

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE RACIAL EXPERIENCES OF BLACK TEACHERS IN  
THE IRISH ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE) SECTOR**

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## **Abstract**

This study explored the racial experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector. The literature indicates that racial discrimination and segregation in the ALE sector have been a problem in the past and continue to be in the present. Specifically, literature suggested that the Irish teaching workforce remains highly monoethnic, especially in the ALE sector. This study adopted a qualitative approach using semi-structured, open-ended interviews as the data collection technique. The study participants comprised of thirteen participants, 4 Black teachers from Nigeria, 3 from south Africa, 3 from Congo, 2 Irish-born Blacks, and 1 graduate from Kenya selected using the snowball sampling technique. The data collected were coded and analysed thematically. The findings indicated that Black teachers are not incorporated into the ALE sector due to their skin colour. If hired, they are given only part-time roles, which do not satisfy their economic and career aspirations. Furthermore, the study indicated that many Black teachers are forced to be creative and find other ways to be useful to the Irish community to uphold their career aspirations and continue practising their skills. The study recommended legislative changes as among the implications of the research.

**Keywords:** Race, Racism, Blackness, Whiteness, Adult learning, Education, Teaching, Adult Learning and Education (ALE) Sector, Critