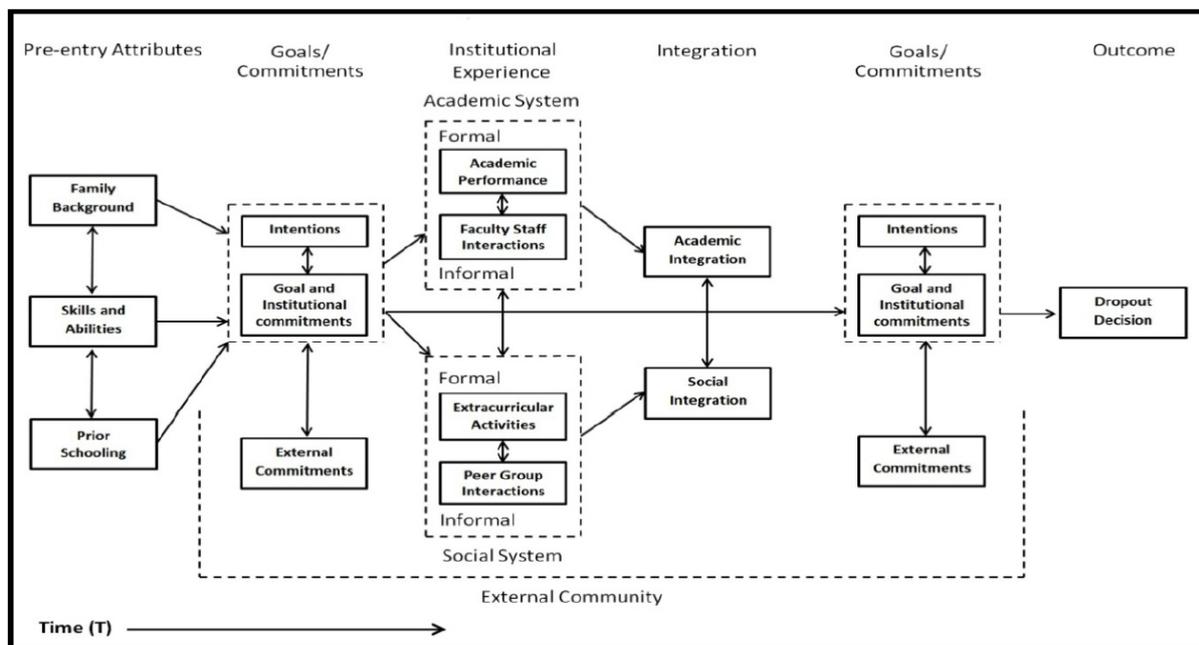
Figure 2.2 The Institutional Departure Model (Tinto 1975, 1993)

Tinto's model is largely based on Spady's work from 1970 and 1971, with a solid emphasis on the link

between the student's interactions in their social and academic environments. Tinto also took

elements from Durkheim's (1951) Suicide Theory, just as Spady did; however, Tinto also adopted

elements from Van Gennep's (1960) anthropological work on the rites of passage in tribal societies

in order to describe the students' longitudinal process of integration into the social and academic

environments of their higher education institutions. Tinto highlighted that a student's departure or persistence is a reflection on their success or failure to navigate the stages of incorporation in the new community i.e., their higher education institution. Tinto also noted that a student separates themselves in this stage from their former communities' norms, values, and behaviours (such family and high school) and identifies the variables in the new community (the higher education institution).

The final version if Tinto's model, published in 1993, explains that higher education institutions comprise of two systems: academic and social, and that students need to be integrated into each of these systems to be able to persist in their higher education institutions. The author explained that a student's academic integration is measured by their intellectual development over the period they have been at the institution and their grade performance, whereas the social integration is measured through their interaction with the institution's social environment, such as the faculty and peers. The model explains that students enter the academic institution with certain goals and commitments, that are initially shaped by their pre-entry attributes that include family background, skills, abilities, and prior schooling. Tinto stated that student's experience at the higher education institution (social and academic integration) will intermittently affect (strengthen or weaken) their level of initial commitments and goals. The subsequently modified levels of commitments and goals affect the student's decision to either persist or leave the higher education institution, according to Tinto (1975; 1993). Aljohani (2016) explained that the main modification Tinto asses to the model was the connotation that the student's level of external commitments (family, job, etc.) affect both the initial and subsequent level of their commitments and goals.

Expectantly, Tinto's model has gone through extensive examination and testing in the past four decades, and cited by countless studies that are investigating the student attrition and retention problem, where the model by was empirically used, tested, and critiqued. Studies by Mannan (2001), Sandiford & Jackson (2003), McCubbin (2003), Caison (2007), and Longwell-Grice & Longwell-

Grice (2007) had adopted and tested Tinto's Model of Institutional Departure in different higher education institutions' environments and systems, adding immense weight to the credibility and validity to the model.

2.5.3. The Student Attrition Model (Bean 1980, 1982)

Bean's model utilised the perspective of studies done to understand employee turnover in work organisations, with a particular focus on the work of Price (1977). Price defines employee turnover as "the degree of individual movement across the membership boundary of a social system" (p. 4). Bean argued that employees and students leave for similar reasons, and that the process that occurs of employees leaving a work organisation and students departing from their academic institutions is quite alike. Bean also stated that employee turnover models and his model of student attrition share the element of satisfaction and persistence, as these two factors are affected by organisational determinants.

In order to adapt the employee turnover model to a higher education context, Bean swapped the variable of 'pay', which is a significant employee turnover indicator, with four educational indicators: student development, student GPA, institutional quality, and practical value. Hence why, Bean's Student Attrition Model (1980) constitutes the following four variable categories: dropout as a dependent variable, satisfaction and institutional commitment as intervening variables, the organisational determinants and the background variables (Aljohani, 2016).

Bean concluded, after conducting a statistical analysis on the hypothesis from Price's model of employee turnover (1977), that conceptual understanding and perspective of employee turnover in work organisations is beneficial in explaining the departure of students from academic institutions. Bean's main findings from the study were that male and female students leave the academic institutions for different reasons, with institutional commitments acting as integral factors for both genders. The main difference between male and female students was the satisfaction, with the male students departing from the academic institution even if they were satisfied. Bean noted that giving

students the opportunity to transfer (which was an opportunity variable) had the most significant

impact on determining their institutional commitment.
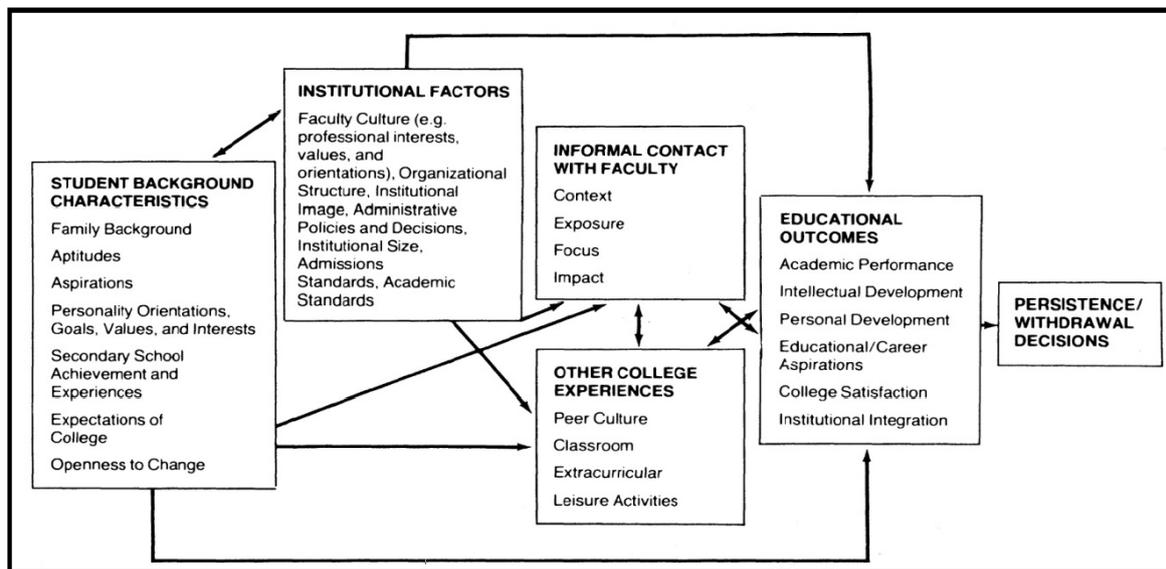
Figure 2.3 The Student Attrition Model (Bean 1980, 1982)

In a synthesised version of the student attrition model published by Bean in 1982 (Figure 2.3.), the

categories of variables were reviewed and transformed into background, organisational,

environmental, and attitudinal and outcome variables. Bean (1982) stated that "any student attrition

study should include variables from these four categories" (Aljohani, 2016, p. 8); as the model is not

exclusively tied to any single theoretical foundation, it can be adapted for application in various

types of institutions and contexts, because researchers can adjust the model by deleting or adding

variables within the four given categories.

2.5.4.   The Student-Faculty Informal Contact Model (Pascarella, 1980)

Pascarella (1980) published that the informal interactions between students and faculty could

possibly increase their level of institution commitment and, inherently, minimise withdrawal risk,

assumptions which were based on the theoretical models of Spady (1970; 1971) and Tinto (1975).

Although Pascarella stated that his claims were supported by extensive studies conducted on Tinto's

model with Terenzini, especially on students for low institutional commitments, there was still not

enough evidence to suggest that faculty-student interactions in an informal context can affect student persistence.

Pascarella's construction of the Student-Faculty Informal Contact Model (Figure 2.4) was based on the above mentioned perspective, with further reliance on the work of Sanford (1967) and Gaff and Wilson (1971) on the value of education and student-faculty out-of-class interaction benefits, as well as on the work of Newcombe (1962) and Wallace (1967) on academic institutions as socialising organisations. Furthermore, Pascarella (1980) a the "philosophical stance which emphasized the importance of college impacts beyond the transmission of facts and knowledge" (p. 545). Even though the study was investigating the influence of student-faculty informal contact on different academic outcomes, the focus of the model was student attrition.
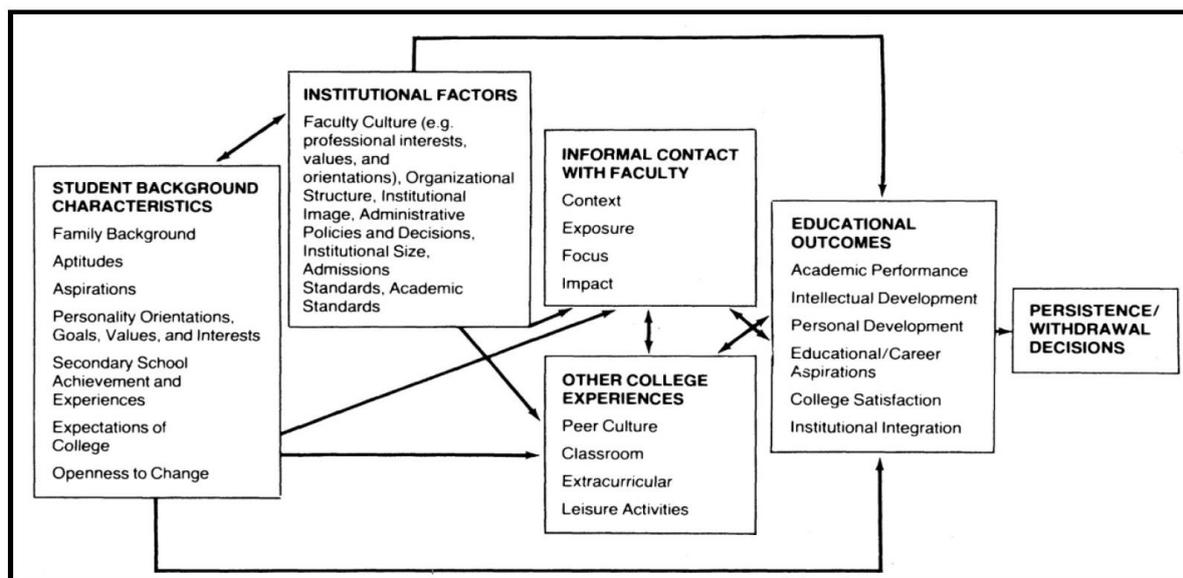
Figure 2.4 The Student-Faculty Informal Contact Model (Pascarella, 1980)

The Student-Faculty Informal Contact Model itself is a longitudinal model, based in the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between student retention and the amount of informal student-faculty interaction. Pascarella also noted that the quality of the student-faculty informal non-classroom interaction is significantly influenced by several factors, including "initial student differences, the faculty culture and classroom experiences, peer-culture involvement and the size of the institution" (Aljohani, 2016, p. 9).

Even though the model takes into accent the academic institution experience and other factors (institutional), Pascarella (1980) emphasised the role of individual differences amongst students, such as their personalities, professional aspirations, education aspirations, abilities, achievements an experiences from prior schooling, as well as the characteristics of their home environments and families. Pascarella also argued that there are several different forms of student-faculty interaction that differ in the influence that the concur; he stated that the most positive of those influences comes from carry the intellectual content of the classroom into a more informal non-classroom context.

2.5.5. The Non-Traditional Undergraduate Student Attrition Model (Bean & Metzner, 1985)

Bean and Metzner (1985) stated their Non-traditional Undergraduate Student Attrition Model (Figure 2.5), although sharing some similarities with previous studies and models on attrition, was an entirely different structure as it focused on a distinct type of student: the non-traditional commuter student. The authors stated that - although the previous models have focused on student persistence process in terms of social integration in the academic institution - for non-traditional students, this factor has minimal impact. Instead, non-traditional students are more likely to be mainly affected by environmental factors, such as family commitments and other external responsibilities.
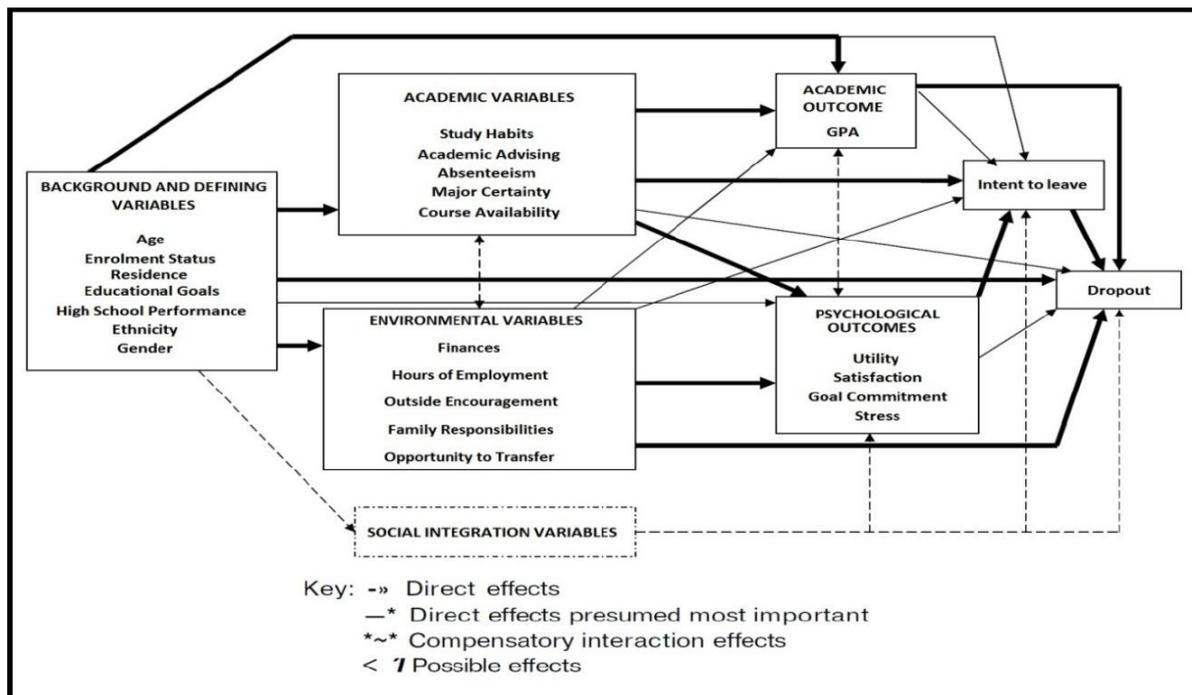
Figure 2.5 The Non-Traditional Undergraduate Student Attrition Model (Bean & Metzner, 1985)

It was argued by Bean and Metzner (1985) that theoretical studies lack a consideration for the experiences of non-traditional undergraduate students, those few studies that did focus on commuter students were "overwhelmingly descriptive" (p. 492). Therefore, they argued that, as the more recognised models of student attrition were based on a more social perspective instead of academic and that one of the defining characteristics on non-traditional students is the lack of social integration, there was a need to fill this gap and explain the process of attrition for such students from a divergent theoretical perspective. To fill this very gap in the literature for student retention, this model was created by Bean and Metzner (1985); this model was partially structured on the previous work of Bean (1982), and other theories on behaviour by Bentler and Speckart (1981), Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), Lewin (1935) , and Locke (1976). The model gave an increased importance to the external factors, rather than only to the institutional factors of socialisation, as the research indicated that non-traditional students experienced a higher degree of external environmental pressures and interacted less with members of their academic institutions.

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2.5.6. The Student Retention Integrated Model (Cabrera, Nora, & Castañeda, 1993)

The Integrated Model of Student Retention (Figure 2.6) was developed on the bases of the recommendations from Cabrera, Castañeda, Nora, & Hengstler (1992), in which the authors had presented an integrative framework through the merging of two separate models of student retention: Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure (1975) and Bean's Student Attrition Model (1982).
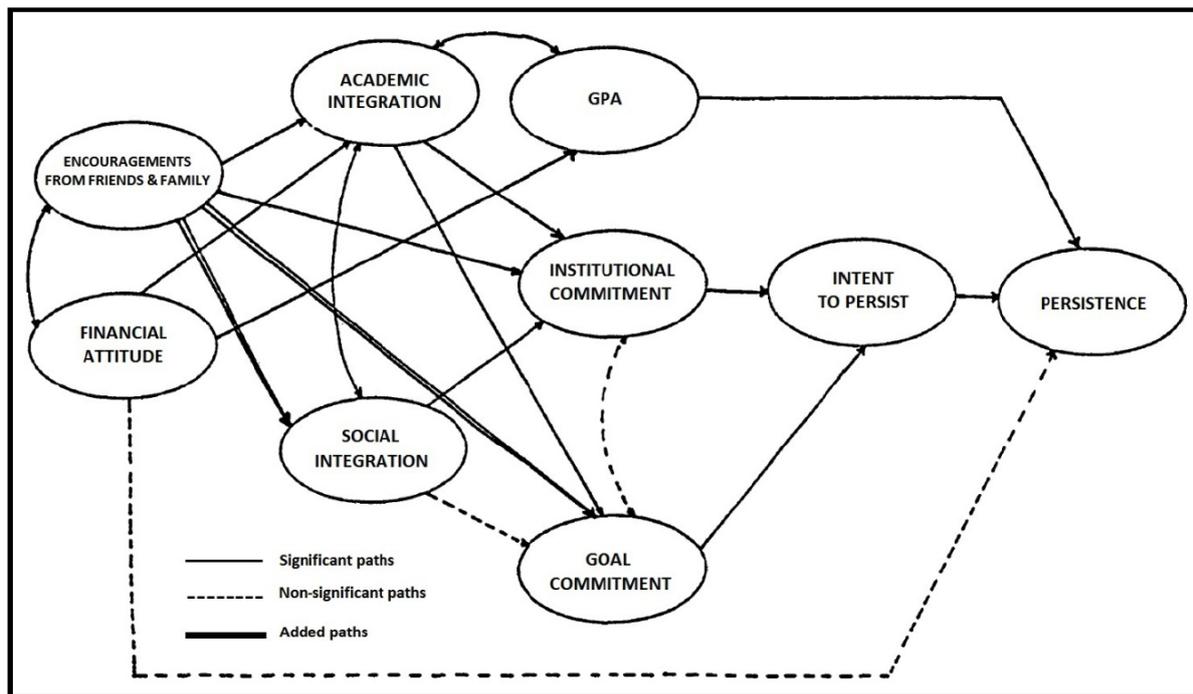
Figure 2.6 The Student Retention Integrated Model (Cabrera, Nora, & Castañeda, 1993)

The Integrated Model of Student Retention contains variables from both Tinto's and Bean's previous models, but only the ones that were statistically confirmed. This model did not include any variables that could not be validated in the initial analysis and all similar variable constructs were merged; for examples, "the "courses" and "institutional fit and quality" constructs of Bean's theoretical model were merged with the "academic integration" and "institutional commitments "constructs of Tinto's theoretical model, respectively" (Aljohani, 2016, p. 11).

The results of Cabrera *et al.*'s (1993) research study indicated that integrating Tinto's model and Bean's model provided a more wholesome explanation as well as a clearer understanding of the

student retention and attrition process. Further, statistical analysis by Cabrera *et al.* confirmed that the environmental variables play a much more complex role in the retention of students than first perceived by Tinto, subsequently supporting Bean's claims of their complexity and importance. Cabrera *et al.* also gave a strong recommendation to academic institutions, stating that the student retention strategies should strongly encourage students to persevere in their degree programmes and should actively pursue behaviours that have led to student withdrawal in the past.

2.5.7. Limitations of Theories on Student Progression and Performance

Like all research, student retention theories and empirical studies have their limitations and shortcomings. One of their most prominent shortcomings, as explained by Jeffery (Jeffreys, 2012), is the lack of generalisability in the student retention theories as most studies are focused onto a particular higher education institution and those findings cannot be easily generalised to other higher education institutions. Berger *et al.* (2012) explained that this may be the case due to the fact that a lack of student retention is a campus-based occurrence. Therefore, every study has unique circumstances and characteristics that make it challenging to generalise the findings to other higher education settings.

Another limitation of the student retention studies is that they mostly focus on traditional students studying in a traditional higher education institution. Bean and Metzner (1985) noted that most of the studies of student retention have taken place in traditional four-year higher education institutions with the participating students belonging ot an average age group and from traditional social backgrounds, with a very low number of studies looking at commuter students and an overall lack of representation from minority ethnic groups and other non-traditional students.

Jones (2008) and Yorke, Ozga, & Sukhnandan (1997) highlighted that most of the early theoretical models and distinguished studies on student retention and progression have used quantitative retention strategies, which have consequently led to a lack of depth and detail needed to understand and explore the issue of student retention. Bean (1982) explained that such studies, that

are deemed non-descriptive and theoretical in nature, only focus on the question of who is leaving the higher education institution, not why they are leaving the institution. Bean and Metzner (1985) also noted that many of the studies on student retention depend heavily on previously created models, such as Tinto's (1975), which were not designed to explain the departure of non-traditional students in the first place. Furthermore, Tinto (1982) explained the models also do not account for or distinguish between withdrawing completely or transferring to another higher education institution. Tinto (1982) also criticised his earlier model from 1975, saying "it does not adequately distinguish between those behaviours that lead to institutional transfer and those that result in permanent withdrawal from higher education" (p. 689).

2.6. Ethnic Minority Students' Progression and Performance

2.6.1. United States of America

The United States Census Bureau (2019) estimates the population of Black and Minority Ethnics in the U.S.A. to be as following (Table 2.2):

Ethnic Minority Group	Origin Definition	% Pop.
Black or African American	A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as "Black or African American," or report entries such as African American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian.	12.0%
Hispanics or Latino	Refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (see Appendix 1).	7.8%
Asian	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. This includes people who reported detailed Asian responses such as: "Asian Indian," "Chinese," "Filipino," "Korean," "Japanese," "Vietnamese," and "Other Asian" or provide other detailed Asian responses.	5.7%
American India and Alaska Native	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. This category includes people who indicate their race as "American Indian or Alaska Native" or report entries such as	0.9%

	Navajo, Blackfeet, Inupiat, Yup'ik, or Central American Indian groups or South American Indian groups.	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. It includes people who reported their race as "Fijian," "Guamanian or Chamorro," "Marshallese," "Native Hawaiian," "Samoan," "Tongan," and "Other Pacific Islander" or provide other detailed Pacific Islander responses.	0.2%

Table 2.2 The estimated population of Black and Minority Ethnics in the U.S.A. (United States Census Bureau, 2019).

2.6.1.1.   Black and African American

Morris & Monroe (2009) explained that there has been a substantial amount of research conducted on the academic progression and academic performance of Black and African American students in U.S.A.'s higher education. Some of the most notable work looking at Black and African American student in U.S.A.'s higher education includes Carter's (2005) book *Keepin' it real: School success beyond Black and White* , Diamond's (2006) study on examining performance of Black and African American student from integrated suburbs, Fordham's (1996) work on racial strategy and its role in the academic performance of Black and African American students in higher education, and Horvat & O'Connor's (2006) publication on a new framework to analyse the academic performance and progression of Black and African American student in U.S.A.'s higher education. Furthermore, Jencks & Phillips (1998) investigated the differential academic performance in this group's higher education students with a comparison to White student, with Lee (2002) researching the racial and ethnic achievement and retention gap, especially focus on Black and African American students.

Mickelson (1990) studied the attitude-achievement paradox in Black and African American higher education students, whereas O'Connor, Lewis, & Mueller (2007) further worked on researching Black and African American students' higher education experience and outcomes. Ogbu (2003) explained the effects of academic disengagement in Black and African American higher education students, with similar works by Perry, Steele, & Hilliard (2003) on promoting engagement and improve academic performance amongst Black and African American students, Thernstrom & Thernstrom (2003) on closing the race-based gap in higher education learning, and Tyson, Darity, & Castellino (2005) on the dilemmas faced by Black and African American students in higher education.

The underachievement of this group students has also been extensively studied, with notable works from Bohrnstedt, Kitmitto, Ogut, Sherman, & Chan (2015), Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin (2009) and Lewis, Simon, Uzzell, Horwitz, & Casserly (2010).

2.6.1.2.   Hispanic and Latino

Similarly, despite the diversity of the Hispanic and Latino groups in the U.S.A., many studies have been conducted to research their group's performance and progression trends in higher education. Although, it should be noted that majority of these research studies comprise of participants who identify themselves from Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Mexican heritage (which are three of the largest Hispanic and Latino populations in the U.S.A.) (Oriz, Valerio, & Lopez, 2012). Other significant studies on the academic performance and progression of Hispanic and Latino students in the higher education of U.S.A. include Behnke, Gonzalez, & Cox's (2010) research on retention of Latino students through improving sense of achievement, Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca's (2006) work on influencing the academic motivation of Hispanic and Latino students through academic support, and Fuller & García Coll's (2010) study on observing the familial context of academic performance and progression in Hispanic and Latino students in U.S.A.'s higher education. Furthermore, Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy (2004) looked into the techniques in promoting high academic performance in Latino students, Monkman, Ronald, & Théramène (2005) researched the effect of social and cultural capital on the academic performance of Hispanic and Latino students in higher education, and Bohon, Johnson, and Gorman's (2006) study investigated the aspirations and expectations among Latino and Hispanic students in higher education in the United States.

2.6.1.3.   Asian American

Zhou & Lee (2017) explained that the ethnic minority of Asian Americans is comprised of more than 24 nationalities, with the largest origin-groups being Chinese, Filipino, India, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese. Several studies have been carried on Asian American students in higher education, especially focused on the Asian American Achievement Paradox in the U.S.A (Zhou & Lee, 2017). In-

depth research studies done on Asian Americans in U.S.A.'s higher education include Chua and Rubenfeld's (2014) book on explaining cultural traits' contribution to academic performance in higher education, Lee's (2002) book on Asian American student from urban America in higher education, and Lee, Carling, & Orrenius's (2014) research on the effect of international Asian migration in higher education of U.S.A.

Similarly, Pang (1990) researched the differential academic performance of Asian American students in U.S.A.'s higher education, with focused studies on understanding the causes behind differential performance as "Asian American students have outperformed their non-Asian counterparts on many commonly accepted indices of educational achievement" (Eaton & Dembo, 1997, p. 433). The works of Kim & Zhao (2014) focus on the academic performances of Asian American female higher education students, whereas the research by Sakamoto, Goyette, & Kim (2009) studied the effect of socioeconomic factors on these students. Finally, Thompson, Kiang & Witkow (2016) conducted a number of observations and elaborate studies to research the effect of minority stereotyping on the academic performance of Asian American students in U.S.A.'s higher education.

2.6.1.4. Native American and Alaskan Native

Amongst the minority ethnic groups in the U.S.A., the one that has been least researched are the Native American and Alaskan Native students in higher education. Even then, there are some studies conducted that have brought to light several of the challenges faced by Native American and Alaskan Native students, such as lack of faculty as mentors in tribal issues, campus culture (appropriation), financial support, social support, and cultural support (Gervais, et al., 2017). Other notables studies on the academic performance of Native American and Alaska Native include Dehyle and Swisher's (1997) research on the effect of assimilation and self-determination on the academic performance of of Native American and Alaska Native students in higher education, Brayboy, Fann, Castagno, & Solyom's (2012) book on how academic performance Native American and Alaska Native students in higher education helps in nation building and self-determination, and Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman's

(2013) book investigated the need for a higher understanding of the academic performance of Native American and Alaska Native students in U.S.A.'s higher education.

Further research conducted by Fish & Syed (2018) applied Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model to explain the academic disparities in Native American and Alaska Native students in higher education. Woodcock & Alawiye (2001) published research on the causes of failures in the comparatively poor academic performance of Native American and Alaska Native students in higher education, whilst Brayboy, Castagno, & Solyom's (2014) studies explained the importance of understanding the history of the Native American and Alaska Native community in order to solve the puzzle of their students' academic performance in higher education.

2.6.2. Canada

According to the Census conducted in 2016 in Canada, the minorities in the country are as follows (Table 2.3) (Statistics Canada, 2019):

Ethnic Minority Group	Origin Definition	% Pop.
Asian Canadians	Significantly Canadians who identify their origins as Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Pakistani, Japanese, Korean, and Middle Eastern (Minority Rights Group International, 2020) .	16.1%
Eastern European Canadians	Significantly Canadians who identify their origins as Ukrainian, Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Romanian, Croatian, Czech, Serbian, and Slovak (Minority Rights Group International, 2020).	10.2%
Indigenous Peoples	Includes: a. First Nations: First Nations people are original inhabitants of the land that is now Canada, and were the first to encounter sustained European contact, settlement and trade. There are 634 First Nations in Canada, speaking more than 50 distinct languages. (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2019). b. Inuit: Inuit are an Indigenous people, the majority of whom inhabit the northern regions of Canada. There are eight main Inuit ethnic groups and five dialects in the Inuit language (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2020). c. Métis: Métis are people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, and one of the three recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2019).	4.9%

| African & Caribbean Canadians | Significantly Canadians who identify their origins as Jamaican, Haitian, Guyanese, Trinidad and Tobago, African (notably from South Africa) (Minority Rights Group International, 2020). | 3.5% |

Table 2.3 Ethnic minority population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2019).

Research into the performance of ethnic minority students in Canada pales in comparison to amount of research done in the U.S.A. on the subject. Thiessen (Thiessen, 2009) noted that due to data limitations in Canada, "research often treats visible minorities as a single population group" (p. 7). Nonetheless, there are some studies that have aimed to research the academic attainment of the BAME groups in Canada's higher education. The studies on the academic performance of BAME groups in Canada's higher education can be divided into two categories for ease of interpretation and understanding: Immigrant Minorities and Native Ethnic Minorities. Immigrant Minorities primarily consists of Asian Canadians, Easter European Canadians, and African & Caribbean Canadians, whereas the Native Ethnic Minorities consist of the three Indigenous groups native to Canada: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

2.6.2.1. Immigrant Minorities

A study conducted by Grayson (1998) focused on the academic performance of ethnic students in a Canadian university, conducted for the purpose of filling the gap due to the lack of student attainment in Canada on race and ethnicity, although concluding that racial and ethnic origin plays no role in academic performance in higher education. Another similar study, this time carries out by Picot and Hou (2011), found that educational attainment of ethnic minorities in higher education was seen to be directly related to the education attainment of those students' parents, with higher attainment seen in second or third-generation ethnic minority students. This pertains to the integration of the minorities' own ethnic capital with the Canadian society. Picot and Hou also highlighted that, in Canada, the educational performance in higher education was directly proportional to the levels of ethnic capital that those students possess, and particularly high in major ethnic immigrant groups (China and South Asia).

Similarly, Abada, Hou, and Ram's (2009) study 'Ethnic Differences in Educational Attainment among the Children of Canadian Immigrants' found that Asian Canadians (with the exception of Filipinos) were more likely to perform better in higher education as compared to students who identified as Easter European Canadians and African & Caribbean Canadians. Abada, Hou, and Ram concluded that "our findings suggest that race/ethnicity has become a salient factor in educational stratification" (2009, p. 2).

2.6.2.2. Native Ethnic Minorities

In comparison to the previous section, there is a better collection of studies on the Indigenous population of Canada and their academic performance in higher education. Thiessen (Thiessen, 2009) noted that research has established that students from the Indigenous groups of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis tend to achiever lower grades in higher education than the Immigrant Minorities.

Aman & Ungerlieder (2008) conducted research to establish the changes implemented in higher education institutions that help Indigenous students, stating that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be condoned. Vandenberghe & Gierl (2001) and Aydemir, Chen & Corak (2008) highlighted that the higher education systems needs to have more intercultural education mobility in order to improve the educational performance of student from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

Research published by Anonson, Desjarlais, Nixon, Whiteman, & Bird (2008) focused on the strategies higher education institutions can use to encourage the academic performance of students from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. Schmold (2011) stated that in order to ensure the academic success of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students in Canada's higher education, more attention has to be paid to the leadership and governance of the higher education institutions. Similarly, Tierney (1992) had highlighted the institutional discouragement that the minorities, especially First Nations, Inuit, and Métis student, face in Canada's higher education in terms of there not being enough considerations made for ethnic minority students when it comes to social and academic integration.

Whitekiller-Drywater (2010; 2020) explained that further action is needed from the higher education institutions of Canada in order to allow First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students to achieve better grade in their academics. The author also stated that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students have developed 'cultural resilience' in order to be able to operate in both, the Indigenous world and the mainstream society, in order to escape the colonialism-inflicted economic depression. Michalski, Cunningham, & Henry (2017) finished that the best way forward for the higher education institutions in Canada is to listen to these students and integrate their cultural strengths into the programming of the higher education.

2.6.3. Australia

Minority Rights Group International (2019) defines the ethnic minorities of Australia and their percentage population as following (Table 2.4):

Ethnic Minority Group	Origin Definition	% Pop.
Australian Aboriginal	Various Indigenous peoples of Australia and its many islands, comprising of hundreds of groups and languages (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2019). Aboriginal peoples have lived in Australia for more than 50,000 years (Minority Rights Group International, 2017).	2.9%
Torret Strait Islanders	Torres Strait Islander refers to the Indigenous peoples of the 274 islands located north of Australia, in the Torres Strait (Common Ground, 2020).	0.2%
Pacific Islanders	Indigenous peoples of Polynesian, Melanesian, or Micronesian descent, living in Australia (Oxford Languages, 2021).	0.8%
Māori	Māori means belonging to or relating to the race of people who have lived in New Zealand and the Cook Islands since before Europeans arrived (Collins, 2020). Māoris are also Pacific Islanders but are indigenous to New Zealand and the Cook Islands (instead of to Polynesia, Melanesia, or Micronesia), and are therefore often referred to as separate from Pacific Islanders.	0.6%

Table 2.4 Definition and populations of ethnic minority groups in Australia (Minority Rights Group International, 2019).

2.6.3.1. Australian Aboriginal and Torret Strait Islanders

Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students are often researched as one group as both sets of students are considered to the Indigenous peoples of Australia. Several studies have

been conducted by researchers in Australia to identify the reasons for differential attainment with Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students in higher education, one such study by Hossain, Gorman, Williams-Mozaly, & Garvey (2008) analysed the needs and aspirations of Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students in Australia's higher education, focusing on first year and last year students in a four-year degree programme. Similarly, Pechenkina, Kowal, & Paradies (2011) explored the role of universities in the participation rates of Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students, highlighting that universities should not opt for a one-size-fits-all teaching strategies if they want to bridge the gap in the academic performance of Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students.

Rossingh & Dunbar (2012) presented a participation evaluation model that reinstated the support needed for Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students in their first year of higher education in order to elevate their academic performance. Majority of the research conducted on of Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students follows the inner-circle-outer-circle premise, such as the one by Martin (2008) on the regulations followed by of Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students with 'outsiders', especially in an academic context. Similarly, Moreton-Robinson (2013) used the standpoint theory to explain the university experience of female students who identify as Australian Aboriginals or Torret Strait Islanders and how this impacts their academic performance in higher education.

Furthermore, Simpsons, Munns, & Clancy (1999), Zevenbergen (2000), and Warren & de Vries (2007) stated that it is imperative for pre-school teachers in Australia to have a functional knowledge of Aboriginal English, as this avoid any future complications in language mismatch that these students may face when they reach higher education, and in turn, can perform better academically. Yet, despite all the research carried out to support these perspectives, Behrendt, Larkin, Griew, & Kelly (2012) and Milne, Creedy, & West (2016) pointed out that higher education institutions still fail to give value to level of flexibility, responsiveness, and inclusivity needed to get Australian Aboriginal

students or Torret Strait Islander students to perform better in their higher education academics, as these continue to consistently struggle to perform above other student groups in Australia (Klenowski, 2009). Slatyer, Cramer, Pugh, & Twigg (2016) concluded, a part of their research on Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students in higher education, that higher education institutions need to deploy strategies that can assist in the development of these students' resilience and engagement. The authors stated that this will eventually lead to better academic performance and academic progression as Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students will be able to "negotiate [higher] studies in a context of ongoing family and financial obligations" (p. 17). Taylor, Lalovic, & Thompson (2019) indicated a similar strategy for Australian Aboriginal students and Torret Strait Islander students, stating that higher education institutions should offer them pre-entry programmes, which continue throughout their tenure as students, in order to overcome linguistic, fiscal, and cultural barriers in higher education.

2.6.3.2. Māori and Pacific Islanders

Much of the research conducted in Australia for Māori and Pacific Islander students is based on the concept of equity (Coates & Krause, 2005; Dobson & Skuja, 2005; Ferrier, 2006; Young, 2004; Postle, et al., 1997; Vinson, 2007; Cuthill & Scull, 2011); by acknowledging that there is a difference in the progression and performance of Māori and Pacific Islander students as compared other majority of students, the researchers and higher education institutes are paving a way for the future where the 'one-size-fits-all' approach becomes redundant and disused.

Kearney, Dobrenov-Major, & Birch (2005) stated that, unsurprisingly, groups of Māori and Pacific Islander students are underrepresented in Australia's higher education, which makes it difficult for the community to be studied in extensive detail when it comes to student progression and performance. However, from the research that is conducted, there is significant evidence to suggest that students from Māori and Pacific Islander students are at high-risk for underachievement, mainly due to linguistic barriers as English is not their first language (Cottone, 2004; Kearney J. , 2008).

Scull and Cuthill (2007) highlighted that Māori and Pacific Islander students face five main issues that are related to their academic performance and progression in higher education (Table 2.5):

Five Key Issues of Participation in Higher Education for Māori and Pacific Islander students
1. Cost and financial considerations
2. Parents' understanding of and involvement in children's education
3. School engagement and attainment
4. Perceived value and benefit of higher education
5. Lack of tertiary-educated Māori and Pacific Islander role models

Table 2.5 Five main issues faced by the Māori and Pacific Islander students (Scull & Cuthill, 2007).

Out of the factors identified, Scull and Cuthill added that Lack of tertiary-educated Māori and Pacific Islander role models might be the one with the most significance to this whole issue. Kearney & Donaghy (2010) stated that there is a clear need for a better understanding of the reasons behind the low academic performance and progression of Māori and Pacific Islander students, with a clear emphasis on "family support for education, equity outreach initiatives in schools and higher education institutes, and transition programs that involve Māori and Pacific Islanders raised aspirations and encouraged access to university" (p. 6).

Supplementary research on the matter of equity in higher education for Māori and Pacific Islander students was conducted by Mafi (2005) on achieving better educational outcomes for Māori and Pacific Islander students though a better understanding of their culture and heritage. The Moreton Pacific Island Reference Group (2007) also released a framework that provided action items to be implemented in Australia's higher education institutes in order to assist the equity efforts for Māori and Pacific Islander students.

2.6.4. Aotearoa New Zealand

The Government of Aotearoa New Zealand (2020) identifies the following significant ethnic minorities, as of Census 2018 (Table 2.6):

Ethnic Minority Group	Origin Definition	% Pop.
Māori	Māori means belonging to or relating to the race of people who have lived in New Zealand and the Cook Islands since before Europeans arrived (Collins, 2020). Māoris are also Pacific Peoples, but are indigenous to New Zealand and the Cook Islands (instead of to Polynesia, Melanesia, or Micronesia), and are therefore often referred to as separate from Pacific Peoples.	16.5%
Pacific Peoples/ Pacific Islanders/ Pasifika	Pacific peoples are a diverse population made up of cultures from many different Pacific Islands. Samoan, Cook Islands Māori, Tongan, Niuean, Fijian, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan and Kiribati comprise the eight main Pacific ethnic groups in New Zealand (Pasefika Proud, 2016). For the purposes of comparing high level ethnic groups in New Zealand they are referred to collectively as 'Pacific peoples', 'Pacific islanders', or 'Pasifika' (Pasefika Proud, 2016).	8.1%

Table 2.6 Ethnic minorities in Aotearoa New Zealand (Government of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2020).

2.6.4.1. Māori and Pasifika

Mayeda, Keil, Dutton, & OfamoʻOni (2014) explained that Māori and Pasifika students, despite having distinct cultural differences, are often studied as one group due to their shared history of European impositions. For this reason, research on the subject will not be divided into two sections.

Wilson *et al.* (2011) stated that Māori and Pasifika students are vastly under-represented in the higher education of Aotearoa New Zealand, highlighting that this is one of the consequences of imposed colonial schooling. McLachlan (2016) stated that, until recently, Aotearoa New Zealand's monoculturalism and systemic racism was evident by the continuous denial of the Ministry of Education on the issue of academic progression and performance gap in Māori and Pasifika students (Jackson, 2016; Price R. , 2016). Zepke, Leach, and Prebble (2006) has previously stated that higher education institutes often overemphasise their ability to "optimise student retention and success" (p. 587), without actually creating an environment that may help Māori and Pasifika students' academic performance and progression.

Hunt, Morgan, & Teddy (2001) had conducted research on the barriers faced by Māori and Pasifika students in higher education, highlighting that strategies of support are pivotal for their success in higher education. A study by Bennet (2003) based its focus on the concept of cultural identity in

Māori and Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand's higher education, and this was furthered by Benseman, Coxon, Anderson, & Anae (2006) with their study on the retention of Māori and Pasifika students through the identification of their cultural capital. Research conducted by Curtis *et al.* (2015) focused on what factors help or hinder the higher education performance and progression of Māori and Pasifika students, studying first year students in universities. Similar research was conducted by Morunga (2009), with a special focus on Māori and Pasifika students in psychology courses at university.

Finally, van der Meer, Scott, & Neha (2010) emphasised that higher education institutes should focus on building Māori and Pasifika students' sense of preparedness and confidence to ask for assistance in terms of integrating in the university.

2.6.5. United Kingdom

The Government of United Kingdom (Office for National Statistics, 2020) published the following figures regarding the significant minority ethnic groups in the country (Table 2.7):

Ethnic Minority Group	*Origin Definition*	*% Pop.*
British Indian	Citizens of the United Kingdom with ancestral roots from India.	2.5%
British Pakistani	Citizens of the United Kingdom with ancestral roots from Pakistan.	2.0%
British Black African	Citizens of the United Kingdom with ancestral roots from African countries, predominantly Nigeria, Ghana, Sudan, and Somalia.	1.8%
British Black Caribbean	Citizens of the United Kingdom with ancestral roots from the Caribbean region, predominantly from the West Indies and Jamaica.	1.1%
British Bangladeshi	Citizens of the United Kingdom with ancestral roots from Bangladesh.	0.8%
British Chinese	Citizens of the United Kingdom with ancestral roots from China.	0.7%

Table 2.7 Significant minority ethnic groups in the United Kingdom (Office for National Statistics, 2020).

Research on retention and performance of students from these ethnic groups in the United Kingdom is often categorised in the following way (Table 2.8) (Office for National Statistics, 2020):

BAME Group	Category	Combined % Pop.	
British Black African	**British Black**	3.3%	
British Black Caribbean			
British Black (Other)			**Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME)**
British Indian			
British Pakistani			
British Bangladeshi	**British Asian**	7.5%	
British Chinese			
British Asian (Other)			

Table 2.8 Categorisation of significant ethnic minority groups in the United Kingdom by the Office for National Statistics (2020).

The term BAME is used as a data 'shorthand' to describe information and statistics from the numerous black and ethnic monitor groups in the United Kingdom. This itself is a problematic approach seen in the literature from the United Kingdom, with Danvers (2021) explaining that each category within BAME is not universally recognised and/or distinctively researched over. Stevenson (2018) highlighted that it is even challenging task to gather statistics on a certain ethnic minority given the imprecise nature of data collection in some of United Kingdom's higher education institutions. For this very reason, literature on BAME students in the United Kingdom will be discussed under one subsection.

It should be noted that, in 2021, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in the U.K. released a report which stated that, according to their research, the term BAME has become redundant and should be "disaggregated" (The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021, p. 25) in order to study the difference in the individual ethnic minority groups. The report added that the purpose of disaggregating the term is study the ethnic groups at the "most detailed level" (p. 25). The report further clarified that using binary classifications when studying ethnic groups, such using categories 'White' and 'Other than White', gives no analytical value to the research. Nonetheless, the current literature review is based on research done prior to this report and, therefore, is based on the use of the term BAME. It is hoped that, in the future, the research for ethnic minorities in all disciplines will disaggregate the term for better analytical value.

2.6.5.1. Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME)

Over the past two decades, especially with the introduction of the WPA, there has been a substantial amount of research conducted on BAME students in U.K.'s higher education in terms of their progression and performance. Nonetheless, only a small proportion of this work appeases the distinguishment needed in between the BAME groups. Initial research conducted by Modood (1993) focused on the actual numbers of ethnic minority students in U.K.'s higher education institutions, whilst Modood's (2004) subsequent research work highlighted the importance of ethnic capital and ethnic identity for BAME students in U.K.'s higher education. Similarly Chowdry, Crawford, Dearden, Goodman, & Vignoles (2008) and Jackson (2012) published notable work on how BAME inequalities are supressed in higher education throughout the U.K, leading to poorer educational performance and low progression from BAME students.

Richardson (2008) explained that trends in the literature review clearly indicate that White students are more likely to achieve better education performance and progression, as compared to their BAME counterparts. Richardson noted these trends emerge from structural inequalities in the society and in the higher education institutions, which are also discussed in the work of Gorard, Smith, May, Thomas, Adnett, & Slack (2006), Leslie (2005), and Shiner & Modood (2002) on BAME students' performance and progression in U.K.'s higher education.

Studies conducted by Ahmed (2012), Bhopal (2018), Bhopal & Henderson (2019), and Arday & Mirza (2018) focused on the underlying patterns of White privilege evident in the higher education institutions of U.K., directly addressing the racism showcased through the strategies and policies of majority of the higher education institutions cater only to the White population. Bhopal and Henderson (2019) also highlighted that most higher education institutions continue to be unaware of the fundamentals of supporting the BAME student population, and "have not fully embraced equality and diversity measures beyond superficial performativity" (Mahmud & Gagnon, 2020, p. 5).

Arday (2020) explained that recent studies and publications have managed to reveal the true depth of the institutional racism in U.K.'s higher education institutions, with most bodies adopting a one-size-fits-all approach that systematic disadvantages BAME students. Bhopal and Pitkin (2020) noted that acknowledgement of this systematic racism is required, as change in the policies cannot come into place unless the problem is admitted by the higher education institutions themselves. Peterson and Ramsay (2021) stated that BAME students should be offered elevated mentoring schemes with other BAME students and senior leaders, which may finish the gap that emerges from the lack of university-taught role models in the some of the BAME communities, leading to better educational progression and performance.

2.6.6. Summary and Outcomes of Research on Black and Minority Ethnic Students

As seen in the research above, there has been substantial studies conducted to help bridge the gap in the educational performance and progression of Black and Minority Ethnic students all over the world. In U.S.A., Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand, research has been formulised to concentrate on each ethnic minority as a distinct group, with the due realisation that each group comes with its own sets of expectations and pressure. This mindset feeds into the overall research strategy where ethnic minorities are not bunched together in one category and one-size-fits-all approach is considered redundant. Some of the more prominent outcomes from these research studies include community outreach, role-model programs, targeted support, and decolonisation of the curriculum.

However, within the U.K., the problem of categorising all non-white students into a BAME category still remains. This leads to any research on such students' educational performance and progression becoming generic and not as specified as required. Students who identify British-Black will face different obstacles in their educational performance and progression than those who identify as British Pakistani or a British Chinese. More often than not, universities tend to offer a generalised BAME support opportunity without realising that whether these students would be willing to avail

such opportunities also depends on their ethnicity and the expectations they have been brought up with. Some of the BAME students from particular groups will be more inclined to ask for help if they need it, whereas others will not. Perhaps, this is the reasons why the U.K. cannot completely fill the gap in BAME attainment and retention.

2.7. British Pakistani Students in U.K.'s Higher Education

2.7.1. Previous Studies on British Pakistani Students in U.K.'s Higher Education

Literature on British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education is limited, mainly due to the umbrella categorisation of British Pakistani students under British Asian or BAME category in most of the research studies.

Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) noted that, generally, children of ethnic minority groups remains a significant concern to academics, due to poor progression in higher education (Archer & Francis, 2006; Burgess, Wilson, & Piebalga, 2009; Platt, 2005). Modood *et al.* (1997) was the first one to identify the differences in the educational performance and progressions in different ethnic minority groups, specifically in South Asians. Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) noted that within the South Asian group, Pakistani and Bangladeshi men were least likely to succeed in higher education, even though Connor, Tyres, Modood, & Hillage (2004) had previously stated that British Pakistani men and women are more likely to *enter* university in the U.K. Several research studies into the South Asian communities, such as those by Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) and Modood (2004), highlight the importance of 'ethnic capital' (as termed by Modood (2004)). Modood (2004) also stated that one of the more dominant explanations for education outcomes in ethnic minority groups may emerge from Bourdieu's (1977; 1986) emphasis on social class origins. Archer and Frances (2006) had noted a similar concept of 'family capital' also drawing from Bourdieu's work.

Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) research focused on the concept of 'ethnic social capital', drawing from Zhou's (2005) study in the United States of America, intersecting it with other theoretical

approached for British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education. Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) argued that British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education are shaped through the social inequalities they face, and that these inequalities are an interplay of ethnicity, gender, family setting, and class. The authors also stated that Bourdieu's work, which claims that "cultural reproduction enables the social reproduction of hierarchies and inequalities between classes in relation to compulsory and post-compulsory education" (p. 1111), emphasises the importance of cultural capital and inheritance of norms. This note from Shah, Dwyer, & Modood's paper indicates how crucial it is for university-level education to be a norm in any family, although this case is specifically focused on British Pakistani families. This further denotes that, if the Bourdieuian approach is to be accepted as true, there are several other factors that can researched to understand the educational performance and progression of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education.

Connor *et al.*'s (2004) report explained that British Pakistani students were 70% more likely to be influenced by their family than other ethnic groups. They also stated that "staying at home or with family, the distance from home, and the particular town or city of the institution were all factors of more importance" (p. 54) to British Pakistani students aiming for higher education, displaying the importance of ethnic social capital and family capital. Connor et al. also noted that, even from their research interviews and data collection, they could not pinpoint all of the factors that affect the education progression and performance of British Pakistani students.

However, Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) noted that the research that may find a link between ethnicity and educational performance and progression is severely underdeveloped and often overlooked (Goulbourne & Solomos, 2003). One of the major factors that is missing in the research sphere, when it comes to British Pakistani students, is the focus on commuter students within this ethnic group. Even though British Pakistani families make up about 2% of the U.K.'s population, making them the second largest ethnic minority in the country (Office for National Statistics, 2020), there are only a handful of reputable research studies (most of the mentioned in this section)

looking into the reasons as to why British Pakistani students have high departure rates and low performance in U.K.'s higher education. Another missing point in the research on the education progression and performance of British Pakistani students is that most of the studies on this particular ethnic groups focus on their reasons of attending university, and very few (and far in between) focusing on why they drop out as well why do these students perform worse (gaining fewer first-class degrees).

2.7.2. British Pakistani Cultural Implication while Commuting

Shaw (1994) defined British-Pakistani as a term used for individuals of Pakistani descent, who are citizens of the United Kingdom, and acquired British nationality because they were either born in the United Kingdom or they migrated to the United Kingdom. Data released by the Office of National Statistics (2018) demonstrated that the British-Pakistani ethnicity made up 2% (1.17 million) of UK's entire population, making it the second largest ethnic minority in the United Kingdom.

Shaw (2014), in her book Kinship and Continuity: Pakistani Families in Britain, explains in great detail the doctrine of the British Pakistani culture and traditions. The author explains that members of the British Pakistani community exhibit a strong collectivist culture, which is almost always part of the first impressions. Din (2012) explained that the British Pakistani community boasts this phenomenon, despite their being a significant cultural and geographical distance between U.K. and Pakistani. In fact, when noting the culture of collectivism, Hofstede's cultural dimension test (Hofstede, 2021) gave a Pakistan a score of 14 on the dimension of Individualism, as compared to U.K.'s score of 89, that demonstrates the absolute paradox in the White British and British Pakistani society in general.

Another important aspect studied by Din (2012) focused on the fact that the high preference for collectivistic culture in the British Pakistani was brought forward by the need to protect themselves from the "wider White community" (p. 72). These perspectives were dictated by the experiences of the men and women that had migrated earlier in the migration era and had faced multiple levels of

discrimination (Shaw, 2014). The collectivist culture led to more and more British Pakistani families settling into specific areas. This further evolved into areas that became communities, and the members of that community avoided moving out of the areas that had high British Pakistani presence. In the recent years, after the introduction of the Widening Participation Agenda that encouraged university education for non-traditional students (Mayhew, Deer, & Dua, 2004), it is this culture of staying close to familial surroundings that translated into a majority of British Pakistani students commuting from their family homes to their chosen higher education institute. Din (2012) and Shaw (2014) explained that, at times, the preferability of the higher education institute for British Pakistani students often depends on the distance they will have to commute. Commuting, therefore, can be considered a part of the culture of the British Pakistani community.

Din (2012) and Shaw (2014) explained further highlighted another imperative point when mentioning the British Pakistani community's view of higher education. Din noted that the men and women who migrated earlier in the migration era boasted almost no qualification, with the women being significantly less literate than the men. Therefore, when the Widening Participation Agenda came into being and the British Pakistani youth began contemplating higher education, it was fairly new and first-generational territory for a majority of British Pakistani community. Hence, while venturing into the unfamiliar, the instinct to remain living in familiar areas prevailed, also giving birth to the culture of commuting which has now become, to a large extent, the norm (Din, 2012).

A final crucial point to consider for the importance of commuting, from the perspective of the British Pakistani students, is the socialisation culture of the universities in general. Vietze, Juang, & Schachner (2019) noted that university socialisation norms are often in line with the "heritage and mainstream culture" (p. 579), such as events involving alcohol – which is forbidden in the British Pakistani culture due to the dominant religion (Din, 2012) – and late night outings – again, a general practice frowned upon in the British Pakistani society (Din, 2012) – and which can lead to ethnic minority students (especially those who carry high cultural capital) to feel left out and socially

disintegrated. Similarly, Jones (2013) stated that, in the U.K., students from ethnic minorities may feel like they are in a "self-conscious cosmopolitan" (p. 420) when attending higher education institutes that do not adapt events and socialisation opportunities to the cultures of the ethnic minority students in the institute. Zeivots (2021) noted that, with ethnic minority students, there is a "degree of outsiderness and socialisation bump" (p. 385) when analysed in terms of socialisation and on-campus activities in their higher education institute. This information, combined with Din (2012) and Shaw (2014)'s analysis on the origins of the commuter culture of the British Pakistani students, begs the conclusion that the commuter culture stems from the need for to protect themselves from assimilation in the Western culture that is dominant in the higher education institutes in the U.K., and also from the lack of socialisation opportunities tailored for ethnic minority students.

Chapter 3: Movement Towards a British Pakistani Model of Understanding

In an effort to understand what affects British Pakistani students' progression and performance in U.K.'s higher education, it is important to first analyse the environment that they 'operate' in and what that environment entails. Several of the previously published models on student retention and attrition, such as Spady (1970; 1971), Tinto (1975; 1993), Bean (1982) , Bean & Eaton (2002) , Bean & Metzner (1985), and Astin (1984), provide a good understand of a few of the pre-entry attributes that affect the students. However, these models can be (and have been) deemed too generic to be applied to all ethnicities and cultures, as the pre-entry attributes often differ due to the ethnicity of the students and the culture they have been brought up in. The closest any of the models have come to accrediting culture and ethnicity are perhaps Tinto's (1975; 1993) Institutional Departure Model and Spady's (1970; 1971) Undergraduate Dropout Process Model , both of which list 'family background' as one of the pre-entry attributes.

In order to build on this argument, the ecological systems theory was utilised to work towards a model that leads to the understanding of the retention and attrition of British Pakistani students. Originally published by Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1979), the ecological systems theory framework has been widely adapted by sociologists and psychologists studying individuals in specific contexts. Many a times, the theory has been 'reconceptualised' to fit the research context, as explained in the sections below.

3.1. *Ecological Systems Theory: The Traditional Framework by Bronfenbrenner*

The ecological systems theory framework was first published, in detail, by Bronfenbrenner in his book, *The Ecology of Human Development* (1979), in which the author described the theory as an arrangement of structures that is nested within itself like a "a set of Russian dolls (i.e. a *matryoshka* doll)" (Neal & Neal, 2013, p. 723) (Figure 3.1):
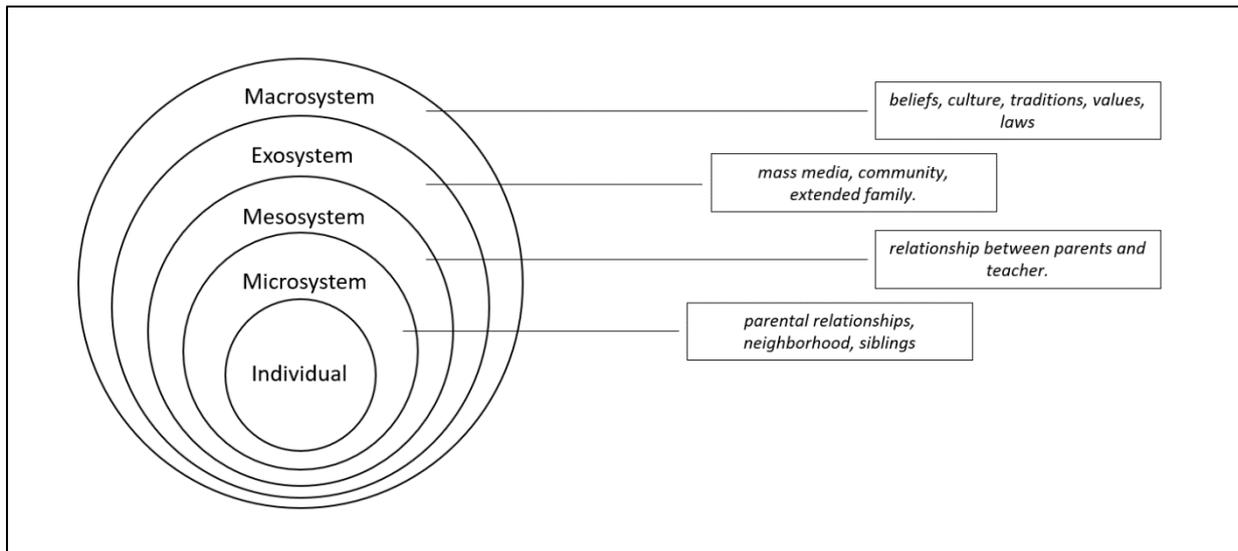
Figure 3.1 Ecological Systems Theory: The Traditional Framework by Bronfenbrenner (1979)

In the original version of the ecological systems theory, Bronfenbrenner explained the definitions of each of the 'systems' he said surround an individual in any particular context or setting. Each system was viewed by Bronfenbrenner as a puzzle piece that will, inadvertently, affect the focal individual in one way or another.

In this nested hierarchy, at the first and lowest level, are the Microsystems. Microsystems, according to Bronfenbrenner, are the systems where individual in focus plays a direct role and has experiences, as well as have immediate social interactions with other individuals. Neal & Neal (2013) stated that, in the example of a developing child, Microsystems can be this can be seen as the child's relationship with their parents and siblings, having a meal together as a family, and playing with the siblings or parents. Next, the Mesosystems are where two or more of the individual's Microsystems meet each other. With the same example as above, this can be seen as the parents of a developing child (from the home setting) meeting their school teacher (from the school setting). Then, there is the Exosystem, which influences the individual who is the focus of the framework but in which that individual does not directly partake, such as educational policies. In the example of the developing child, a change in the school's policy to have bigger classrooms (a decision in which the developing child as not directly participates) will affect the child's classroom experience and schooling. Finally,

Bronfenbrenner explained the Macrosystems which includes the more long-term cultural influences and other ideologies that have future consequences for the individual in focus. Within the same example, this could mean the ethnicity of the child, the cultural changes in educational policies, and teaching strategies that evolve over time that pertinently affecting the child's education.

These four core systems from Bronfenbrenner's original work were then joined by a fifth in 1986 (Figure 3.2). Bronfenbrenner (1986) introduced the Chronosystem as "a system reflecting change or continuity across time that influences each of the other systems" (Neal & Neal, 2013, p. 725). This can be seen as the transitions in the life of a developing child, such as from secondary school to higher education or puberty onset, all of which reside in the Chronosystem.
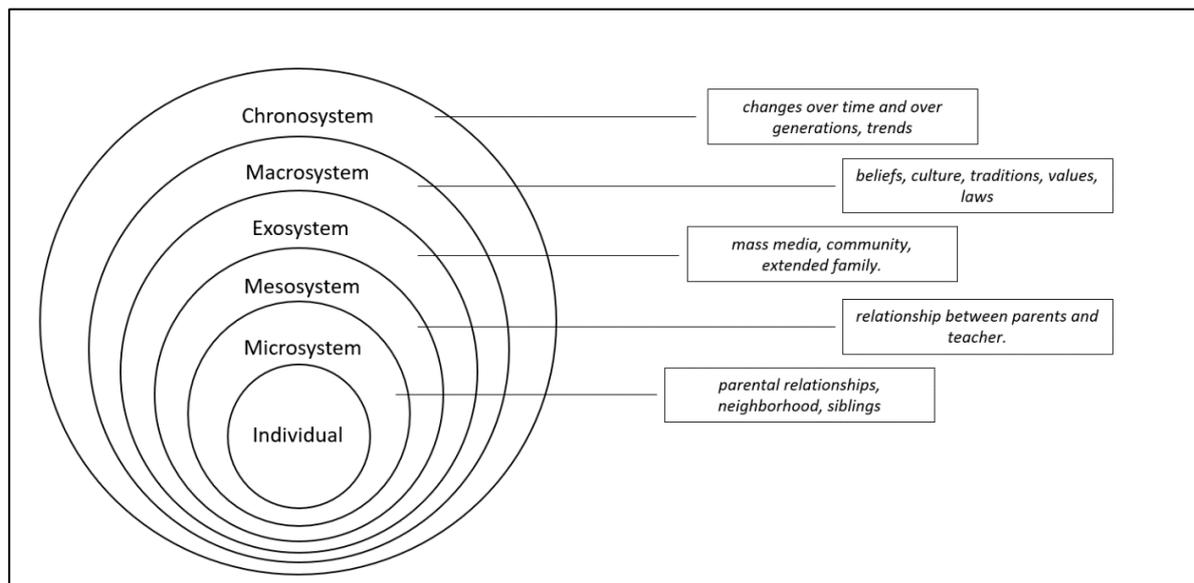
Figure 3.2 Ecological Systems Theory: The Traditional Framework by Bronfenbrenner (1986)

The ecological systems framework has been utilised in several different areas of psychological and social development of individuals in varied contextual settings. One such example of Rose-Krasnor's (2009) research on the engagement of youth in activities that are beyond compulsory. Within the theory itself, some systems are researched more than others, such as the Microsystem and the Mesosystem.

In the studies using Microsystems, one of the more renowned research studies was conducted by

Chipuer (2001) on the connection between youths and their experience of loneliness, looking into

how attachments of a dyadic nature and connecting with the community affects their experience.

Similarly, Seidman *et al.* (1995) had published research on development of Microsystems by

adolescents and their perception of social support, life involvement, and daily hassles. Gifford-Smith

& Brownell (2003) studied the Microsystems for the peer relationship of children, focusing on social

acceptance, peer networks, and friendships. Criss, Shaw, Moilanen, Hitchings, & Ingoldsby (2009)

used Microsystems, from the ecological systems theory, to understand how child adjustment can be

predicted by family, neighbourhood, and peer characteristics. All in all, there are countless research

studies that have utilised Microsystems as the bases of their research, especially when looking at

predictable factors for social interactions and social contexts.

Mesosystems, from the ecological systems theory, have also been notably used in research studies.

One such application was the research publication by Durlak *et al.* (2007) on the positive effects of

youth development campaigns on community, family, and school. Similarly, Serpell & Mashburn

(2012) had studied connectedness between a child's family and their school, and how it may affect

the social development of the child, looking into the parent-teacher Mesosystem.

Neal & Neal (2013) noted that in the general application and exploration of the ecological systems

framework, the use of Exosystems and Microsystems remains elusively less frequent in the

literature. What also remains less frequent, and almost an anomaly, is the fact that the ecological

systems theory framework – commended for its multilevel systems and interdependability – is rarely

used in the study of students in a higher education setting.

3.2. *Reconceptualisation of the Ecological Systems Theory Framework by Fish & Syed (2018)*

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory framework, as explained above, is often used in

sociological and psychological research studies as the focal point of such studies is often one type of

individual and the several settings they operate in. However, the use of the ecological systems theory framework in understanding student development, retention, and attrition in the context of higher education is close to nought. The framework itself provides ample opportunity to be adapted to different student groups and characteristics.

Perhaps, one of the only such applications the framework was conducted by Fish & Syed (2018), whilst studying the experiences of Native American students in U.S.A.'s higher education. Fish & Syed explained that the current higher educational disparities faced by Native American students are a result of the government's involvement in Native American education; this led the authors to study the overall experience of Native American students in U.S.A.'s higher education and how 'historical and cultural' factors affect these students.

Fish & Syed noted that educational disparities for Native American students is often approached using a *deficit* model by Dehyle & Swisher (1997) , in which the individuals and the communities are seen as the root of the problem. To counteract this, the authors presented an alternative approach using Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory framework. However, they reconceptualised the framework in order to pose more emphasis on the Macrosystem and the Chronosystem (Figure 3.3). Fish & Syed (2018) stated that the reconceptualisation "provides a framework that is developmental, strength-based, and contextually focused" (p. 388) and that they aimed to highlight "how historical and cultural factors are inextricably connected to Native American college students' experiences and how campus professionals can leverage such factors to transform education" (p. 388).
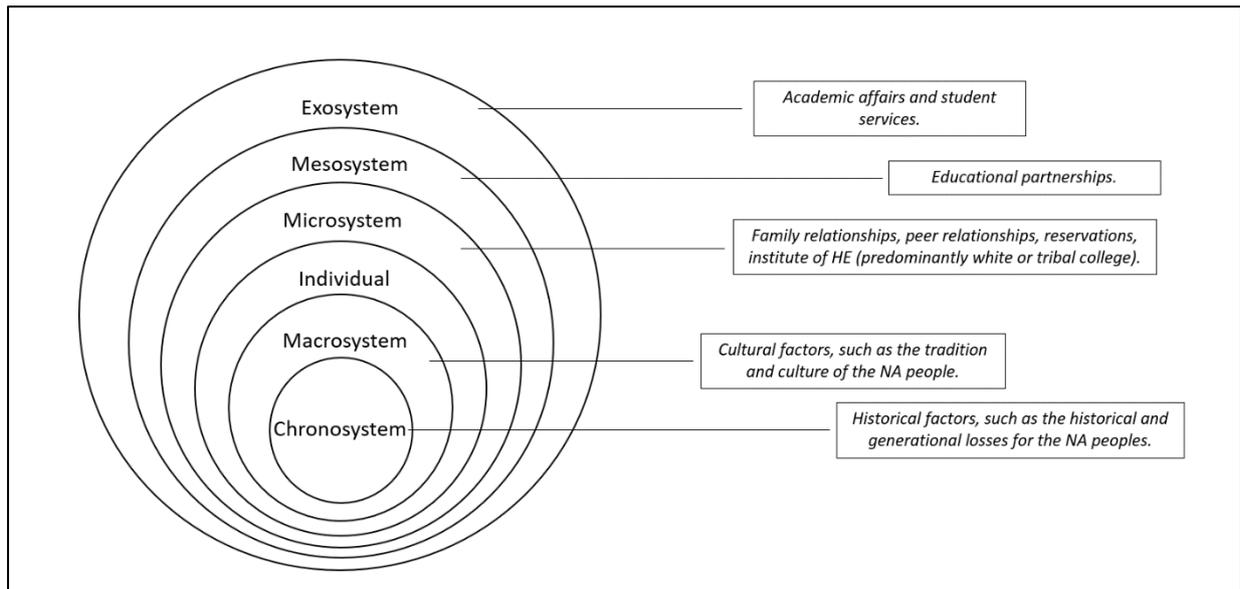
Figure 3.3 Reconceptualisation of the Ecological Systems Theory Framework by Fish & Syed (2018)

Fish & Syed (2018) explained that this rearrangement of the ecological systems theory framework

accomplishes various aims. The first one is in relation to the Chronosystem; Fish & Syed highlighted

that by choosing to begin the framework with the Chronosystem, they developed the foundation on

which they wanted all the forthcoming systems to rest, which is the fact that the experiences of

Native American students are grounded in their past, giving due importance to the historical factors

that affect their higher education journey. Then, the authors noted that positioning the

Macrosystem on the inside of the framework was an integral step as that places due emphasis on

the role of culture, as advocated by other scholars (Juang, Syed, Cookston, Wang, & Kim, 2012). Fish

& Syed stated that Native American culture and way of being needed to be emphasised, instead of

being minimised as had been done by several Western frameworks that try to categorise or study

Native Americans in higher education (Brayboy B. M., 2005; Castagno & Lee, 2007). Finally, Fish &

Syed argued that, by resituating the Chronosystem and the Macrosystem to the core of the

framework, "history and culture are inextricably connected to the remaining levels, making it

impossible to ignore the role they play in the educational development of Native Americans" (p.

391). The authors summarised that the reconceptualisation of the ecological systems theory

framework would lead to a better understanding of the Native American higher education experience.

Approaching the reasons as to why they decided to focus on the Chronosystem and the Macrosystem specifically, Fish & Syed stated that this was necessary so as to highlight the specific issues that the Native American students face (in terms of their history and culture).

3.2.1. Chronosystem

The Chronosystem in the original model by Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1979) signified the critical role time played in individual development. In the reconceptualisation by Fish & Syed (2018), the Chronosystem was moved to the core of the framework, and signified the historical losses faced by Native Americans. Fish & Syed explained that time within the Chronosystem entails change and stability at two distinct levels; the first one is ontogenetic change which refers to the changes an individual encounters over the course of their life, and the second is historical phylogenetic change that is "parallel to historical and cohort shifts across generations" (p. 391). Fish & Syed stated that this definition, where the concept of time is not just about the individual's age but about the change across generations, takes the Chronosystem into a third dimension as it cuts across the other four systems (Figure 3.4).
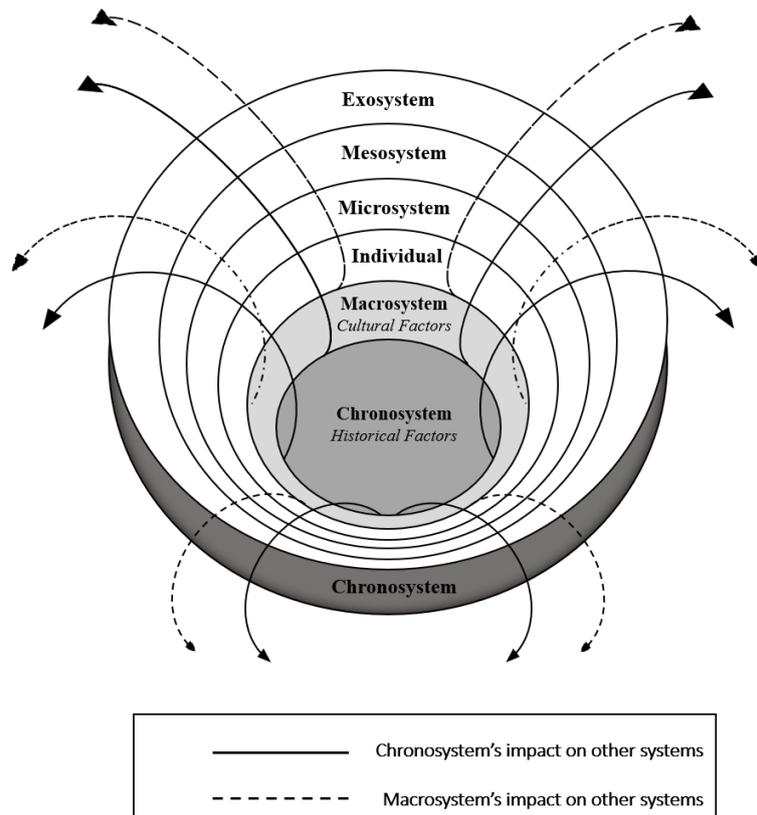
Figure 3.4 3D Reconceptualisation of the Ecological Systems Theory Framework by Fish & Syed (2018)

Fish & Syed noted that despite the Native American history of colonisation, researchers often limit their attention on connected it with the experience of Native American students in present-day higher education. The authors noted that the historical trauma that is experienced by Native American peoples often transcends generations, and is a topic that requires more research, especially when it comes to their higher education experiences. Fish & Syed highlighted that giving the Chronosystem its due importance – instead of denying, understating, and overlooking the historical facts – can "validate the individual and collective experiences of Native American students" (p. 392). This was a approach previously also commended by Tachine, Cabrera, & Yellow Bird (2017), who explained that understanding and validating the historical trauma of Native American peoples, and its current percussions on their mental health when they are asked to interact with the very institutions (higher education, for example) that had been used for their (and/or their ancestor's) assimilation, empowers and affirms their belief in that fact that they are being provided an

intellectual and social space to develop their sense of belonging within these higher education institutions.

3.2.2. Macrosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1979) defined Macrosystems as the social and cultural consistencies of the Microsystem, Mesosystem, and Exosystem, with a clear emphasis on "lifestyles, beliefs, ideologies, customs, and opportunity structures" (Fish & Syed, 2018, p. 393). In a typical rendition of the ecological systems theory framework, the Macrosystem is the second outermost level which is, more often than not, disregarded and rarely discussed with relation to the other systems. In the reconceptualisation by Fish & Syed (2018), the Macrosystem was relocated to be the second core level of the ecological systems framework in order to more effectively focus on how culture is connected to the other systems. The authors noted that conversation of Macrosystems mainly revolves around how the culture of Native American students influences their experience in higher education.

Fish & Syed explained that there is ample research on how cultural values and tradition affect the experience of Native American students. However, most of this research takes on a deficit approach, which is to say that Native American students who are traditional and value their culture have trouble settling into higher education and are less likely to succeed, establishing that the problem lies within the individuals (Huffman, 2008) – not within the education system that refuses to accept their culture values and traditions. Several other research studies, such as the one by Bingham, Jackson, Adolpho, & Alexitch (2014), state that Native American students need to develop bicultural identities in order to be successful in higher education which, once again, puts the onus on the Native American students. Fish & Syed (2018) contradict this approach by stating that "this perspective is setting up Native American students for failure, as it may be difficult to construct a sense of self that connects Native American ways of being with an oppressive educational system" (p. 393). The authors went on to state that it should be the responsibility of the higher education

institutes to integrate and accommodate Native American culture in order to allow the Native American students to be successful, an approach that was also noted by Guillory (2009).

Fish & Syed explained that, currently, higher education can be an isolating experience for Native American students with strong cultural identities and traditional mindsets as they "feel intensely alienated on campus due to experiences of racism, stereotyping, and victimisation" (2018, p. 394). This ultimately results in the Native American students departing from higher education early, as described in the studies by Reamey (2009) and LaRocque, McDonald, Weatherly, & Ferraro (2011). Fish & Syed noted that by solely focusing on the dominant culture, frameworks on Western education create an environment where Native American students feel unwelcomed and out of place, leading to more departures and drop-outs. Therefore, by placing cultural values and traditions at the core of the framework, Fish & Syed identify its importance to Native American students and how higher education institutes can use this as a guide as to how crucial it is to accommodate non-dominant cultures and traditions.

3.2.3. Conclusions from Fish & Syed (2018)

Fish & Syed (2018) concluded that due to the previous student experience frameworks being structured around Euro American values, the deficit was seen in the Native American students where their cultural connections were blamed for their inability to academically and socially integrate in the higher education institutes. Hence why, the reconceptualisation of Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory framework by Fish & Syed provides a new perspective as the higher education institutes are urged to accommodate the cultures and traditions of Native American students in order to make them feel safe to socially and intellectually develop. The two factors, historic and cultural, need to be incorporated in not just the acceptance attitude of the higher education institute, but also in the on-campus norms of these institutes.

3.3. Reconceptualisation for British Pakistani Students in U.K.'s Higher Education

In the previous years, the literature has seen several student retention theories from several key scholars in the field, such as Spady (1970; 1971), Tinto (1975; 1993), Bean (1982) , Bean & Eaton (2002) , Bean & Metzner (1985), and Astin (1984), focusing on various aspects of progression and performance of students in higher education institutions. However, as highlighted in the sections above, there is a stark gap in the literature that fails to address the differences within students from different ethnicities. This gap is more visible in research focused on U.K.'s higher education where the umbrella of BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) is used, without the consideration of the differences in each different ethnicity of students present in the U.K.'s higher education. Furthermore, the term BAME has been declared redundant by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021), making it even more pertinent that there be distinct research conducted to understand the retention of different ethnicities and cultures that the students in U.K.'s higher education belong to.

In order to supplement this direction of research for British Pakistani students, there is the need for a framework that adequately captures the role culture and ethnicity play in their progression and performance in U.K.'s higher education. For this purpose, a reconceptualisation of Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory framework is being proposed, where the macrosystem (that encapsulates cultural factors) is placed at the core of the framework instead of on the margin (Figure 3.5) , offering a distinct perspective into the reasoning behind the differential performance of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education. This alternative framework should prove to be the first of many when studying ethnic minorities individually, without the lens of BAME, and for a deeper understanding of the ideals and pressures of various cultures.
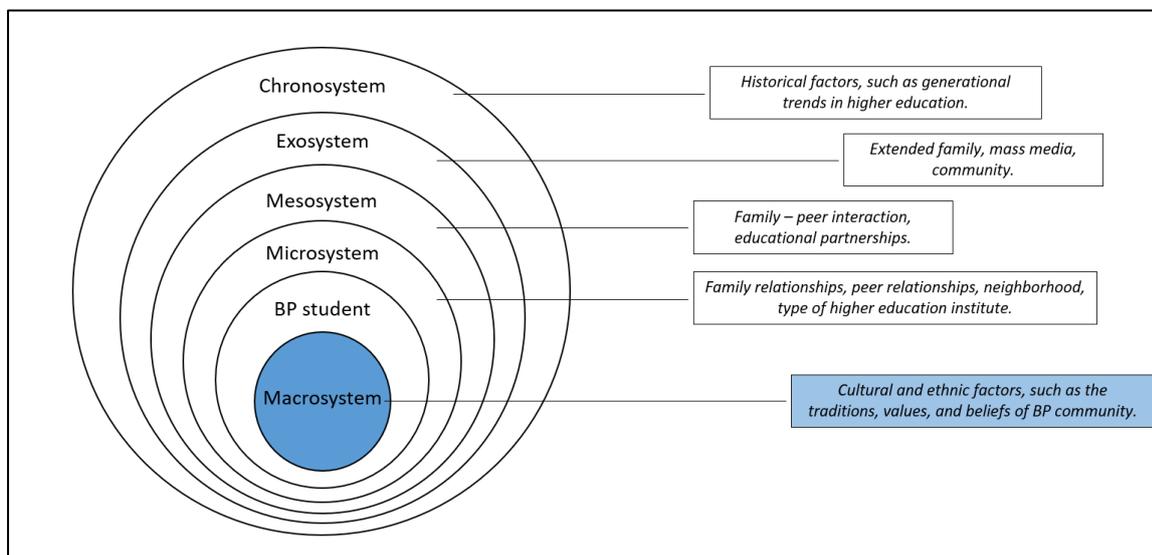
Figure 3.5 Reconceptualisation for British Pakistani Students in U.K.'s Higher Education.

The reconfiguration of the framework endorses three main goals of this research. Firstly, the

reconceptualisation of the model highlights that there is an unwavering connection between the

individual at the focus of the framework and the culture they belong to or associate themselves

with. This connection comes in the form of observing the immediate family members. Secondly, the

reconceptualised framework notes that culture unequivocally affects most (if not all) behaviours

exhibited by the individual in focus (Karahanna, Evaristo, & Srite, 2005; Oyibo, Orji, & Vassileva,

2017), and that, ultimately, progression and performance in higher education are attributed to

certain social behaviours in these individuals (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani, 2009; Bayer,

Bydzovska, Geryk, Obsivac, & Popelinsky, 2012) ; that is why the fact that culture, in one way or

another but nonetheless significantly, affects retention and attrition in higher education can no

longer be ignored. Finally, ever since the introduction of the Widening Participation Agenda,

research on non-traditional students, especially ethnic minority students in higher education, has

been encapsulated under the BAME terminology; by placing the Macrosystem at the core of the

framework, it ensure that scholars place the differences in the cultures and ethnicities at the centre

of every research conducted, and to study individuals based on distinct cultural heuristics instead of categorising them only as White and non-White (BAME).

3.3.1. The Macrosystem – Cultural and Ethnic Factors

Previously, in theories related to student progression and performance, the role of culture usually had one of the two types of representations: it was either used as a normative term (such as BAME) to highlight non-White cultures, or used as an after-thought where it is not seen at the core of the phenomenon. This reconceptualisation of the ecological systems theory framework for British Pakistani students puts Macrosystem, which embodies culture and ethnicity, at its centre to prove how important of a role it plays in the progression and performance of these students in higher education.

Generally, there has been some prominent research conducted that highlights the importance of culture in individual behaviours and in the decision-making process. However, the connection between individual cultures and ethnicities with the retention and attrition of higher education students has not been significantly explored in the U.K.

3.3.1.1. *Culture Capital by Bourdieu*

One of the most prominent theories of culture came from Bourdieu (1977), who introduced the concept of *culture capital* and *culture reproduction*. Bourdieu's main stance with culture highlighted that individuals are unconsciously influenced by the dominant culture in their surroundings, stating that individuals gain cultural capital through their initial learning process. Huang (2019) noted that Bourdieu had highlighted that individuals behave based of the specific culture that they live in, due to their understanding of the dominant cultural codes imprinted in their society. Jæger & Møllegaard (2017) brought forward a point from Bourdieu (1977; 1984) and Bourdieu & Passeron (1990), explaining Bourdieu's argument that cultural capital "is a key determinant of educational success" (Jæger & Møllegaard, 2017, p. 130). Bourdieu had also classified cultural capital into three forms: *embodied* (preferences, language, mannerisms, etc.), *objectified* (cultural books, goods, art, etc.),

and *institutionalised* (educational qualifications) (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Bourdieu's other concept, *cultural reproduction*, was defined by Franklin (2007) as the term used to describe the phenomenon that culture transmits itself from one generation to the next, the transmission itself including cultural forms such as "social inequality, privilege, elite status, ethnicity" (p. 11).

Laraeu (2003) and Cheung & Andersen (2003) explained that cultural capital is transmitted in individuals from their parents, either by unconsciously exposing them to embodied or objectified cultural capital at home, or by knowingly investing time to transmit their cultural capital, a point that was later corroborated by Kraaykamp & van Eijck (2010) and Jæger & Breen (2016). Kisida, Greene, & Bowen (2014) and Bisin & Verdier (2011) further explained that, over a period of time, individuals end up internalising their parent's cultural capital, which ultimately becomes a significant part of their behaviours and faculties, which Bourdieu (1977; 1984) termed as *habitus.* Bisin & Verdier (2011) also noted that it is possible for individuals to gain cultural capital, in minimal capacities, from sources other than immediate family, such as school/university or peers.

What does this mean for the reconceptualisation of the ecological system theory framework? The significant takeaway from the section above is that culture is at the heart of the very personality and behaviour that leads to students' differential performance and progression in higher education. The phenomenal role that culture plays is especially prominent in Bourdieu's (1977; 1984) specific classification of cultural capital, where the author states that institutionalised cultural capital is visible through not only the individual's educational achievement, but also through the education achievement of those that the individual receives the cultural capital from.

3.3.1.2.   *Ethnic Capital by Shah, Dwyer, & Modood*

Prior to Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) publishing their research, there was always the notion that cultural capital plays a part in how students perform and progress in higher education, and that ethnicity is not a part of the cultural capital itself (LiPuma, 1993). However, Shah, Dwyer, & Modood

(2010) argued that ethnicity is not only part of the cultural capital that is transmitted from generation to generation, but also has a significant material impact on the individuals. The authors reviewed the research conducted in U.S.A. by Zhou (2005; 2000) and Zhou & Bankston (1994) on the higher education performance and progression of post-1965 immigrants' children in the Chinese and Vietnamese communities, which stated that "the presence of dense co-ethnic networks, including cultural endowments, obligations and expectations, information channels and enforcement of social norms, can serve as a distinct form of social capital" (Shah, Dwyer, & Modood, 2010, p. 1112).

This research led to Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) to identify dimensions of cultural capital that are quite unique to immigrant families: intergenerational closure and norms enforcement; this then led to the ultimate collapsing of the Bourdieuian idea of a clear distinction between cultural capital and social capital, now filled with the concept of ethnic capital and the role it plays, as reiterated earlier by Modood (2004). The idea of ethnic capital further identifies concealed mechanisms, stated by Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) as "familial adult-child relationships, transmission of aspirations, and attitudes and norms enforcement" (p. 1112), which can facilitate favourable educational progression and performance.

Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010), being the pioneers on the concept, further added that this concept of ethnic capital can be applied and studied on British Pakistani families, although cautioning that ethnicity has a strong interplay with class, gender, and religion. For example, the authors argued that male and female British Pakistani students differ in their educational aspirations and life negotiations, which is what leads to differed results in the higher education progression and performance.

Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010) added, in their conclusion, that although ethnic capital is a noble concept which can aide community studies as well as student retention (and attainment) research, the impact of the ethnic capital (as part of the cultural capital) should be contextualised within certain social contexts and structural barriers that form various socio-economic opportunities for

definite groups. This means that this theory cannot be applied to BAME as a whole group, as done in the past with many of the theories aiming to explain BAME students' progression and performance in U.K.'s higher education. Instead, specific ethnic groups need to be studied under this theory separately as each ethnic groups entails its own sets of expectations and pressures for the individuals to deal, under the context of social and cultural capital.

3.3.2. Significance to the Reconceptualised Framework

The concepts of cultural capital and ethnic capital are the backbone of the Macrosystem in this reconceptualisation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory framework. This is because the above research highlights the multiple effects culture and ethnicity can have on an individual. Firstly, it is seen in the research above that cultural capital is an integral dimension of educational achievement and should, therefore, be given due importance as to the nature of its effect on the progression and performance in higher education (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani, 2009; Bayer, Bydzovska, Geryk, Obsivac, & Popelinsky, 2012). Secondly, the concept of ethnic capital, as explained by Shah, Dwyer, & Modood (2010), is more pertinent in ethnic minority and immigrant families, highlighting its importance for when British Pakistani students are being studied for their performance and progression in higher education.

However, another significant point highlighted from the research above is that ethnic capital, and subsequently cultural capital, cannot be studied for generalised groups of ethnicities, such as BAME or British Asians. This is where the individualisation of ethnic minorities comes in; the reconceptualised model with the Macrosystems at the core would not be significantly applicable if it is applied to groups of ethnic minorities, as the fundamental concept and purpose of the framework is to break away from the enforced generalising of other models developed through grouping of the ethnic minorities.

3.3.3. Difference from Fish & Syed's (2018) Reconceptualisation

Due to the nature of the framework, it is imperative to highlight how the reconceptualisation described above for British Pakistani students differs from Fish & Syed's (2018) reconceptualisation for Native American students. This can be understood at two levels.

On the surface level, the difference is obvious. Fish & Syed focused their reconceptualisation on two of the ecological systems in Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) framework: the Macrosystem and the Chronosystem. As the framework is based on the context of the individual, Fish & Syed used the two of the most relevant systems for Native American students when researching their higher education experiences.

Beneath the surface, there is another difference between the two reconceptualisations: the availability of the studies for each of the systems and the variables they affect. For Fish & Syed's study, there is ample literature available that can be placed in each of the systems of the ecological systems theory framework. However, that is not the case for British Pakistani students. There is a severe lack of literature on British Pakistani students' higher education experience in the U.K. Therefore, this study focuses on what is known generally about the British Pakistani community and dedicates a large proportion of the literature to elucidate the importance of culture in the form of cultural and ethnic capital.

To summarise, Fish & Syed's (2018) reconceptualisation aimed at categorising existing research on Native American students' higher education experience as there has been an abundance of papers on the subject. Whereas, the reconceptualisation for British Pakistani students aims to elevate the importance of culture and stress on how imperative it is to conduct research to study the effects of culture on their higher education experience as well as other systems in the ecological system's model.

3.4.   Moving Forward with the Thesis

After the establishment and explanation of the reconceptualised ecological systems theory

framework for British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education, it imperative to identify a

suitable methodology and conduct a data analysis to understand if the role of culture and ethnicity is

as pivotal as expected from the literature review.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

A prominent issue with the research conducted on student progression repeatedly focuses on the same demographics of students (BAME), with little work done that exclusively focuses on British Pakistani students. These shortcomings of past research are addressed in this chapter, detailing the rationale behind the methods, philosophies, and strategies of choice. This chapter encapsulates the essence of research in higher education, performance, progression, and in social sciences in general, to provide a well-sketched landscape of the industry and its history with academic research. The issue that is being investigated remains at the centre of the chapter, that is what role culture plays in the progression and performance of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education, the end goal being the development and application of a conceptual framework that can be applied to ethnic minority students. The final parts of this chapter look into the applications of the research design, as well as a summary as to what comes next in the research process of the issue at hand.

It is important to note that the main aim of the research remains at the centre of the chapter, which is to critically assess the performance, integration, and progression of British Pakistani commuter students in U.K.'s higher education. The objective of this chapter is to find a research approach and design that aligns with the main aim of the research, as well as justify why it is being applied.

4.2. Research in Social Sciences and Higher Education

Academic research is often referred to as the type of research that can be "authenticated, replicated, or developed further" (Franklin, 2012, p. 8) in a systematic method and is able to "withstand *intense* and *concerted* scrutiny over time" (p. 8). Schoenberger & Beban (2017) noted that all academic researchers are activists with individually constructed research identities through rich scholarship. Brannick & Coghlan (2007) further added that academic research's primary focus is on theory development with no compulsion to focus on actions or practice, meaning at times there

is little practical use of the theoretical knowledge devised. Reale, Barabara, & Costantini (2007) added that academic research is often done for the purposes of publication, and any research with the criteria of "rationality, impartiality, validity, reliability, efficiency, and effectiveness" (pp. 216-217) is considered to be academic, even if it is not deemed completely practical and actionable.

The present research can be categorised as the insider academic research, due the researcher's connection to the Pakistani society and as a student in the higher education institution where majority of the data collection will take place. Brannick & Coghlan (date) stated that much of the research carried out in higher education is often branded as "insider academic research" (p. 59). This is a term closely associated with self-ethnography that is defined by Alvesson (2003) as "a study and a text in which the researcher-author describes a cultural setting to which s/he has a natural access, is an active participant, more or less on equal terms with other participants. The researcher then works and/or lives in the setting and then uses the experiences, knowledge and access to empirical material for research purposes" (p. 174), repercussions and flaws of which may contribute towards the reasons as why there are significant gaps in research that concerns higher education singularities. Morse (1998) made the strong point that "it is not wise for an investigator to conduct a qualitative study in a setting where he or she is already employed and has a work role. The dual roles of investigator and employee are incompatible, and they may place the researcher in an untenable position" (p. 61). On the other hand, Mercer (2007) presented a significantly contrasting viewpoint by quoting Merton (1972) "individuals have not a single status, but a status set" (p. 22) and that "identities are always relative, cross cut by other differences and often situational and contingent" (DeVault, 1996, p. 35). Mercer further highlighted that several noted authors in higher education research have rejected the concept of insider/outsider dichotomy (Anderson & Jones, 2000; Bulmer, 1982; Carter, 2004; Hockey, 1993; Kelleher & Hillier, 1996; Labaree, 2002; Narayan, 1993; Surra & Ridley, 1991), suggesting that, as researchers, we all are multiple outsiders and insiders who deviate between varying boundaries according to situations, contexts, and statuses.

Greene (2014) explained that majority of research with sociological and anthropological roots tends to be considered as insider researcher with 'natives' of the environment leading the analysis being carried out; if it were to be believed that the insider/outsider continuum does exist, Green suggests that there are several measures that can be taken to moderate the presence of any bias or partiality, including reflexivity. The practice of reflexivity stems from Pierre Bourdieu's work, that states that the notion of reflexivity is to be in active engagements with one's self through questioning perceptions and exposing their contextualised and power-driven nature (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Greene M. , 2014); Van den Hoonaard (2002) stated that "self-reflexivity involves the researchers taking into account his or her own consciousness" (p. 88). When it comes to the relevance this may have with insider academic research, Doucet (2008) explains that their needs to be an appropriate degree of social and emotional distance between the researcher and the participants as that is crucial to the reflexive process. Taylor (2011) highlighted that the appropriate degree of social and emotional distance between the researcher and participants is determined by the researcher themselves, the purpose of it being to avoid "the narrative of the researched and the researcher becoming entwined" (p. 9). Taylor further added that the researcher is then "forced to look both outward and inward, to be reflexive and self-conscious in terms of positioning, to be both self-aware and researcher-self-aware and to acknowledge the intertextuality that is a part of both the data gathering and writing processes" (p. 9). Couture, Zaidi, & Maticka-Tyndale (2012) noted that role of reflexivity would be further enhanced if it was considered as part of the data collected as an account of the researcher's insider/outsider status, as well as an account of how it actually affected the data collected.

4.3. Historical Debate of Methods: Qualitative versus Quantitative

Tuli (2010) explained that majority of the research in social sciences perceives qualitative research as inferior to quantitative research, especially when dealing with issues concerning higher education. Tuli further added that "research methodology used in social science for much of the 20th century was largely quantitative methodology" (p. 98) due to the need for valid, reliable, and practical

results and data. However, at the turn of the century, many social scientists began expressing their dissatisfaction for quantitative methodology, which ultimately divided the masses and led to the emergence of the intellectual purists on both end of the paradigms i.e. quantitative purists and qualitative purists. Krauss (2005) and Lincoln & Guba (2005) explained that quantitative purists, also known as positivists, maintain that observations in social sciences should be treated in the same manner as physical phenomena. On the contrary, Krause and Lincoln & Guba noted that qualitative purists, also referred to as interpretivists or constructivists, believe that reality in social sciences is subjective to its social context by the participants of that reality. Newman, Benz, & Ridenour (1998) wrote that "virtually all qualitative researchers, regardless of their theoretical differences, reflect some sort of individual phenomenological perspective; most quantitative research approaches, regardless of their theoretical differences, tend to emphasize that there is a common reality on which people can agree" (p. 2).

Goetrz and Mahoney (2012) explained that the archetypal divide between qualitative and quantitative paradigms is not as simple as it is portrayed to be by many; the authors wrote that the qualitative-quantitative distinction is built into every social scientists' vocabulary to place their work in a category and to serve as a common point of reference when discussing research. Goertz and Mahoney point out that the "labels of qualitative and quantitative are quite inadequate for capturing the most salient differences between the two traditions" (pp. 4-5) and that understanding the methodological similarities between the two paradigms should elevate any social scientist's knowledge of as to why the differences exist. Similarly, Gelo, Braakmann, & Benetka (2008) previously argued that qualitative approaches and quantitative approaches can almost be considered as incompatible because the "*meta-theoretical paradigms* underlying the two approaches are so different that any reconciliation between them would destroy the philosophical foundations of each" (p. 268), especially because the qualitative versus quantitative debate is largely based on epistemological issues if anything. However, Salomon (1991) stated that sooner or later researchers will have to realise how "potentially complementary the paradigms are on the practical

level" (p. 10) foreshadowing the era of mixed-methods research in social sciences by noting that the

zeitgeist has started "tolerating, even encouraging, a multiplicity of methods" (p. 10). Sale, Lohfeld,

& Brazil (2002) further added that the philosophical distinction between qualitative approaches and

quantitative approaches have become increasingly blurred, with researchers integrating them to

answer substantial questions. Regardless of what Howe (1988) labelled as the *incompatibility thesis*,

a notion that qualitative and quantitative paradigms cannot and should not be mixed, there has

been a significant surge in the application and utilisation of mixed-methods research, especially in

social sciences. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) stated that there are several commonalities

between the traditional paradigms, such as the use of empirical observations to answer research

questions and incorporating measures to ensure there is minimum bias. Also, Greene (2008)

explained that that the mixing of the research was quintessential for innovative and thoughtful

researchers, with interest in social sciences for mixed methods has often arisen more from

"theoretical and epistemological concerns than from practice" (p. 7). Greene went on to state that

"the development of mixed methods theory has involved a dynamic interplay with creative practice

in highly practical fields and with the felt limits of traditional theory in fields with strong disciplinary

theoretical traditions" (p. 8), adding that the use of mixed methods has been productive for the

social sciences, and is likely to continue being used.

4.4. Problems with Students' Performance and Progression Research

Having discussed the concept of insider academic research, let us now consider the research

methods administered in student retention research and what problems they might face. According

to Caison (2007), research on student retention has traditionally followed the linear path of either

using a survey or following the students for a specific period of time to understand if they will pre-

maturely drop-out or not; several studies and theories in the retention literature have relied on this

research design, including Tinto's widely applied model of student integration. Tinto's work on the

institutional departure of students led to several other theories coming in to being, that used a wide spectrum of survey instruments to measure the components of student retention.

However, Cabrera, Nora, & Castañeda (1993) had stated a warning that even though the findings of such studies may contribute greatly to the literature, they pose the threat of not being generable to other institutions, who perhaps witness difference in student persistence patterns. McLaughlin, Brozovsky, & McLaughlin (1998) emphasised that student retention has long-term effects on the educational institute as an organisation, which is why there should be extensive research done on the subject with the utilisation of various methods and instruments that truly triangulate the results, as well as make them nationally (of not globally) applicable. The authors further added that if institutions understood the strategic implications of student retention, the research would gain more importance as a whole and increase the "likelihood of students' completing their program of study" (p. 2). Braxton, Brier, & Steele (2007) also noted that the ill-advised structure of higher education in the UK does not assist in solving the student departure and differential performance puzzle. The authors explained that the institutions conducting research on the progression and performance are often not given access to the information of students that have dropped out and may find it difficult to document their perspective on the departure process.

Similarly, as Bhopal (1997) notes, majority of the research community may be of the view that if research is done on an ethnicity different to their own, it may be ostracised and labelled as "racist, unsound, or unimportant" (p. 22). This might go some way in explaining the lack of empirical research on British Pakistani progression and performance in U.K.'s higher education. Williams & Neighbors (2001) added the precedent for any research that is being conducted in a different ethnic group that the researcher's own to be labelled as racist was set many years ago, and has since hindered the progress researchers could have made if this was not the case. Evidently, the label of racism should not be a liability or a fear for researchers who are trying to point out the findings from their research in order to improve the given conditions in any subject field. However, as it is

currently a problem in all forms and areas of research, the researcher's Pakistani background should prove to be an advantage in the current research; but this problem significantly affects the collating of literature on British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education as there is minimal research done on the subject, and research that is published on the (similar) topics usually does not a boast a very detailed research design.

4.5. Research Approach

4.5.1. Ontology and Epistemology

In the initial stages of developing a methodology, whilst the plan was to undertake a mixed-methods approach in this research, the research adopted a mainly constructivist approach while using quantitative and qualitative methods, while using an abductive methodology. However, as the initial plan to conduct a mixed-methods designs were rendered non-executionary by circumstances (4.8 Impact of Covid-19), the research approach was altered to a positivist approach, while using quantitative methods; nonetheless, the underlying reasoning of abductive methodology remained constant. This section first explains the initial approach of constructivism for the research, and then moves on to explain the altered approach of positivism to the research.

4.5.1.1. Initial Research Approach: Constructivism

Constructivism takes its roots from the traditional paradigm of interpretivism and is described in the literature as an approach that allows researchers to construct their own knowledge and understanding of the world through different experiences and by reflecting on those experiences (Honebein, 1996). To the constructivist, constructing the meaning from experiences is learning, and there is no motivation in learning if the knowledge cannot be applied to real life situations (Adom, Yeboah, & Ankrah, 2016). In several academic circles, the use of constructivism is praised, principally because the use of the approach provides context and empirical evidence when explaining (or rather, examining) a phenomenon (Vanderstraeten & Biesta, 1998). Studies with a constructivist approach create an ethical responsibility for the researcher to authentically explain the context,

whilst also minding that the context may change at any given moment (Allen, 1994). Canepescu (2009) noted that human perceptions are made from social relations and contextual synthesis; it is beneficial to not reduce the complexity of the constructivism but to embrace it in order to understand social, educational, and academic phenomena that is being researched in this thesis.

The formulation of constructivism, especially in research conducted in academia and education (Smith L. , 1999), beholds a relativist notion of ontology. Gura (1992) highlighted that ontological relativism is essential when utilising the constructivist inquiry paradigm as it lays the foundation for this particular school of thought. Gura also noted that defining relativism would contradict the very essence of it, stating that the terms need to be open to growth in knowledge and sophistication. Nonetheless, relativism offers the belief that there are multiple versions of the reality being pursued as the reality can evolve and change depending on experiences, making it context-bound and non-generalisable (although it can be transferred to *similar* contexts) (Palecek & Risjord, 2012). One of the most notable proponents of ontological relativism, Thomas S. Kuhn, discussed in lengths that there is no objectively right way of representing the world, and that the world is bound to change in one's perspectives as they go through various experiences (Sankey, 2000). Sankey noted that Kuhn's earlier work on relativist was considered more radical, whereas his stance exudes more rationality when describing relativism in ontology.

While the ontology of constructivism is relativist, the epistemological stance of the constructivism follows an emic approach. Harris (1976) referred to the emic approach in epistemology as the actual presence and potential interactive behaviour of the ethnographer in a particular domain, leading to a wider understanding of the context of the interaction. Henwood (2008) wrote that the emic research strategy is quintessential to generating meaningful, experiential, in-depth, and culturally and contextually sensitive knowledge. Henwood further added that using an emic research maximises the curiosity about studies life and leads to learning the logic of the participants' worlds. It is important to understand and acknowledge that the strength of the emic approach in

epistemology stems from seeking to grasp diverse ways of seeing the world to one's own, and to

create knowledge based on the complex realisation that knowledge and power dynamics are

intertwined in an intricate way. Niblo and Jackson (2004) added that the while the etic approach

assumes universal laws of behaviour, the emic approach focuses on the inimitable aspects of

different cultures, with similar discussions resonated in the earlier work on emic/etic debate by

Church & Kataibak (1988), Smith & Bond (1993), and Cheung and Leung (1998).

4.5.1.2.   Alternate Research Approach: Positivism

Crossan (2013) explained that, in positivism, the onus is on the factual knowledge that is gained

through the observation of measurements, and is therefore deemed trustworthy. Crossan went on

to define that positivism favours the use of quantitative techniques, as opposed to post-positivist

approaches (such as, constructivism) that favour the use of qualitative techniques to explore and

describe phenomena. Ryan (2018) agreed with the work of Crossan, adding that a positivist

approach to research depends on observations that are quantifiable and are moving in the direction

of a statistical analysis. Collins (2017) had previously noted that positivism, as a philosophy, relied on

the empiricist accordance that knowledge emerges from the experience of humans. Although the

initial applications of positivism solely focused on the fact that the researcher has (or should have)

no provision of vested interest in the study (Holden & Lynch, 2004; Mkansi & Acheampong, 2012),

Crowther & Lancaster (2008) argued that as long as the researcher focuses on the facts, and not on

the phenomenology of the observed data, the sanctity of the positivist philosophy remains intact.

For the current research, positivism made an appropriate fit as the facts and trends derived from the

data become the contribution of this study. It could be argued that there are also constructivist

notions to this piece of work, but there is no bases for using that philosophy with the current

research design being of a quantitative nature.

Once the philosophy of positivism is understood, it is imperative to include the ontology of realism in

the process. Michell (2003) explained that ontological realism is the notion that something is real

and seen as a fact of the matter, based more on the data collected and less on intuition. Perl (2017) highlighted that realism has the reputation for being judgemental of facts and make interpretations independent of individual state of evaluation. Michell (2003) further added that the use realism, often also denoted as *naïve realism*, provides a strong bases for qualitative methods in social sciences, a view point also noted by Wasserman, Manley, & Chalmers (2009). Yet, Groff (2004) pointed it out that social sciences are increasingly becoming post-positivist and undertaking a more relativist view of the world, embarking the impression that any belief can be considered valid depending on the individual's perspectives and there is, in fact, no such thing as realism or one reality. Nonetheless, the current research's precipice is clearly on the ontology of realism as the researcher aims to decipher the *reality* of the role culture plays on the progression and performance of British Pakistani students. Any further research, if done in a qualitative design, could denote a relativist point of view, but the current research remains strictly of the realist nature.

Finally, after the settlement of the ontological realism, the current research follows an etic epistemology. In contrast to the emic approach, the etic approach is defined by the "nonessential status of actor-observer elicitation" (Harris, 1976, p. 331), meaning it does not require the ethnographer to be interactive or be present in the actual context of the domain being studied (Henwood, 2008). In the current research, the researcher did not interact with the participants of the data set, eliciting the non-essential status of the researcher in how the knowledge is gained. However, from another perspective, the epistemology can also be considered emic. On one hand, the research is deemed of an etic view in epistemology because the researcher was not present for, and did not influence, the data set – making the researcher an outsider. On the other hand, the research may also be counted as of an emic view due to the fact that the researcher belongs to the same culture – giving the researcher an insider's view. Ultimately, the best approach is to accept that the epistemology of the research beholds a hybrid nature.

4.5.2. Inductive, Deductive, and Abductive Reasoning

The initial instinct when deciding on the research approach was to pick from it either being inductive or deductive, like much of the work done on progression and performance. Deductive and inductive reasoning are often seen as the "broad methods of reasoning" (Trochim, 2006, p. 1) in research. A deductive research approach began with a generalised hypothesis or a general theory that already exists, and finished with specific logical conclusions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Deductive reasoning is a powerful tool when making inferences from the existing literature, especially as different parts of the existing literature can contain the initial statements of deduction; however, as the initial statements come from the observation of the world, that provides a whole new set of challenges for the researchers as it can be difficult to pinpoint which statement should be considered the initial starting point (Yin, 2003). In contrast, an inductive approach to research begins with specific observations, followed by discerning of patterns and data, and finally concluding with a theory or a generalisation (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). But the obvious limitation of an inductive approach lies in the fact that it usually based on a set of observation which is not complete (Yin, 2003). Yet, neither quite fit the premise of the research being conducted. In order to fully understand the premise of the current research, the approach being adopted had to be able to infer the several possible observations that may be causing the phenomenon.

This is where abductive reasoning comes in. Yin (2003) explained abductive reasoning as an approach that involves deciding what is the most likely inference that can be made from a set of certain observations. Yin further explained that abductive reasoning can "explain, develop, or change the theoretical framework before, during or after the research process" (p. 29). Abductive reasoning often moves back and forth between the open-ended, inductive research settings and the hypothetical, deductive inference system. In social sciences, abductive reasoning applies a process of systematic combining, as defined by Dubois & Gadde (2002) in Figure 4.1:
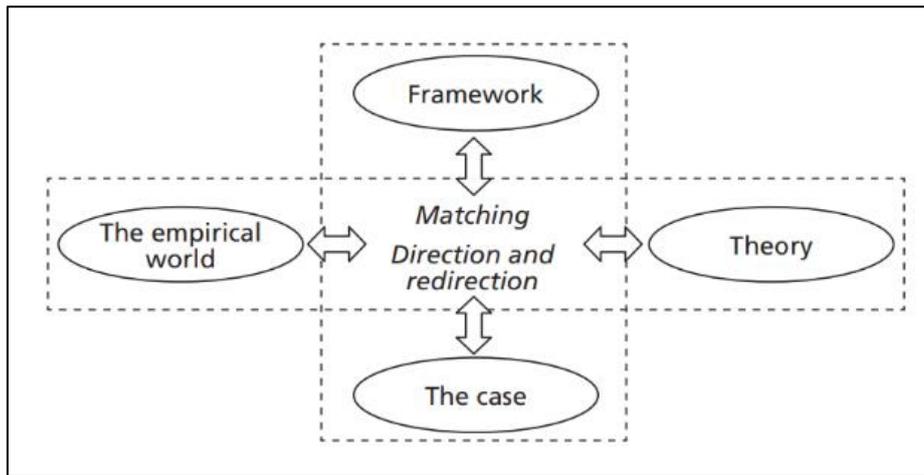
Figure 4.1 Abductive reasoning by Dubois & Gadde (2002).

Lipscomb (2012) noted that abductive reasoning often generates the "correct results" (p. 244) and is "envisaged as the creative, imaginative or insightful moment in which understanding is grasped – or is thought to be grasped" (p. 244). Råholm (2010) stated that Charles Sanders Pierce, one of the earliest pioneers of abductive reasoning, often (misleadingly) used the term hypothesis instead of abduction in his earlier work; further on there were clarification made my Pierce that a hypothesis is the initially plausible assumption, which once further pursued leads to the most reasonable claim and is then known as the abduction (Haig, 2008).

However, Lipscombe (2012) also point out that even though it can be notoriously straight-forward to come up with an abductive suggestion (as is the nature of the approach's inference), it should not be ignored that abductive reasoning can be seen as "an act of extremely fallible insight" (p. 245). The author goes on to suggest that if abductive reasoning is to be used as the chosen method of inference, it's (at times) particularly weak nature should be recognised in order to form sufficient justifications when abduction occurs.

Timmermans & Tavory (2012) explained the logic of abduction, starting from the etymology of the world itself that refers to "a leading away" (p. 170). They go on to highlight in the research context, abduction refers to "an inferential creative process of producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence … a researcher is led away from old to new theoretical insights" (p.

170). In order to understand the method of inference and the difference between abduction, induction, and deduction, Pierce (1958) gives the following examples (Figure 4.2):

All A are B.

C is A. — **Deduction**

Thus, C is B.

All observed A are C. — **Induction**

Thus, all A are C.

The surprising fact C is observed.

But if A were true, C would be a matter of course. — **Abduction**

Hence, there is a reason to suspect that A is true.
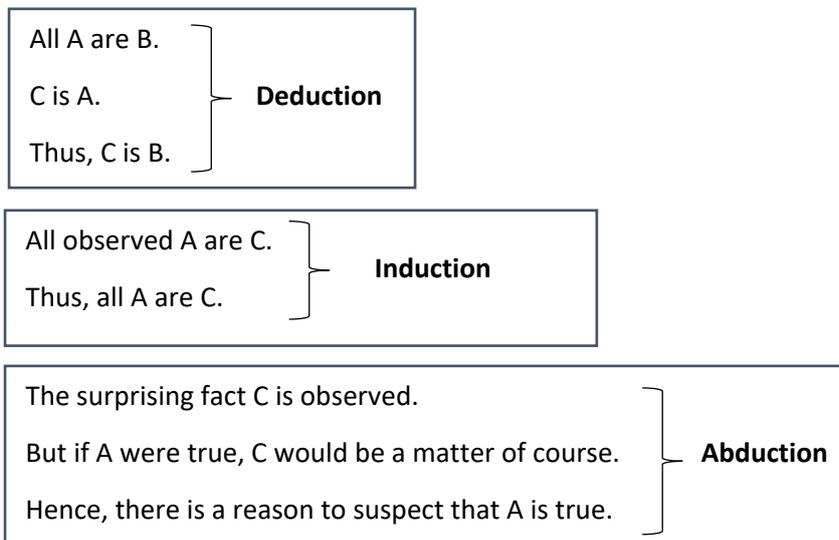
Figure 4.2 Deduction, Induction, and Abduction by Pierce (1958).

In simpler terms, the reasoning done using abduction includes the understanding and perception that there may be hidden cause and effect relationships affecting the phenomenon being studied, that the phenomenon being studied may be similar to another phenomena previously been studied or explained, or that there may be the need for creating new general descriptions for the phenomenon (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Pierce (1958) and, subsequently, Fann (1970) stated that out of the three logics noted above, abduction hold the most conjecture as it seeks the perfect amalgamation between observed facts and rules without the situational context being overshadowed.

Aliseda (2006) stated that abduction is the process we follow when we go from evidence to an explanation, "a type of reasoning characteristic of many different situations with incomplete information" (p. 28). Aliseda explained that the history of abduction can be traced back to the time of Aristotle, who gave theory of *apagoge* that was "a non-strictly deductive type of reasoning whose conclusions are not necessary, but merely possible" (p. 29). Aliseda further added that with every use of abductive reasoning, it is important to add an explanatory argument that makes explicitly

clear that the inference is chained and explanatory. Thagard & Shelley (1997) noted that there have

been attempts made at creating a formalised model of abductive reasoning in order to achieve a

more structured understanding of what it entails, such as by Bylander, Allemang, Tanner, &

Josephson (1991) and Konolige (1991). However, Thagard & Shelly point out that whilst these are

commendable attempts at modelling the variant nature of abductive reasoning, it cannot be

concluded that these models provide a sound and precise understanding of abductive reasoning, nor

should abductive reasoning only be viewed in terms of deduction but also in terms of coherence.

The current research did not fit the criterion for deductive research as an existing theory, or a

general rule, was not utilised for specific conclusions; in fact, a new framework was devised (the

reconceptualisation of the ecological systems theory framework), yet the research design was

quantitative which leads to a poor partnership with an inductive approach. Therefore, the most

suitable approach for reasoning emerged as the abductive reasoning approach whereby the

observations of this study remain incomplete, yet the best prediction for the results will be made

and further research advised.

4.5.3. Summary of the Research Approach

The table below (Table 4.1) uses a variation of Crotty's (1998) technique to summarise the alternate

research approach that was applied to this research.

	Definition	**Selected**	**Rationale**
Theoretical Perspective	Philosophy that informs methodology	*Positivism* Recognising only that which can be verified by logical proof and can be validated.	For the current research, positivism made an appropriate fit as the facts and trends derived from the data become the contribution of this study.
Ontology	Beliefs about reality	*Realism* something is real and seen as a fact of the matter, based more on the data collected and less on intuition.	The current research's precipice is clearly on the ontology of realism as the researcher aims to decipher the *reality* of the role culture plays on the progression and performance of British Pakistani students.
Epistemology	Theory of knowledge	*Etic/Emic Hybrid* The obtained knowledge can be with the researcher on the outside (etic) or with the researcher present within the study (emic), as well as a hybrid (in this case).	The research is deemed of an etic view in epistemology because the researcher was not present for, and did not influence, the data set – making the researcher an outsider. The research may also be counted as of an emic view due to the fact that the researcher belongs to the same culture – giving the researcher an insider's view.
Reasoning	Structure of the argument set in the research	*Abductive* Logical inference from a set of observations, seeking the most obvious conclusion.	The most suitable approach for reasoning emerged as the abductive reasoning approach whereby the observations of this study remain incomplete, yet the best prediction for the results will be made and further research advised.

Table 4.1 Summary of the Research Approach using Crotty's table.

4.6.   Quantitative Research Designs

Hopkins (2008) explained that when implementing a quantitative research design, it is useful to look

at the main designs as part of a spectrum that ranges on how much control the researcher has on

the variables. The author highlighted that there are four main quantitative research designs in this

spectrum, stated in the figure below (Figure 4.3):

Types of Quantitative Research Designs

Variables not controlled, only observed   *Variables very closely controlled and manipulated*

| Descriptive Research | Correlational Research | Causal-Comparative/Quasi-Experimental Research | Experimental Research |

Figure 4.3 Types of Quantitative Research Designs

4.6.1. Descriptive Research

Bloomfield & Fisher (2019) explained that a descriptive research design in quantitative research focuses on exploring the current status of the independent variables and the dependent variables. Bloomfield & Fisher added that this type of research design is often used to deliver further systematic and descriptive information about a particular phenomenon.

In the descriptive research design, Hopkins (2008) highlighted that researchers do not typically start with a hypothesis, but are likely to develop one after they have completed data collection. Bloomfield & Fisher (2019) also noted that the hypothesis is then tested by analysing and synthesising the data collected, for which the variables studied are carefully selected and then, subsequently, carefully measured.

4.6.2. Correlational Research

Lowhorn (2007) explained that a correlational research design aims to understand and determine the scope of a relationship between two or more variables by using the statistical data collected. The author added that this type of design focuses on the relationship between multiples facts which are then interpreted. Bloomfield & Fisher (2019) noted that this type of research is useful for recognising patterns and trends in the data collected.

However, the correlational research design does not go as far to prove what the causes for the trends and patterns are, as the relationships, patterns, and trends are merely studied. Bloomfield & Fisher (2019) added that this is due to the fact that, in this research design, variables are not

manipulated, they are merely identified and then studied (or observed) as they occur in their natural environment.

4.6.3. Causal-Comparative/Quasi-Experimental Research

The third type of quantitative research design, known as the causal-comparative research or the quasi-experimental research, aims to determine a cause-and-effect relationship between the variables present (2019). Lowhorn (2007) added that such research designs bore several similarities to true experiments, albeit a few key differences.

In such a design, the independent is only identified, not manipulated, by the researcher; the researcher then studies how the dependent variables are affected by the independent variables. Lowhorn highlighted that in such quasi-experimental research, the groups are not randomly assigned by the researcher, rather the researcher uses the groups that form naturally or are pre-existing. Instead, the researcher identifies control groups exposed to the independent variable(s) and the those are studied against those groups which are not exposed to the independent variable(s).

4.6.4. Experimental Research

Bloomfield & Fisher (2019) explained that this class of quantitative research, also known as true experimentation, utilises scientific methods to steadfastly determine cause-and-effect relationship between an assortment of variables identified in the study. The authors noted that experimental research is often perceived as a laboratory study, however this is not always the case as experimental research can be carried out even without a laboratory setting.

Lowhorn (2007) added that an experiment research, or a true experiment, is any study where the research puts in the effort to identify and control independent variables, as well as manipulate it to determine its effects on the dependent variables. The subjects are also assigned randomly, instead of being only identified in a naturally occurring group.

## 4.7.	Chosen Design: Correlational Research

The current quantitative study follows a correlational research design, explained further in the

elements below. The design was deemed appropriate for this research study as it identifies at least

four variables that can be studied for correlational significance.

### 4.7.1.	Obtaining the Data Set

The data set used for this research was obtained from a university in North England, collating data

from the Applicant and Student Information System (ASIS). The data set features a record of nearly

35,000 students from the academic year 2002/2003, up until the academic year 2017/2018. The

data set was acquired via special permission from the university's managing body. As ASIS also

contains the personal information for all students and applicants in the university, there were special

considerations made to remove all identifying data (such as name and student ID number) from the

data set in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. This was conducted by the university's

ASIS department before the data set was handed over, as it was deemed safer that such data be

disposed-off by the department itself.

#### 4.7.1.1.	Cleaning the Data Set

Once the data set was obtained, a process for cleaning the data commenced in Microsoft Excel. The

initial categories in the data set included thirty-two columns that were only identifiable by their field

names (see Appendix 2). For example, the 'Reason for Withdrawal Code' column was titled as

'sce_rftc', and the 'Degree Classification' column was titled as 'cla2_code'. The first step in cleaning

up the data set was to rename all of the columns so as to make them easier to identify for the data

analysis (see Appendix 2).

The second step in cleaning the data set was to remove all columns that would not be deemed as

useful in the data analysis. As per the nature of the data set, each column for any point of

information was accompanied by a column for its corresponding code. For example, the column for

'Highest Qualification on Entry' was accompanied by 'Highest Qualification on Entry Code', and the

column for 'Ethnicity' was accompanied by 'Ethnicity Code'. The corresponding codes were mainly

put in place for internal use of the ASIS department and were, therefore, unnecessary for the

current purpose of the research. Therefore, all columns depicting codes in the date set were

removed.

The next step was to create groups in the column of 'Entry Tariff'. Three main categories with the

most entries were identified as: 110-130 entry tariff points, 210-230 entry tariff points, and 310-330

entry tariff points. These were also deemed as the average in each centennial category. The groups

were defined to allow for an analysis to be conducted of the entries in that group later on. Another

step taken here was to identify students as Commuters and Residents. This was conducted using the

IF function on Microsoft Excel. The formula was used on the two columns that indicated the 'Home

Postcode' and the 'Term Time Postcode' in the data set. If the postcodes in any row matched, they

would be labelled as commuters, and if they did not then it would be labelled as resident. The

configuration used for this formula was: =IF(A2=B2,"Commuter","Resident"). This formula was then

applied to all records, which gave way to a new column in the data set called 'Accommodation Type'.

Several other changes were also made to make it easier for the data analysis to be conducted. One

such change was to standardise the names of the ethnicities, as there were some instances where

there were discrepancies, such as both Brit-Pak and British Pakistani being used to depict the same

ethnicity. Also, all rows that contained any blank categories were also removed so that the missing

data does not affect the viability of the results.

4.7.1.2.   Pivot Tables

In order to make ease of the data analysis process, the feature of Pivot tables was used in Microsoft

Excel. Pivot tables allow for the calculation, summarisation, and analysis of the data in order to

compare the results, as well as identify trends and patterns in the data (Palocsay, Markham, &

Markham, 2010; Jelen & Alexander, 2018). The use of Pivot tables also gave an interactive view of

the cross-tabulation tables used in the Findings & Discussion chapter to display the results and the statistical outcomes (Jelen, 2011).

4.7.2. Use of Hypotheses: Null and Alternate

Anderson, Burnham, & Thompson (2000) defined null hypothesis as a statistical statement that represents no difference between any number of population parameters of interest (denoted as a H_0), whereas the alternate hypothesis is represents a unidirectional of bidirectional difference between the population parameters (denoted as H_1). Anderson, Burnham, & Thompson added that both null and alternate hypotheses correspond to different models, meaning that when two groups of interest are being compared, the researcher assumes that thesis come from the same population so that difference between their actual means is 0.

The process of testing the null hypothesis is known by several names, such as significance testing, null hypothesis testing, and null hypothesis significance testing (Royall, 1997). In this procedure, a test statistic is used from the sample data and then compared to the hypothesised null distribution to assess how consistent the data is with the stated hypothesis. Anderson, Burnham, & Thompson (2000) noted that before the statistical testing, and "substantially arbitrary level" (p. 912) is set which acts as a cut-off and is known as the alpha value (denoted as a-value). The alpha value acts a basis for the decision when deciding whether the results from the statistical testing are statistically significant or statistically non-significance. Royall (1997) added that this process is hybrid of Fisher's (1928) technique for significance testing and Neyman & Pearson's (1933) technique for hypotheses testing.

Masson (2011) noted that null-hypothesis significance testing remains one of the most used standard inferential tools in social sciences, with researchers such as Krueger (2001) and Nickerson (2000) delving into many debates in the method's defence. Nonetheless, there are some disadvantages of using null-hypothesis testing, with Masson (2011) suggesting that the most

prominent one being that it does not provide the full picture to the researchers. However, it still remains the most used methods of statistical inference in many studies.

The full set of null and alternate hypotheses utilised in the current research are stated in the Table 4.2 below:

Theme	Null Hypothesis (H_0)	Alternate Hypothesis (H_1)
Progression Status	H_0: The progression and non-progression rate of British Pakistani students is equivalent to the progression and non-progression rate of White students	H_1: The progression and non-progression rate of British Pakistani students is *not* equivalent to the progression and non-progression rate of White students.
Non-Progression with Accommodation Type	H_0: The proportion of British Pakistani commuter students who do not progress is equal to the proportion of White commuter students who do not progress.	H_1: The proportion of British Pakistani commuter students who do not progress is *greater* than the proportion of White commuter students who do not progress.
Performance of British Pakistani Students	H_0: The distribution of degree classifications in British Pakistani students is equivalent to the distribution of degree classifications in White students, when both groups enter the university with the same number of entry tariff points.	H_1: The distribution of degree classifications in British Pakistani students is *not* equivalent to the distribution of degree classifications in White students, when both groups enter the university with the same number of entry tariff points.

Table 4.2 The full set of null and alternate hypotheses utilised in the current research.

4.7.3. Variables Included in the Research

When studying the cause-and-effect relationship in a correlational research design, it is important to distinguish between the independent and dependent variables in the study. This not only aides the process of Chi-square testing, but also makes it easier to understand the dependency (or lack of) from the analysis's results.

4.7.3.1. Independent Variables

MacKenzie (2007) stated that independent variables are the cause in the cause-and-effect relationship being studied. A more prosaic explanation for their name is that they are 'independent' of the participants and controlled by the researcher.

In the current research study, there are two main independent variables are identified in the table below (Table 4.3):

Variable	Stated	Defined
Independent Variable 1 (IV$_1$)	Ethnicity	In this research, ethnicity is defined as the state of belonging to a social or ethnic group. The two ethnicities used in this research, for comparison, are White and British Pakistani.
Independent Variable 2 (IV$_2$)	Accommodation Type	In this research, accommodation type is defined as the classification as to whether the students live in a hall of residence (noted as Resident) or in their family home (noted as Commuter).

Table 4.3 Independent variables for the current research.

Both of the independent variables identified were utilised to study their relation to the dependent variables (explained in the next section). The reason why this study is deemed as a correlational research design is pertaining to the fact that both of these independent variables naturally occurred in the data set, and were merely observed by the researcher instead of being manipulated; this is based on the definition of the correlational research deign provided by Bloomfield & Fisher (2019).

For the current research, the independent variable of Accommodation Type acts a gateway for studying British Pakistani students' culture (Shaw, 1994; 2014; Din, 2012) and the effects it has on their performance and progression in U.K.'s higher education.

4.7.3.2.   Dependent Variables

MacKenzie (2007) explained that the dependent variable is the phenomenon being monitored and is scrutinised to see how dependent is on the independent variable.

The main dependent variables in this research are defined in the table below (Table 4.4):

Variable	Stated	Defined
Dependent Variable 1 (DV$_1$)	Progression	Progression, in this research, is defined as the action of continuing university studies in the following academic year.
Dependent Variable 2 (DV$_2$)	Performance	Performance, in this research, is defined as the degree classification received by a student at the end of their university programme. These classifications are: First Class (1ST) – final grade is $\leq$ 70% Upper Second Class (2:1) – final grade is between 60% – 69% Lower Second Class (2:2) – final grade is between 50% – 59% Third Class (3RD) – final grade is between 40% – 49%

Table 4.4 Dependent variables in the current research.

4.7.4. Pearson's Chi-square Test for Independence

Howell (2011) explained that Pearson's Chi-square test, often known as the 'goodness of fit' or just Chi-square test, is a statistical analysis intended to understand how likely it is that a set of observed values are due to a coincidence or chance. Howell added this stems from Karl Pearson's paper on the subject in the 1900s.

Ling (2008) noted that a Chi-square test is essentially designed to analyse categorical data, not parametric or continuous data. The categories should be carefully constructed as the results of the tests can vary depending on how you categorise the data. This is where a limitation of this statistical technique comes up, as the test cannot point out if the categories you have constructed are meaningful or not. It is important the categories constructed should make sense to the researcher(s) of the study as they are ones in control of organising the data. Ling (2008) further explained that the Chi-square test can also be used to test the null hypothesis by finding out if the variables (categories) are independent of each other and to what degree. In this Chi-square test of independence, the observed values are compared to expected values; this research study uses the Chi-square test of independence to identify whether there is a significant relationship between the variables identified.

The mathematical formula for the Chi-square test is as following (Equation 1):

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

x^2 = chi-squared
O_i = observed value
E_i = expected value

Equation 1. Chi-Square Test Equation

Satorra and Bentler (2001) explained that relationship in Chi-square formula denote the relationships that have been discussed above, especially when talking about observed values and expected values. The O in O_i stands for observed values, whereas the E in E_i stands for expected values; the subtracted of the former from the later gives you the 'residual' value. The square of the residual value is calculated to eliminate any negative values. Satorra and Bentler then stated that the squared value is divided by the expected frequency and then, using the sigma in front of the equation, add all the value together as this process is carried out for all the values in the table. The final answer, combined with the degrees if freedom (i.e., number of categories minus 1) gives the researcher the *p*-value.

Satorra and Bentler (2001) added that the *p*-value is then compared to the chosen *a*-value, which is set by the researcher at the start of the process. A *p*-value lower than the *a*-value indicates that there is significant dependency between the variables identified in the test itself. This lower *p*-value renders the null hypothesis rejected and nullified, making the alternate hypothesis true and accurate. Ling (2008) gave the example that if the Chi-square test for independence gave the *p*-value of 0.0355, while the *a*-value was set at 0.05, that means that there is a 3.6% chance that the null hypothesis is correct. It can also be interpreted as that there is a 3.6% chance of the researcher finding a discrepancy between the observed values and the expected values. Therefore, the higher the *p*-value, the higher the chance of discrepancies in the data and the trends being due to chance.

Franke, Ho, & Christie (2012), however, stated a warning that it is important to understand the limitations of the Chi-square test for independence. The authors explained that although the Chi-square test is useful for calculating the probability of independence between variables, it does not

give any details about the relationship between these variables. It proves that two variables are related, and then other methods can be used to further define the relationship between the variables.

Despite this main limitation, Sharpe (2015) stated that Chi-square testing remains one of the most use statistical analysis, as both good-of-fit test and test of independence. Bakker & Wicherts (2011) reported that 642 Chi-square tests were reported on average from six prominent social sciences journals per year. Sharpe (2015) noted that, despite researchers now opting newer non-parametric statistical analyses, Chi-square tests "remain important and useful methods for applied researchers seeking to evaluate categorical data" (p. 8).

In the current research, the Chi-square test for independence was applied on the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. This was done to identify whether the statistics gained from the data set showed a high level of dependence between the variables, and if the probability of getting discrepancies in the data set was low.

4.8.   Impact of Covid-19

Like many aspects of everyday life, this study has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This section aims to explain the multiple aspects that were affected by the pandemic, and the limitations they caused.

4.8.1.   First Limitation

The first impact of the pandemic was on the methodology itself. Initially, the plan for the research was to execute a mixed-method approach. In the proposed approach, a Sequential Explanatory Design was to be followed (Figure 4.4):

| Quantitative *(Archival Data)* | → | Qualitative (*Interviews*) | → | Interpretation based on Quan + Qual results |
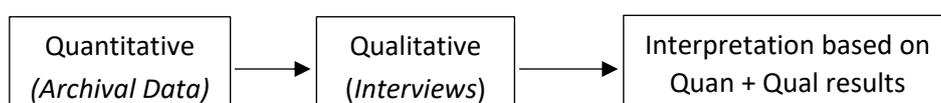
Figure 4.4 Sequential Explanatory Design in mixed methods research.

Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick (2006) explained that the Sequential Explanatory Design is considered quite popular amongst researchers and consists of "collecting and analysing first quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study" (p. 4). . The Sequential Explanatory Design is well expanded upon at several points in the research methodology literature, notably by Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998), Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson (2003), and Creswell & Plano Clark (2007), with its application in social and behavioural sciences explored by Kinnick & Kempner (1988), Ceci (1991), Klassen & Burnaby (1993), Janz, Zimmerman, Wren, Israel, Freudenberg, & Carter (1996), and Lamont, Brunero, Lyons, Foster, & Perry (2014). Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick (2006) added that the rationale behind the use Sequential Explanatory Design is to first collect numerical data in order to establish the context (as well as extent) of the issue being researched, and then apply qualitative data collection and analysis to explore the "participants' views in more depth" (p. 5). For the proposed research, the quantitative phase of data analysis was to be aided by archival data, whereas the qualitative phase of the research would use interviews.

However, it became imminently impossible to conduct interviews during the lockdown period in the U.K., from May 2020 up until October 2020. It was suggested by supervisors that I conduct virtual interviews with the British Pakistani students (who were to be the main participants of the interviews), but that would not have been viable for the current research. Due to the nature of the questions that would have been asked, it was important that the British Pakistani students feel comfortable in the environment in which they are answering questions. This was pertaining to the fact that there would be questions about their parents' perception of higher education, family culture, restrictions on socialisation, and other topics that may be deemed as sensitive when discussed with family around. Through research, it was abundantly clear that the answers received from the British Pakistani students may not be as open or honest with the presence of their family in that same environment. Similar precautions were taken by Din (2012) during his research on the British Pakistani community in Bradford; the author had added that he had to separately interview

the British Pakistani youth in order to get detailed and honest answers, as well as to make the participants comfortable.

4.8.2. Second Limitation

Another issue was of access to potential participants. During the pre-pandemic era, the northern university would be an easy location to retain multiple participants for such a study. However, with the campus being closed and all teaching moved online, it was nearly impossible to recruit participants for the proposed Stage II of the study. The recruitment was mainly aided by emails sent to entire student population, with only three students initially showing interest, and then later retrieving it. A reward strategy was also applied, where each participant would be given a £10 Amazon voucher, but even that did not improve the interest in the study. Ultimately, the decision was made to continue and finish the research with the archival data set with the interviews being omitted, and the in-length interviews were added as a suggestion for further research.

Chapter 5: Findings & Discussion

5.1.   Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the data collected over the sixteen-year period, from the academic year 2002/2003 to the academic year 2016/2017, in a northern University in England. The findings and discussions are divided into four sections. The first section provides the demographic and systematic information of the data that was collected, describing the nature of the cohorts. The second section focuses on the progression trends of British Pakistani students in the data collected, with an explanation of the analysis conducted and a discussion on the results acquired, as well as a comparison to White students. The third section is similar to section two, but with a focus on the performance of British Pakistani students. Both section two and section three incorporate the independent variables of the commuter/resident factor as a representative of the students' culture. The final section of this chapter concentrates on the limitations of this study, discussing *force majeure* circumstances and their implications.

Once again, the aims the entire research remain at the centre of the chapter and considered paramount to the results identified. The main research aim, that is to critically assess the performance, integration, and progression of British Pakistani commuter students in U.K.'s higher education, feeds into the two main themes of the results discussed in this chapter, as well as in the significance of those results.

5.2.   Descriptive Results and Sample Statistics

In order to understand the findings of the research, it is important to establish the nature of the student population in the sample being studied. The entire sample consisted of 35,000 students, out of which 30,937 were classified as Home students and, therefore, became part of the population studied.

Ethnicity	% of sample	Count of Ethnicity
British - Arab	2.07%	641
British - Bangladeshi	1.39%	430
British - Indian	4.22%	1,306
Black British - Other	0.53%	163
Black British - African	4.29%	1,326
Black British - Caribbean	1.19%	369
British - Pakistani	15.13%	4,681
British - Chinese	2.21%	685
White	68.97%	21,336
Grand Total	100.00%	30,937

Table 5.1 Distribution of ethnicities in the data set

Table 5.1 displays the multiple ethnicities present in the sample. It should be noted that the White students make up the majority of the population, and the largest ethnic minority group to emerge is the British Pakistani students at 15.13%. This demographic is generally representative of the University's student population, as well the regional population in West Yorkshire; statistics published by the Office for National Statistics (2020) stated that 20.1% of the U.K's British Pakistani population resided in the Yorkshire and Humber region. However, it is difficult to seek out statistics from other reliable sources as the ethnicities of Arab, Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, & Chinese are all categorised under the umbrella of Asian, a notion that is the off shoot of the same issue that embodies the term BAME.

 From this wider sample, the analysis was conducted on the White students' and the British Pakistani students' data (referred to as focused sample from now onwards) as the two groups were compared for progression and performance in U.K.'s higher education. Table 5.2 displays the count for the sample when only White students and British Pakistani students are included, bringing it to 26,017 students altogether. The focused sample represents 84.09% of the wider sample.

Ethnicity	Count of Ethnicity
British Pakistani	4,681
White	21,336
Grand Total	26017

Table 5.2 Focused sample count when only White students and British Pakistani students are included.

The wider sample showed an almost equal split in the distribution of gender, with the grand figure being 48.74% female students and 51.26% male students. Figure 5.1 displays the split between the genders in each ethnicity.
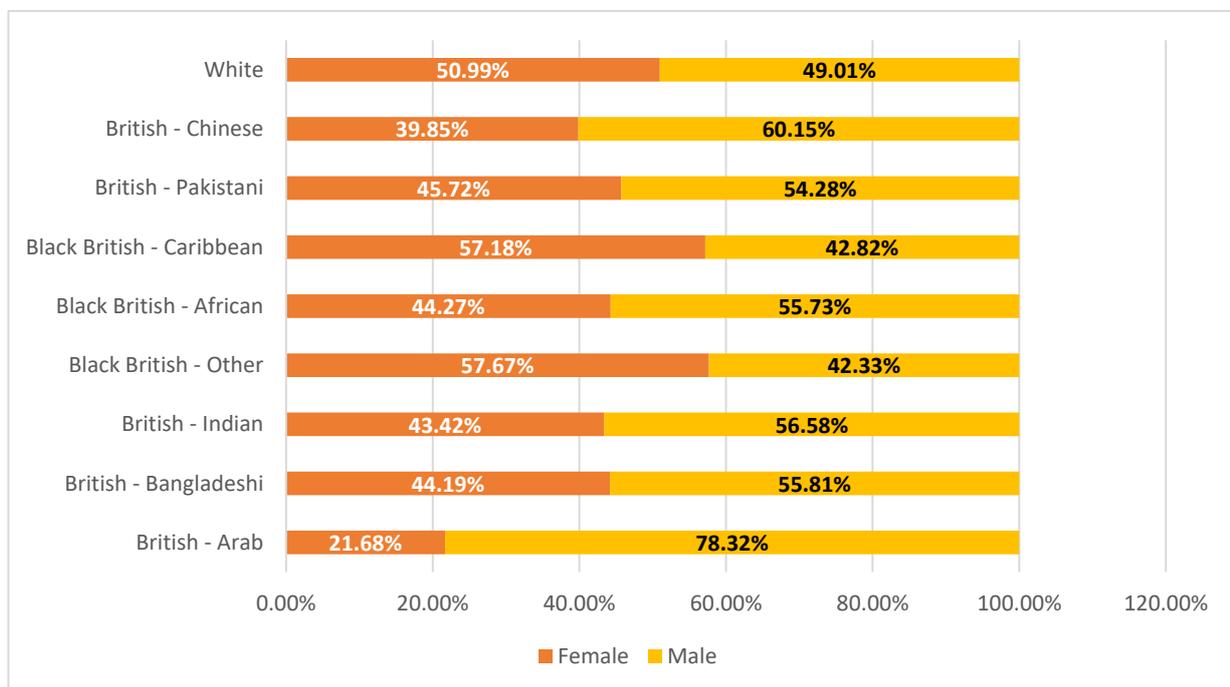
Figure 5.1 Percentage of male and female students in each ethnicity.

The turbulent trend can be observed in the British-Chinese and British-Arab categories; however, it was deemed insignificant as those categories were discarded from the focused sample.

A substantial part of the research is to study the consequence of the commuter/resident factor in White students and in British Pakistani students. For this, Figure 5.2 displays the commuter/resident split in the wider sample.
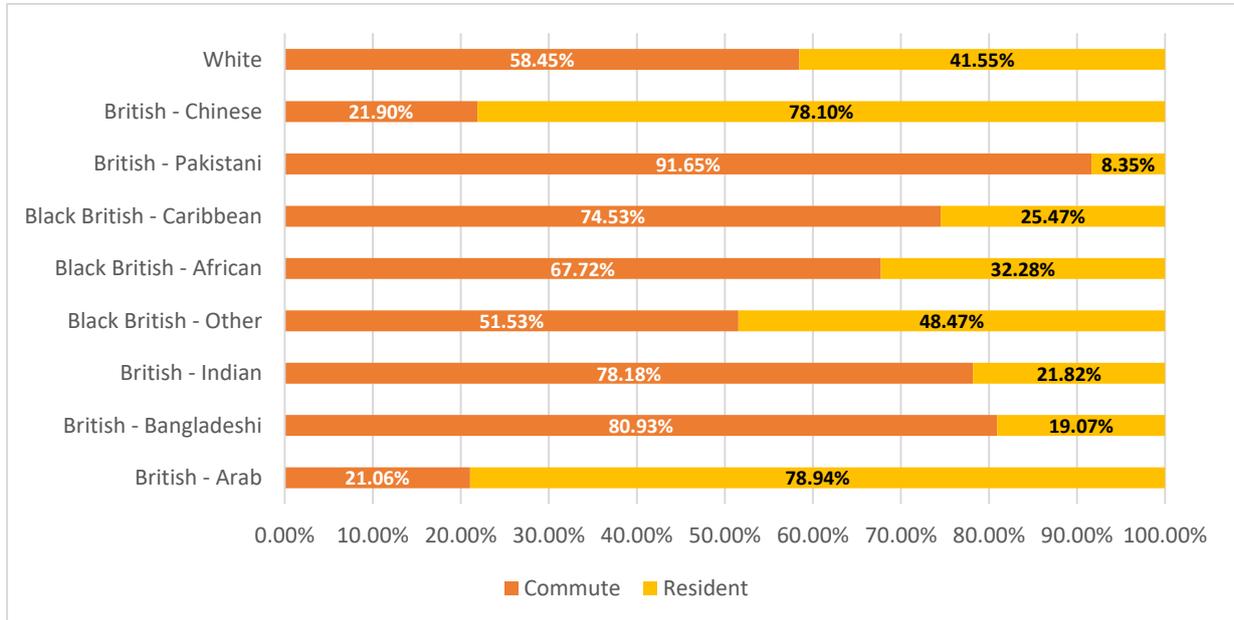
Figure 5.2 Percentage of commuter and resident students in each ethnicity.

The focused sample's commuter/resident split is displayed in Figure 5.4 and Figure 5.3 below.
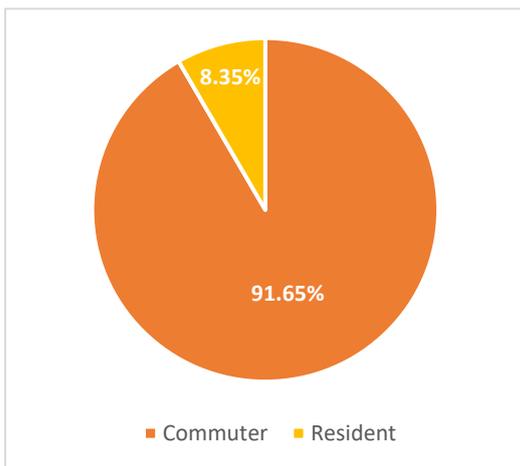
Figure 5.4 Percentage of commuter and resident British Pakistani students.
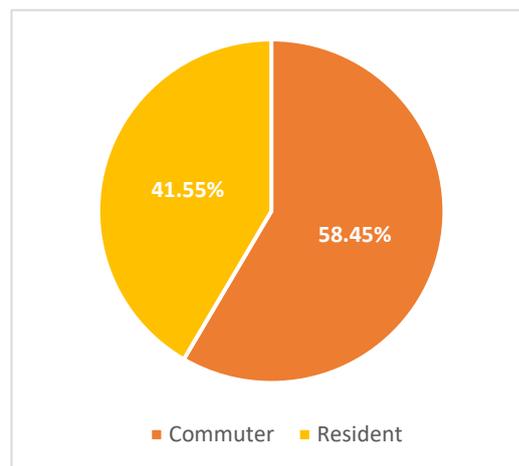
Figure 5.3 Percentage of commuter and resident White students.

To find the validity of the commuter/resident split in the sample for British Pakistani students and the White students was tested using the chi-square test if the statistics were by chance or were representative of the actual population in the University. The following null hypothesis and alternate hypothesis were generated before the test:

H_0: The proportion of British Pakistani commuter students is equal to the proportion of White commuter students.

H_1: The proportion of British Pakistani commuter students is not equal to the proportion of White commuter students.

The results for the chi-square test are explained below in Table 5.3:

Statistic	Value	Meaning
Significance Level (*a*-value)	0.05	The p-value should be <0.05 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Probability (*p*-value)	0.000001	As the p-value of the test is significantly lower than the a-value set, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.
Degrees of Freedom (*df*)	1	Calculated by the formula: $(r-1)(c-1)$ (r = total rows; c = total columns)
Chi-square Critical Value (*v*)	3.841	Calculated from the chi-square distribution table. The chi-square test value should be >3.841 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Test Statistic	23.92	As the chi-square test statistic is significantly above the chi-square critical value from the distribution table, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.

Table 5.3 Chi-square test results for commuter/resident split in White and British Pakistani students.

The penultimate descriptive result from the analysis is the distribution of the wider sample according to the academic schools of the University. The overall data collected was from: school of applied sciences; school of art, design, and architecture; business school; school of computing and engineering; school of human and health sciences; the school of music, humanities, and media. Figure 5.5 demonstrates the split of students from the wider sample between the six academic schools.
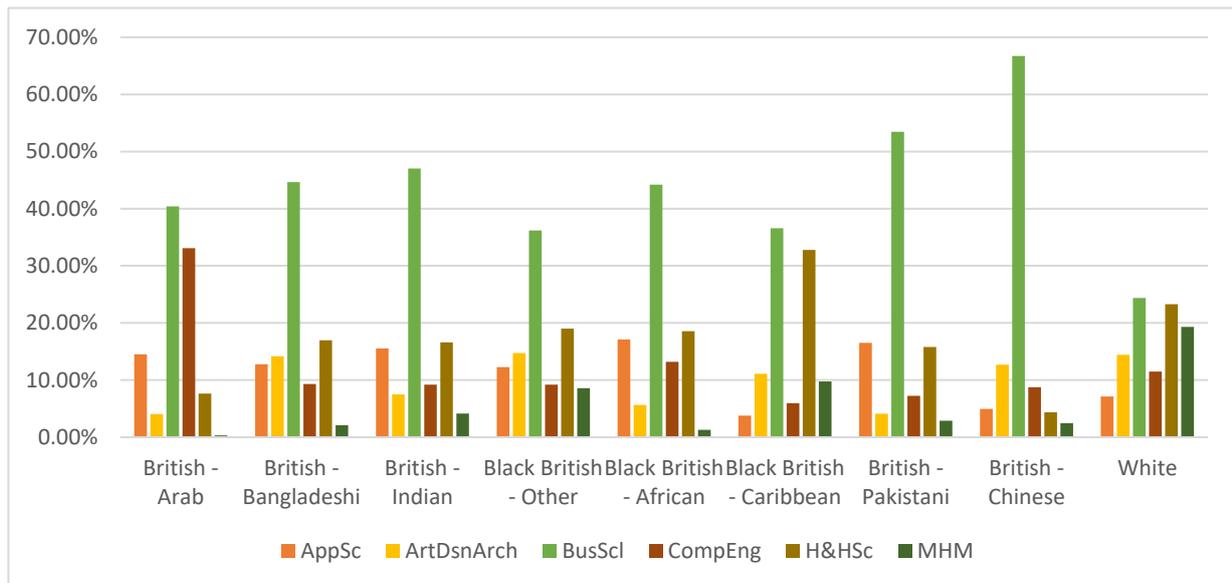
Figure 5.5 The percentage of students from the wider sample between the six academic schools.

Below, Figure 5.6 displays the academic school split for the focused sample.
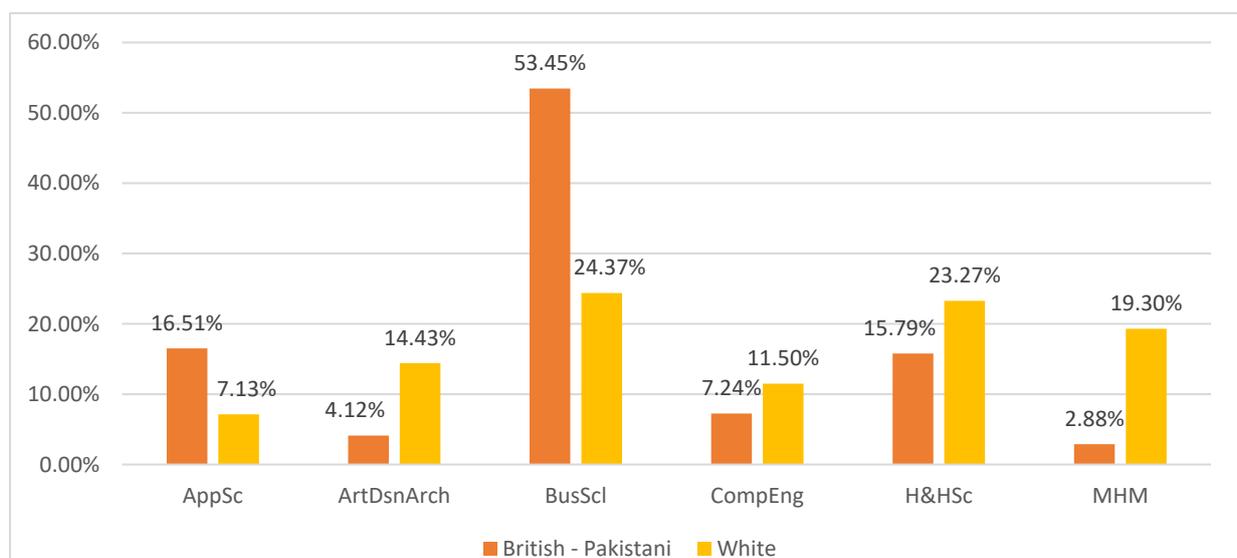
Figure 5.6 The percentage of White and British Pakistani students between the six academic schools.

The final descriptive result from the wider sample aims to amplify the significance of British Pakistani students as a minority. Figure 5.7 identifies the percentage of minorities in the sample, highlighting British Pakistani students as the largest minority in the sample.
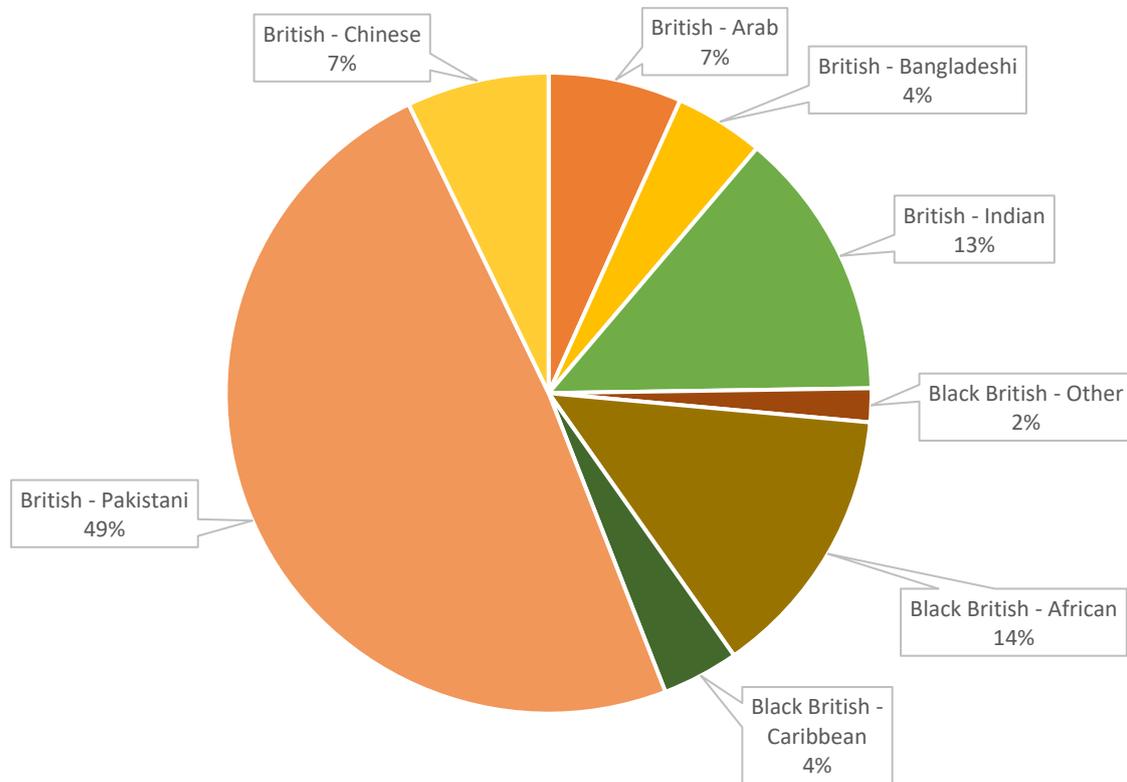
Figure 5.7 Percentage split of ethnic minorities in the wider sample.

5.3. Pearson's Chi-Square Test for Independence

In order to conduct the chi-square test, it is important to highlight two key aspects of the calculation. The first aspect is the concept of degrees of freedom (*df value*), which is calculated using the following using the formula: $(r-1)(c-1)$ (r = total rows; c = total columns).

For the current data set, the *df* value was calculated to be 1 for the analysis of student progression, whereas the *df* value was calculated to be 4 for the analysis of student performance.

The next aspect of the chi-square important to note is the significance level, or the *a*-value. The *a*-value for the current study was set at 0.05. This means that when the *p*-value is calculated, it should be below the *a*-value of 0.05 to considered significant and for the null hypotheses to be rejected.

These two aspects of the chi-square test are then used to identify the chi-square critical value (v)

from the distribution table (Table 5.4) given below:

df	0.99	0.98	0.95	0.90	0.80	0.70	Probability 0.50	0.30	0.20	0.10	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.001
1	0.0^3157	0.0^3628	0.00393	0.0158	0.0642	0.148	0.455	1.074	1.642	2.706	3.841	5.412	6.635	10.827
2	0.0201	0.0404	0.103	0.211	0.446	0.713	1.386	2.408	3.219	4.605	5.991	7.824	9.210	13.815
3	0.115	0.185	0.352	0.584	1.005	1.424	2.366	3.665	4.642	6.251	7.815	9.837	11.345	16.266
4	0.297	0.429	0.711	1.064	1.649	2.195	3.357	4.878	5.989	7.779	9.488	11.668	13.277	18.467
5	0.554	0.752	1.145	1.610	2.343	3.000	4.351	6.064	7.289	9.236	11.070	13.388	15.086	20.515
6	0.872	1.134	1.635	2.204	3.070	3.828	5.348	7.231	8.558	10.645	12.592	15.033	16.812	22.457
7	1.239	1.564	2.167	2.833	3.822	4.671	6.346	8.383	9.803	12.017	14.067	16.622	18.475	24.322
8	1.646	2.032	2.733	3.490	4.594	5.527	7.344	9.524	11.030	13.362	15.507	18.168	20.090	26.125
9	2.088	2.532	3.325	4.168	5.380	6.393	8.343	10.656	12.242	14.684	16.919	19.679	21.666	27.877
10	2.558	3.059	3.940	4.865	6.179	7.267	9.342	11.781	13.442	15.987	18.307	21.161	23.209	29.588
11	3.053	3.609	4.575	5.578	6.989	8.148	10.341	12.899	14.631	17.275	19.675	22.618	24.725	31.264
12	3.571	4.178	5.226	6.304	7.807	9.034	11.340	14.011	15.812	18.549	21.026	24.054	26.217	32.909
13	4.107	4.765	5.892	7.042	8.634	9.926	12.340	15.119	16.985	19.812	22.362	25.472	27.688	34.528
14	4.660	5.368	6.571	7.790	9.467	10.821	13.339	16.222	18.151	21.064	23.685	26.873	29.141	36.123
15	5.229	5.985	7.261	8.547	10.307	11.721	14.339	17.322	19.311	22.307	24.996	28.259	30.578	37.697
16	5.812	6.614	7.962	9.312	11.152	12.624	15.338	18.418	20.465	23.542	26.296	29.633	32.000	39.252
17	6.408	7.255	8.672	10.085	12.002	13.531	16.338	19.511	21.615	24.769	27.587	30.995	33.409	40.790
18	7.015	7.906	9.390	10.865	12.857	14.440	17.338	20.601	22.760	25.989	28.869	32.346	34.805	42.312
19	7.633	8.567	10.117	11.651	13.716	15.352	18.338	21.689	23.900	27.204	30.144	33.687	36.191	43.820
20	8.260	9.237	10.851	12.443	14.578	16.266	19.337	22.775	25.038	28.412	31.410	35.020	37.566	45.315

Table 5.4 Distribution table for the chi-square critical values.

The chi-square test statistic, calculated using the MS Excel function of =CHISQ.INV.RT, should be

above the identified critical value of the chi-square test. The chi-square test statistic being greater

than the critical value allows for the null hypothesis to be rejected and for the alternate hypothesis

to be considered true and valid.

To summarise, the following statistics are set for the chi-square tests to be conducted and measured

against (Table 5.5):

Statistic	Value	Meaning
Significance Level (*a*-value)	0.05	The p-value should be <0.05 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Degrees of Freedom (*df*)	1	Calculated by the formula: $(r-1)(c-1)$ (r = total rows; c = total columns)
Chi-square Critical Value (*v*)	3.841	Calculated from the chi-square distribution table. The chi-square test value should be >3.841 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.

Table 5.5 Statistical values set for the chi-square tests to be conducted and measured against.

5.4. Progression of British Pakistani Students

The analysis of the progression status led to the emergence of two main statistical derivations from the data set. The first one focuses on the progression and non-progression of British Pakistani students with the added dimension of Commuter/Resident. The second statistical set focuses on the students under the non-progression category and highlighting how the dimension of Commuter/Resident affects these results.

5.4.1. Progression Status

The Table 5.6 below displays the cross-tabulation between the ethnicity and progression status of the focused sample, specifically noting the progression and non-progression rates.

	Progression Status		
Ethnicity	*Not Progress*	*Progress*	*Grand Total*
British - Pakistani	865	3234	4099
White	3168	15956	19124
Grand Total	4033	19190	23223
	Progression Status		
Ethnicity	*Not Progress*	*Progress*	*Grand Total*
British - Pakistani	21.10%	78.90%	100.00%
White	16.57%	83.43%	100.00%
Grand Total	17.37%	82.63%	100.00%

Table 5.6 Contingency table displaying the cross-tabulation between the ethnicity and progression status of the focused sample.

The null and alternate hypotheses for the progression status of the focused sample are:

H_0: The progression and non-progression rate of British Pakistani students is equivalent to the progression and non-progression rate of White students.

H_1: The progression and non-progression rate of British Pakistani students is *not* equivalent to the progression and non-progression rate of White students.

The results for the chi-square test are explained below in Table 5.7:

Statistic	Value	Meaning
Significance Level (*a*-value)	0.05	The *p*-value should be <0.05 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Probability (*p*-value)	0.00000000000344	As the *p*-value of the test is significantly lower than the *a*-value set, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.
Degrees of Freedom (*df*)	1	Calculated by the formula: $(r-1)(c-1)$ (r = total no. of rows; c = total no. of columns)
Chi-square Critical Value (*v*)	3.841	Calculated from the chi-square distribution table. The chi-square test value should be >3.841 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Test Statistic	48.42	As the chi-square test statistic is significantly above the chi-square critical value from the distribution table, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.

Table 5.7 Chi-square test results for ethnicity and progression status of the focused sample.

5.4.2. Non-Progression with Accommodation Type

The non-progression rate of the British Pakistani students and white students was also studied with

the classification of commuter and resident. Table 5.8 displays the cross-tabulation of non-

progression rates between ethnicity and accommodation:

	Accommodation Status of Non-Progressors		
Ethnicity	*Commuter*	*Resident*	*Grand Total*
British - Pakistani	91.68%	8.32%	100.00%
White	65.34%	34.66%	100.00%
Grand Total	70.99%	29.01%	100.00%
	Accommodation Status of Non-Progressors		
Ethnicity	*Commuter*	*Resident*	*Grand Total*
British - Pakistani	793	72	865
White	2070	1098	3168
Grand Total	2863	1170	4033

Table 5.8 Contingency table displaying the cross-tabulation of non-progression rates between ethnicity and accommodation for the focused sample.

The null and alternate hypotheses for the non-progression rates of the focused sample with accommodation status are:

H_0: The proportion of British Pakistani commuter students who do not progress is equal to the proportion of White commuter students who do not progress.

H_1: The proportion of British Pakistani commuter students who do not progress is *greater* than the proportion of White commuter students who do not progress.

The results for the chi-square test are explained below in Table 5.9:

Statistic	Value	Meaning
Significance Level (*a*-value)	0.05	The *p*-value should be <0.05 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Probability (*p*-value)	1.076E-5	As the *p*-value of the test is significantly lower than the *a*-value set, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.
Degrees of Freedom (*df*)	1	Calculated by the formula: $(r - 1)(c - 1)$ (r = total no. of rows; c = total no. of columns)
Chi-square Critical Value (*v*)	3.841	Calculated from the chi-square distribution table. The chi-square test value should be >3.841 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Test Statistic	228.82	As the chi-square test statistic is significantly above the chi-square critical value from the distribution table, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.

Table 5.9 Chi-square test results for non-progression rates between ethnicity and accommodation for the focused sample.

5.5. Performance of British Pakistani Students

The analysis of the performance of British Pakistani students was conducted with the use entry tariff points in the data. The points were divided into three main categories of: 110 – 130 points, 210 – 230 points, and 310 – 330 points. These thresholds were chosen to accommodate the majority distribution of the points in the data set.

The null and alternate hypotheses set for the performance of British Pakistani students were set as following:

H_0: The distribution of degree classifications in British Pakistani students is equivalent to the distribution of degree classifications in White students, when both groups enter the university with the same number of entry tariff points.

H_1: The distribution of degree classifications in British Pakistani students is *not* equivalent to the distribution of degree classifications in White students, when both groups enter the university with the same number of entry tariff points.

5.5.1. Entry Tariff Group: 110 – 130 points

Table 5.10 displays percentage distribution of the degree classifications attained by British Pakistani students and White students under the entry tariff of 110 – 130 points:

	Degree Classification Status					
Ethnicity	1ST	2:1	2:2	3RD	ORD	Grand Total
British - Pakistani	0%	13%	58%	29%	0%	100%
White	13%	36%	36%	8%	7%	100%
Grand Total	10%	29%	42%	14%	5%	100%

Table 5.10 Percentage distribution of the degree classifications attained by the focused sample under the entry tariff of 110 – 130 points.

The distribution of the degree classification in this entry tariff group is also displayed as a bar graph below in Figure 5.8:
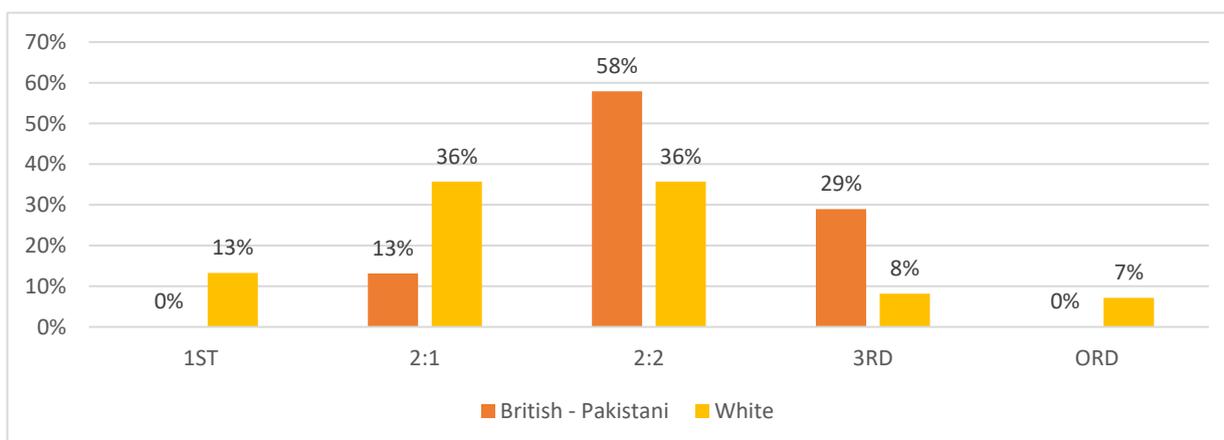
Figure 5.8 Percentage distribution of the degree classifications attained by the focused sample under the entry tariff of 110 – 130 points.

The results for the chi-square test are explained below in Table 5.11:

Statistic	Value	Meaning
Significance Level (*a*-value)	0.05	The *p*-value should be <0.05 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Probability (*p*-value)	0.000948189	As the *p*-value of the test is significantly lower than the *a*-value set, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.
Degrees of Freedom (*df*)	4	Calculated by the formula: $(r-1)(c-1)$ (r = total no. of rows; c = total no. of columns)
Chi-square Critical Value (*v*)	9.488	Calculated from the chi-square distribution table. The chi-square test value should be >3.841 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Test Statistic	18.58	As the chi-square test statistic is significantly above the chi-square critical value from the distribution table, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.

Table 5.11 Chi-square test results for the distribution of the degree classifications attained by the focused sample under the entry tariff of 110 – 130 points.

5.5.2. Entry Tariff Group: 210 – 230 points

Table 5.12 displays the cross-tabulation of the degree classifications attained by British Pakistani

students and White students under the entry tariff of 210 – 230 points:

Degree Classification Status						
Ethnicity	*1ST*	*2:1*	*2:2*	*3RD*	*ORD*	*Grand Total*
British - Pakistani	8%	28%	47%	14%	3%	100%
White	12%	48%	35%	2%	4%	100%
Grand Total	11%	42%	38%	5%	3%	100%

Table 5.12 Percentage distribution of the degree classifications attained by the focused sample under the entry tariff of 210 – 230 points.

The distribution of the degree classification in this entry tariff group is also displayed as a bar graph below in Figure 5.9:
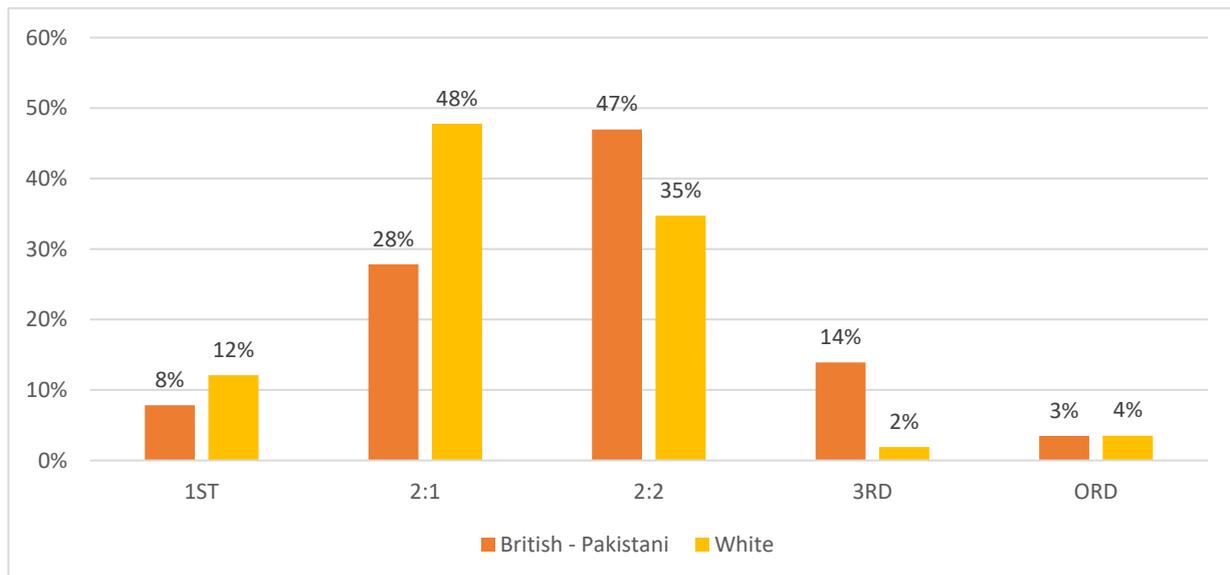
Figure 5.9 Percentage distribution of the degree classifications attained by the focused sample under the entry tariff of 210 – 230 points.

The results for the chi-square test are explained below in Table 5.13:

Statistic	Value	Meaning
Significance Level (*a*-value)	0.05	The *p*-value should be <0.05 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Probability (*p*-value)	0.000000256	As the *p*-value of the test is significantly lower than the *a*-value set, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.
Degrees of Freedom (*df*)	4	Calculated by the formula: $(r-1)(c-1)$ (r = total no. of rows; c = total no. of columns)
Chi-square Critical Value (*v*)	9.488	Calculated from the chi-square distribution table. The chi-square test value should be >3.841 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Test Statistic	36.26	As the chi-square test statistic is significantly above the chi-square critical value from the distribution table, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.

Table 5.13 Chi-square test results for the distribution of the degree classifications attained by the focused sample under the entry tariff of 210 – 230 points.

5.5.3. Entry Tariff Group: 310 – 330 points

Table 5.14 displays the cross-tabulation of the degree classifications attained by British Pakistani students and White students under the entry tariff of 310 – 330 points:

	Degree Classification Status					
Ethnicity	*1ST*	*2:1*	*2:2*	*3RD*	*ORD*	*Grand Total*
British - Pakistani	15%	46%	36%	2%	1%	100%
White	28%	49%	22%	1%	0%	100%
Grand Total	25%	49%	24%	1%	1%	100%

Table 5.14 Percentage distribution of the degree classifications attained by the focused sample under the entry tariff of 310 – 330 points.

The distribution of the degree classification in this entry tariff group is also displayed as a bar graph below in Figure 5.10:
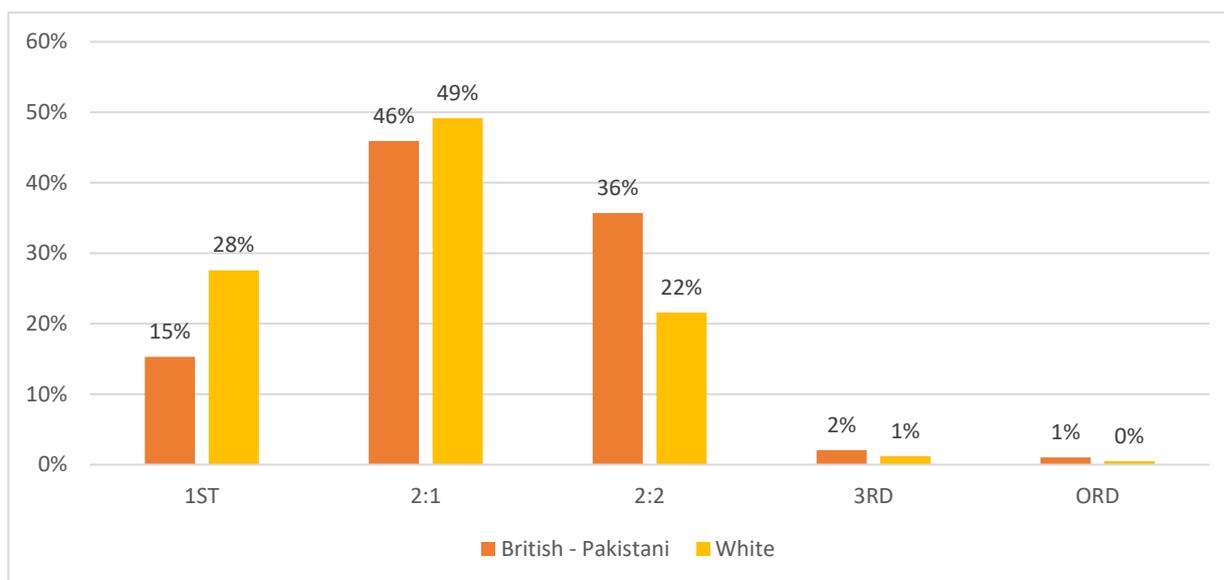

Figure 5.10 Percentage distribution of the degree classifications attained by the focused sample under the entry tariff of 310 – 330 points.

The results for the chi-square test are explained below in Table 5.*15*:

Statistic	Value	Meaning
Significance Level (*a*-value)	0.05	The p-value should be <0.05 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Probability (*p*-value)	0.015607569	As the p-value of the test is significantly lower than the a-value set, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.
Degrees of Freedom (*df*)	4	Calculated by the formula: $(r-1)(c-1)$ (r = total no. of rows; c = total no. of columns)
Chi-square Critical Value (*v*)	9.488	Calculated from the chi-square distribution table. The chi-square test value should be >3.841 for null hypothesis to be rejected and alternate hypothesis to be accepted as valid.
Chi-square Test Statistic	12.24	As the chi-square test statistic is significantly above the chi-square critical value from the distribution table, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted as true and accurate.

Table 5.15 *Chi-square test results for the distribution of the degree classifications attained by the focused sample under the entry tariff of 310 – 330 points.*

5.6.   Summary of the Results

Table 5.16 briefly summarises the results of the data analysis:

Theme	Null Hypothesis	Alternate Hypothesis	Chi-Square *p*-value	Significance Level *a*-value	Conclusion	Research Objectives Fulfilled
Progression Status	H$_0$: The progression and non-progression rate of British Pakistani students is equivalent to the progression and non-progression rate of White students	H$_1$: The progression and non-progression rate of British Pakistani students is *not* equivalent to the progression and non-progression rate of White students.	0.00000000000344	< 0.05	The p-value for the chi-square test for independence is below the a-value set at 0.05, and the chi-square test statistic is significantly above the chi-square critical value from the distribution table. This denotes that null hypothesis can be rejected and the alternate hypothesis is true and valid.	**RO$_2$**: To define the role of ethnicity and culture in British Pakistani students' progression in U.K.'s higher education. **RO$_3$**: To assess the impact of living at home, as an expression of British Pakistani culture, on the students' progression and performance.
			Chi-square Test Statistic	*Chi-square Critical Value (v)*		
			48.42	3.841		

			Chi-Square p-value	Significance Level a-value		
Non-Progression with Accommodation Type	H₀: The proportion of British Pakistani commuter students who do not progress is equal to the proportion of White commuter students who do not progress.	H₁: The proportion of British Pakistani commuter students who do not progress is *greater* than the proportion of White commuter students who do not progress.	1.076E-51	< 0.05	The *p*-value for the chi-square test for independence is below the *a*-value set at 0.05, and the chi-square test statistic is significantly above the chi-square critical value from the distribution table. This denotes that null hypothesis can be rejected and the alternate hypothesis is true and valid.	**RO₂**: To define the role of ethnicity and culture in British Pakistani students' progression in U.K.'s higher education. **RO₃**: To assess the impact of living at home, as an expression of British Pakistani culture, on the students' progression and performance.
			Chi-square Test Statistic	*Chi-square Critical Value (v)*		
			228.82	3.841		
Performance of British Pakistani Students	H₀: The distribution of degree classifications in British Pakistani students is equivalent to the distribution of degree classifications in White students, when both groups enter the university with the same number of entry tariff points.	H₁: The distribution of degree classifications in British Pakistani students is *not* equivalent to the distribution of degree classifications in White students, when both groups enter the university with the same number of entry tariff points.	*Chi-Square p-value*	*Significance Level a-value*	The *p*-value for the chi-square test for independence is below the *a*-value set at 0.05, and the chi-square test statistic is significantly above the chi-square critical value from the distribution table. This denotes that null hypothesis can be rejected and the alternate hypothesis is true and valid.	**RO₁**: To examine the role of ethnicity and culture in British Pakistani students' performance in U.K.'s higher education. **RO₃**: To assess the impact of living at home, as an expression of British Pakistani culture, on the students' progression and performance.
			Entry Tariff Group: 110 – 130 points 0.000948189	< 0.05		
			Chi-square Test Statistic	*Chi-square Critical Value (v)*		
			18.58	9.488		
			Chi-Square p-value	*Significance Level a-value*		
			Entry Tariff Group: 210 – 230 points 0.000000256	< 0.05		
			Chi-square Test Statistic	*Chi-square Critical Value (v)*		
			36.26	9.488		
			Chi-Square p-value	*Significance Level a-value*		
			Entry Tariff Group: 310 – 330 points 0.015607569	< 0.05		
			Chi-square Test Statistic	*Chi-square Critical Value (v)*		
			12.24	9.488		

Table 5.16 Summary of data analysis and results.

5.7. Discussion on the Significance of the Results

The purpose of the examining the data set above and validating the results achieved is to understand the viability of the main aim of this research: to critically assess the performance, integration, and progression of British Pakistani commuter students in U.K.'s higher education. Not only has the validity of the data been proved, as seen in Table 5.16, a correlation has been established between the independent variables and the dependent variables given in the Table 5.17 below:

	Independent Variable 1 (IV$_1$) Ethnicity	Independent Variable 2 (IV$_2$) Accommodation Type
Dependent Variable 1 (DV$_1$) *Progression*	Significant correlation found through chi-square testing; DV$_1$ is dependent on IV$_1$ and IV$_2$.	
Dependent Variable 2 (DV$_2$) *Performance*	Significant correlation found through chi-square testing; DV$_2$ is dependent on IV$_1$ and IV$_2$.	

Table 5.17 Summary of the correlation between the independent and the dependent variables.

The results above portray an important picture for U.K.'s higher education: there is a significant performance and progression gap between White students and British Pakistani students, with 4.53% in the data set above as seen in Table 5.6. It is also evident that British Pakistani students' non-progression is higher for those students who identify as commuters (living at family home whilst in university), as noted in Table 5.8.

Both progression and performance are seen to be increasingly relevant to the application of this data set to the ecological system's theory framework and its reconceptualisation (Figure 5.11) for the British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education. The reconceptualised framework created for this research identifies culture at the centre of all behaviours that lead to the non-progression of British Pakistani students. The significance of culture in determining educational outcomes is evident from previous research noted in the literature review (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani, 2009; Bayer, Bydzovska, Geryk, Obsivac, & Popelinsky, 2012).
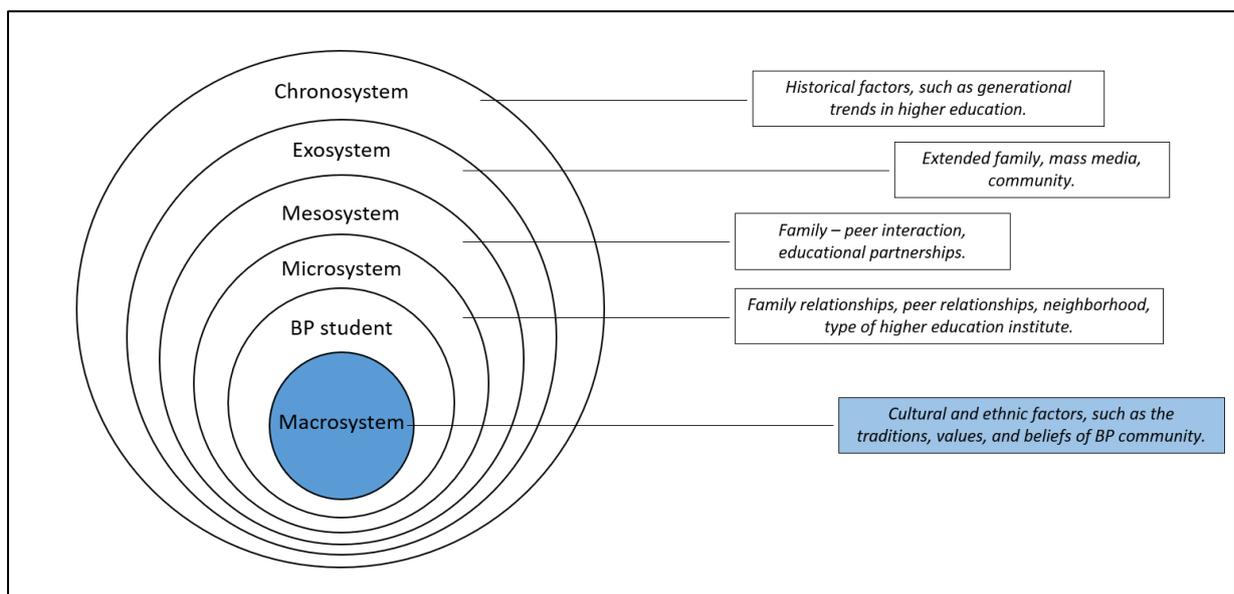
Figure 5.11 Reconceptualisation for British Pakistani Students in U.K.'s Higher Education.

For the British Pakistani students, living at home is an integral part of the culture (Din, 2012; Shaw, 1994; 2014). As noted in the literature review, Shaw (2014) explained that British Pakistani communities in the U.K. take pride in the fact that theirs is a collectivist society, where living at home during the university years is considered the norm and, to an extent, encouraged. Shaw had further added that commuting arrangements are often seen as a necessary struggle for keeping the students in the community close to their cultural heritage and to the generation that actually grew up or lived in Pakistan.

From the reconceptualisation of the ecological systems theory framework, it is noted that the Macrosystem consists of varied aspects that come together to portray the cultural and traditional

values of ethnic minority groups (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979; 1986; Fish & Syed, 2018), one of

which, for British Pakistani students, is the tradition of being a commuter student (living at family

home whilst at university) instead of living in a student accommodation (Shaw, 1994; 2014; Din,

2012); commuting is seen as an expression of the culture to which these students belong to. It is not

that culture is the negative connotation in this aspect – culture is neither positive not negative, it

only exists and is part of the individual's macrosystem, the strength of which depends on their

cultural capital – it is actually the fact that the non-acceptance or non-accommodation of an ethnic

minority culture is what is at the root of the issue being discussed here, as previously noted by Fish

& Syed (2018). One of these detrimental effects of not properly recognising, and catering for, ethnic

minority culture is the lack of social integration for the ethnic minority students (Jones D. , 2013;

Vietze, Juang, & Schachner, 2019; Zeivots, 2021), a rite of passage deemed necessary for progression

by Tinto (1975; 1993), as well as Spady (1970; 1971).

Social integration was highlighted by Tinto (1975; 1993) as being one of the two main forms of

integrations that students must complete in order to be fully incorporated in the higher education

system. For British Pakistani students, social integration may be especially difficult when they are

commuting from home; Shaw (2014) explained that British Pakistani youth have shown an

astounding resilience to assimilation in the Western culture, despite either being born in the U.K. or

being brought up in the U.K. from a very early age. The social environment in U.K.'s universities does

not do well to accommodate several types of non-traditional students, especially ethnic minority,

commuter students (Jones D. , 2013; Vietze, Juang, & Schachner, 2019; Zeivots, 2021). Events such

as club nights, events with alcohol, and late night gatherings, (Vietze, Juang, & Schachner, 2019;

Zeivots, 2021) are a class of socialisation that British Pakistani students are adamantly hesitant, or

downright not interested, in attending (Din, 2012; Shaw, 1994; 2014). Due to the lack of social

options for them, British Pakistani students may not ever socially integrate within the university

environment.

An interesting point to mention here is that one of the conclusions from Fish & Syed's (2018) can be confidently applied in this situation as well: in the U.S.A., it was noted that higher education institutes expected the Native American students to change their own beliefs and distance themselves from their culture in order to be able to 'fit in' to the university; this led to extremely poor progression rates for Native American students in the country. Similarly, higher education institutions in the U.K. expect that ethnic minority students, who embody substantial cultural and ethnic capital – such as the British Pakistani students (Din, 2012; Shaw, 1994; 2014) – will automatically assimilate into the dominantly Western environment of the university; higher education institutions fail to realise that British Pakistani students have a strong resilience to such an assimilation, especially when they live in their family home (Din, 2012; Shaw, 1994; 2014). This is where the ecological systems theory framework (Figure 5.11) illustrates how culture is at the centre of the behaviours of the British Pakistani students, which then transpires into the trends of progression and non-progression seen in Table 5.8, where 91.68% of British Pakistani non-progressing students were registered as commuter, with the White students in the same category coming up to 65.34%.

The second aspect of the significance of the data analysed is the performance of the British Pakistani students. Higher education institutes tend to assume that students who enter university with the same grades will also graduate with the same grades, based on the theories of Spady (1970; 1971) and Tinto (1975; 1993). This was seen as an untrue fact and was statistically significant in Table 5.10, Table 5.12, and Table 5.14. For example, in the category of 110-130 entry tariff points, 13% White students attained a first-class degree, where 0% of British Pakistani students in that tariff group did, results which were proven to be statistically significant as well once the chi-square test was conducted.

From the moment these two groups of students (White and British Pakistani) begin their journey in the higher education institute to the point when they graduate, there is a stratified gap in the type

of support and learning they receive (Din, 2012; Shaw, 1994; 2014). For non-traditional students, such as the British Pakistani students, the one-size-fits-all approach often adopted by higher education institutes simply does not work (Fish & Syed, 2018). This approach is delivered in terms of campus support services, support from lecturers, academic integration, as well as social integration (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002).

The commuter culture in British Pakistani students often holds them back from the study culture of the university; not because the culture is a negative connotation itself, but because the needs of students arising from belonging to that culture are often ignored or misrepresented by higher education institutes (Shaw, 1994; 2014; Din, 2012). It is often seen in universities that students can spend hours in the libraries, studying late into the night, and going back to their accommodations at any time that suits them. However, for British Pakistani commuter students, this is not possible. In her book on the Pakistani community in Britain, Shaw (2014) highlighted that presence at home after, what she called, 'necessary work' is desirable. Notions of the Western culture, Shaw (1994; 2014) explained, such as staying out late (even if it is at the library to study), missing dinner with family, or spending the night away from home (even at the library) is deemed as unacceptable in the collectivist society that the British Pakistani community.

In finality, the data analyses signifies (as discussed above) that culture and ethnicity are central to the concept of progression and performance in British Pakistani students, as well as for their integration in U.K.'s higher education. This significance justifies the development of the reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework (Figure 5.11) where culture and ethnicity were placed at the epicentre of the forces that influence individuals.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1. Revisiting the Research Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the research conducted was to critically assess the performance, integration, and progression of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education. In order to fulfil the main aim, the research gave a detailed account of the research conducted on the performance and progression of the British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education by not only focusing on the literature from the U.K. itself, but also from other countries that hold a high proportion of ethnic minorities, especially in their higher education environment. The research drew from the range of literature discussed in the chapter itself, critically assessing several perspectives in the previously published work, to bring forward a model that places culture and ethnicity at the epicentre of the progression and performance, as well as integration.

6.1.1. Research Objective 1

RO$_1$: To examine the role of ethnicity and culture in British Pakistani students' performance in U.K.'s higher education.

RO$_1$ was fulfilled by the extensive literature review conducted on the effects of culture and ethnicity on ethnic minority students in the major countries in the world; as well as by examining perceptions of British Pakistani students and community towards their culture and ethnicity, using published material that gave in-depth insights.

6.1.2. Research Objective 2

RO$_2$: To define the role of ethnicity and culture in British Pakistani students' progression in U.K.'s higher education.

RO$_2$ was fulfilled by the use of abductive reasoning on the data analysis, where the results were used to infer and define the relationship between British Pakistani students and their culture and

ethnicity – an important aspect that was previously missing from the literature as the previous work had not differentiated between cultures under the umbrella term of BAME of British Asian.

6.1.3. Research Objective 3

RO₃: To assess the impact of living at home, as an expression of British Pakistani culture, on the students' progression and performance.

RO$_3$ was fulfilled by analysis of the data set that established a connection between the independent variables (ethnicity and accommodation type) and the dependent variables (progression and performance), with the literature dictating that ethnic minorities, such as British Pakistani (students), tend to be rich in cultural capital and cultural reproduction.

6.1.4. Research Objective 4

RO₄: To propose a HE framework to study and understand progression and performance of British Pakistani students.

RO$_4$ was fulfilled by the reconceptualisation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory framework, where the Macrosystems – that carry the cultural and ethnic factors – were placed at the epicentre to demonstrate the central role of culture and ethnicity in progression and performance of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education.

6.1.5. Research Objective 5

RO₅: To provide a recommendation for best practice in the progression and performance of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education.

RO$_5$ is fulfilled by three main recommendations for the future of the current research:

1. The framework should be tested under a mixed methods research approach to understand the full extent of its applicability.

2. The framework should be tested for applicability on other ethnic minorities as well, becoming the central model for studying progression and performance in non-traditional students.

3. Umbrella terms, such as BAME, should be avoided in the research for ethnic minority students.

6.2.   Key Points from Main Chapters

The introduction chapter of this research focused on the context and background of the higher education industry in the United Kingdom, highlighting the role of university in the wider society from an academic perspective. The chapter also highlighted the functions of higher education, which are to provide education, to conduct research, and to contribute to the society. The focus was then shifted to the importance of higher education based on these functions, with a transition towards understanding the higher education systems in U.K.'s higher education, namely elite, mass, and universal. The chapter then went onto discuss the Widening Participation Agenda, depicting the changes made to the higher education's student population since the commencement and implementation of the agenda. The chapter defined and differentiated between the two types of student populations that had emerged after the Widening Participation Agenda: traditional and non-traditional students, with a swift section on the implications of the changing landscape of the higher education industry in the United Kingdom. The final part of the chapter relays the research aim and objectives of the thesis, based on the changes and gaps identified from the initial context of the research. These gaps are further addressed and examined in the literature review.

The review of the literature began with a timeline of the student progression and performance studies, giving an evaluation of the types of research studies conducted on the topic throughout history. The chapter then moved on to review the theoretical roots of progression and performance studies, analysing the psychological and sociological connotations in the some of the major theoretical models, with the key contributors to the field identifying suicide theory by Durkheim (1951) from sociology, Van Gennep's (1960) theory on the rites of passage in tribal societies in social anthropology, and Price's (1977) concept of labour turnover in human resources as the bases of

several of the topic's theories and models. The literature review further provided a well-explained section on six of the most popular student progression and performance theories, concluding the section with an analysis of their limitations, which then becomes the basis of identifying the gaps in the literature.

The review of the literature moved on to explain the progression and performance of ethnic minority students by conducting a global review of literature from United States of America, Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as the United Kingdom; the purpose of focusing on countries apart from the United Kingdom was to emphasise on the fact that those countries have conducted research based on differentiated ethnic identities and cultural aspects, whereas majority of the research in United Kingdom on ethnic minorities is casually put under the umbrella term of BAME or, to the most extent, British Asian. This leads to the ignorance of the facts that all cultures come with their own identities and challenges, a fact that is discussed in detail in the next part of the literature review. This, then, opened a gateway towards the ethnic minority students that is the focus of the research: British Pakistani students. The chapter further explains the previous studies on British Pakistani students' progression and performance in the U.K., highlighting the fact that there is minimal research on this specific subject without the categorisation of all ethnic minorities under the single categorisation i.e., BAME.

The final sections of the literature review focused on the development of a framework that deems to understand the role of culture and ethnicity in ethnic minority students, the purpose of it being that each culture and ethnicity should be treated as an individual set of rules and traditions. The section explained the reconceptualisation of the framework from Bronfenbrenner's original work, and used the concepts of cultural capital and ethnic capital to justify why these two concepts should be at the epicentre of progression and performance studies with British Pakistani students (and, in the future, all ethnic minorities).

The chapter on methodology began with providing an overview of the research landscape of social sciences in higher education, and then swiftly moves on to discuss the age-old debate of qualitive versus quantitative that is seen as an ever-prevalent tug-of-war when it comes to academic research. The chapter then went onto elaborately discuss the current issues in the research conducted on progression and performance for higher education students, specifically ethnic minority students, connecting the methodology to main aim of this thesis. The chapter furthered on with an exhaustive section of the methodological approach of the current research, exploring avenues that were previously considered as being part of the approach as well as the new strategy that was taken onboard due to Covid-19 restrictions. This section then moved on to discuss the impact of Covid-19 in more detail, highlighting the previous research approach that was to be adopted and what obstacles were faced due to the pandemic.

The final chapter before the conclusion focused on the findings of the research as well as the discussion on the significance of the findings. The chapter recapped the research aim and objectives of the thesis, furthering on to note the key findings from the data set. The key statistical findings were then tested for validity and reliability with the use of Pearson's Chi-Square Test for Independence. The data set showed high correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variables that were previously recognised in the methodology chapter. The significance of the results and the data analysis highlighted not only the gap in the literature for ethnic minority students, specifically those that identify as British Pakistani, but it also elaborated how important it is to study this trend of lower performance and progression due to the higher education institute's ignorance of the importance of culture and ethnicity.

6.3. Contribution to Knowledge

6.3.1. First Contribution to Knowledge

The first contribution of this research is the development of the reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework for studying the effects of culture and ethnicity on the progression and

performance of British Pakistani students. This framework was created after the identification of a gap in the literature, where the majority of the models and theories of students' progression and performance do not take into account the role of culture and ethnicity. A framework such as this was deemed necessary from a review of the literature that emphasised the importance of cultural and ethnic capital in ethnic minority students. The framework revolutionises the way culture and ethnicity are viewed when progression and performance are studies; previously, there was not due importance given to role of culture and ethnicity, so much so that even Bronfenbrenner's original model of ecological systems places culture and ethnicity on the outer crust. However, research in recent years, across several avenues but especially higher education, has highlighted that culture and ethnicity are worth studying quite closely as the impact they can have on the performance, integration, and progression of ethnic minority is often underestimated, although it should not be in any way.

The reconceptualised framework also allows higher education institutes in the U.K. to reflect on what kind of support they are providing for students who belong to ethnic minorities. The reconceptualised framework, when used by these higher education institutes, would put culture and ethnicity at the epicentre of any and all support that is designed for specific ethnic minorities in the U.K. The literature, building up to the model, also demonstrates how other ethnically diverse countries have adopted a research and development approach that incorporates minorities when it comes to higher education. This example, along with the reconceptualised framework, can act as the starting point for policy and support reforms in U.K. higher education institutes.

This contribution is now more important than ever as the ethnic minority population of the U.K. continues to not only increase but also actively participate in economic activities which benefit the countries, especially those students who go into graduate roles are completing higher education. Not only would the reconceptualised framework allow for ethnic minority students in the U.K. to be studied and supported in an improved way, it can be globally applied to other countries that host

ethnic minorities and want to increase the uptake of ethnic minority students in their higher education system.

Keeping the dynamic and globalised world we live in in now, it should be noted that the development of a reconceptualised framework that can be, after adequate research, be applied globally to the higher educational contexts is a significant contribution to the literature, where the pre-existing models and frameworks mainly focused on a singular type of student. This reconceptualised framework would, in the future, aim to eradicate the distinction of traditional and non-traditional students in higher education. The ideas of traditional and non-traditional students were set in by studies consisting mainly of homogenous participants with minimal representation from ethnic minorities or other diverse groups. Thus, the eradication of the traditional and non-traditional smoke screen would assist in a better understanding of the progress and performance of ethnic minorities in higher education.

6.3.2. Second Contribution to Knowledge

The second contribution to knowledge from this research is the 'dismemberment' of umbrella terms such as BAME or British Asians in academic research for student progression and performance. The review of literature identified this gap when seeking specific research on British Pakistanis in the U.K.'s higher education, only to come across research conducted by grouping students into either a BAME category or, at the most extent, the British Asian category. The two encapsulating terms bring together students just on the basis that they belong to *an* ethnic minority, not recognising that the ethnicities themselves have distinguishing features between them, effects of which need to be studied separately. One such example came from the data set where British Pakistani students had the highest proportion of commuter students in any ethnic minority, significantly higher than British Indian students, British Bangladeshi students, and British Chinese students. But, in the literature, these ethnic minorities are grouped together under the British Asian category, leaving a significant gap on what we can learn from each individual culture.

The purpose of dismembering the terms BAME and British Asian BAME or British Asians in academic research for student progression and performance is so that higher education institutes in the U.K. can understand the different pressures of each ethnic minority group and provide targeted support for students belonging to those groups, instead of adopting a one-size-fits-all approach for all ethnic minority students on-campus. In 2021, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities published their report, that focused in to the racial and ethnic disparities in the U.K., and stated that BAME is now redundant term. This statement from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities further adds weightage to this contribution to knowledge, as it confirms that this gap identified in the literature is valid. The literature also identified that other countries, that hold strong ethnic minority populations, have specific studies and research grants dedicated to each ethnic minority group, unlike in the U.K.

There is now growing evidence that several other countries are also following suit, such as Germany and Norway, where the ethnic minorities make up a smaller proportion of the population than the U.K., yet there is research being conducted on specific ethnic minority groups to understand their progression and performance in higher education. This, in turn, feeds into the narrative discussed in the first contribution of the eradication of the traditional and non-traditional classification of students in higher education. Those classifications do not fit into the higher education context of the 21st century as they do not validly represent the student population. This is evident by the publications that have stemmed from other countries that host ethnic minorities, and are discussed in length in the literature review of this thesis.

6.4. Limitations of the Research

6.4.1. First Limitation of the Research

The first limitation of the research is the research design utilised. The original plan for the research design for this thesis was to implement a Sequential Explanatory Design (SED), which is discussed in section 4.8.1. The design was aimed at incorporating a well-rounded research design, where the first

phase of the study was to be the analysis of the archival data. The analysis of the archival data would

have given a snapshot preview of the situation of progression and performance of British Pakistani

students in U.K.'s higher education. The second phase was going to be in-depth interviews with at

least 20 British Pakistani students and 20 White students, the aim of which was to gather rich

information on the factors that affect their progression and performance in higher education; it also

would have been possible to retrieve information on how they believe their ethnicity has affected

their progression and performance, with a focus on the issues faced by these students. The

interviews were then to be analysed using the coding technique in NVivo, in which key themes from

the students' answers would have been identified. The third, and final, phase of the research design

would have been to create a questionnaire out of the key themes identified in the interviews, to be

distributed electronically to higher education students all over the country; the purpose of this was

to validate the answers received in the smaller sample of the interviews.

However, the research had to be altered as the Covid-19 pandemic insinuated a series of events that

led to the interviews becoming impossible to conduct. There were several reasons for this decision;

the higher education institute that was to be utilised for finding the sample for the interviews had

been shut down due to the country-wide lockdown, with most students moving away from their

student accommodation and back to their family homes. It was deliberated whether the interviews

can be conducted online, i.e. via Zoom or Microsoft Teams; this was then decided against as there

would could have been a possibility of receiving answers that may not be a true representation of

the situation, especially in the case of the British Pakistani students who were identified as being

majorly consumer students anyway, due to the students' families being present at the home and,

therefore, creating a biased response. In turn, the third phase (the questionnaire) of the research

design was also called off as it could not have been conducted without the interviews.

Ultimately, a different methodology approach was utilised where the research design consisted only

of the analyses of the archival data, which could be a limitation for the research because although

the data set utilised is comprehensive, the results only provide a snapshot into the reasons for the

difference in progression and performance of British Pakistani students and White students in U.K.'s

higher education.

6.4.2. Second Limitation of the Research

The second limitation of the research relates to the type of quantitative analysis conducted. The

current research's analysis mainly comprises of Pearson's Chi-Square Test for Independence (section

4.7.4). It would have been ideal to incorporate several other statistical testing as well in the research

design; however, due to time constraints, the decision was made to conduct one thorough statistical

test and to address the lack of the quantitative analysis as a recommendation for future research.

6.4.3. Third Limitation of the Research

The third limitation of the research focuses on the perspectives discussed in the reconceptualisation

of the ecological systems' theory framework. The framework addressed the issue of incorporating

the culture and ethnicity in the strategy for studying progression and performance in U.K.'s higher

education; however, the need for such a strategy is only addressed from the perspectives of the

students, not the higher education institute themselves, i.e. the supply perspective. Although it was

deliberated that this is a valid point that must be included in the research, there was a lack of

literature and information on such a perspective on which the stance of this research could be based

upon. This lack of the supply side perspective serves as limitation of the current research, but it

should be noted this limitation may also transpire as a recommendation for future research as it

addresses a gap in the literature in the progression and performance of ethnic minority students in

U.K.'s higher education.

6.5. Future Research Recommendations

6.5.1. First Recommendation for Future Research

The first recommendation for future research is the reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework be studied in more detail. The main strategy for doing so should be to conduct in-depth interviews with British Pakistani students and White students in U.K.'s higher education, using a comparative approach. The aim of these interviews should be to note and identify aspects of culture and ethnicity, discussed in the research above, in further detail. This includes aspirations from childhood, parental expectations for academic and social integration, family history of higher education, development of goals in higher education, use of on-campus support services, cultural taboos arising from involvement in higher education, and any other perspectives that arise.

The interview should be semi-structured to collect data on what factors affect British Pakistani students' and White students' differential performance and progression, and the role ethnicity and culture may have in the process. Semi-structured interviews provided us with a greater flexibility around the questions being asked as well as the opportunity to allow for the participants to elaborate on how they feel their ethnicity and culture has affected their higher education journey. These interviews can provide in-depth insights into the perceptions of these students and can be used to further verify the reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework.

Conducting such interviews was part of the original research plan, but that phase of research had to be taken out due to the obstacles and challenges that arose with the Covid-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, this phase of research can be continued as a post-doctoral opportunity.

6.5.2. Second Recommendation for Future Research

The second recommendation of this research is that, once the interviews from the first recommendation are complete and the premise established further, the reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework should be applied and tested on other ethnic minorities. This will allow researchers to evaluate if the reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework has the

potential to become the central model that is used for the research on the behaviours of ethnic minorities in higher education. This is especially relevant in the current landscape of the higher education industry where non-traditional students' participation is on the rise.

6.5.3. Third Recommendation for Future Research

The third recommendation for this research for the renaming of the Macrosystem in the reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework. In the original framework by Bronfenbrenner, the Macrosystem was named as such as it was placed as the outer most layer of the ecological systems theory framework. In the reconceptualisation, the Macrosystem – which comprises of the role of culture, ethnicity, and traditions - was placed in the nucleus of the framework; this means that naming as the *Macrosystem* may no longer be appropriate, which is why it is proposed that in future research, after due diligence has been conducted, it should be renamed as the *Hybrid Microsystem*. It would have been simpler to rename it as just the *Microsystem* but the model already has that name taken, therefore the configuration of a new name may need further validation before the application.

6.5.4. Fourth Recommendation for Future Research

The fourth, and final, recommendation for future research addresses the third limitation discussed in section 6.4.3. Research conducted in the future should address the gap in the literature on how the supply side, i.e. the higher education institutes, respond and contribute to the reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework. Addressing this area would not only fill a vital gap in the literature in the progression and performance of ethnic minority students in U.K.'s higher education, it would also pave the way for future research that incorporate both perspectives, providing a detailed landscape of U.K.'s higher education system.

6.6. Closing the Loop

The research on the role of culture and ethnicity in the progression and performance of British Pakistani students in U.K.'s higher education comes to an end here, with the researcher having

provided a reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework for the application in current and future research projects. Individual recognition of ethnic minorities is more significant now than ever before, due to the increased diversity in higher education and the awareness of how important support is for students. The research has fulfilled its main aim and has the potential to be taken further. The key themes of the research and the main aim played a pivotal role in shaping the thesis as well as being a driving force for the application of the reconceptualised ecological systems theory framework.

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Appendix 1

Hispanic or Latino Origin Countries

Definition: Hispanics or Latino refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. This includes people who reported detailed Hispanic or Latino groups such as:
•Mexican
•Puerto Rican
•Cuban
•Dominican Republic
Central American (excludes Mexican)
•Costa Rican
•Guatemalan
•Honduran
•Nicaraguan
•Panamanian
•Salvadoran
•Other Central American
South American
•Argentinian
•Bolivian
•Chilean
•Colombian
•Ecuadorian
•Paraguayan
•Peruvian
•Uruguayan
•Venezuelan
•Other South American
Spaniard
•All other Hispanic or Latino

Source: (United Stated Census Bureau, 2019)

Appendix 2

Field names and description from the data set:

Field Name	Description
sce_scjc	SCJ Code
stu_code	STU Code
sce_crsc	Course Code
sce_ayrc	Academic Year
entry tariff	Entry Tariff
scj_qenc	Highest Qualification Code
qen_name	Highest Qualification on Entry
stu_dob	Date of Birth
start date	31st August in Year Started
age	Age at 31st August in Year Started
stu_gend	Gender
stu_ethc	Ethnicity Code
eth_name	Ethnicity
stu_hapc	Home Postcode
stu_hapc2	First Block of Home Postcode
home town	Postal Home Town
stu_capc	Termtime Postcode
stu_natc	Nationality Code
nat_name	Nationality
sce_fstc	Fee Status Code
fst_name	Fee Status
sce_rftc	Reason for Withdrawal Code
rft_name	Reason for Withdrawal
sce_endd	Date of Withdrawal
sce_pgsc	Student Progress Code
pgs_name	Student Progress
awd_name	Award Name
cla2_code	Classification
sce_ttac	Termtime Accommodation Code
tta_name	Termtime Accommodation
cap_clyn	Clearing?
entry method	Entry Method Type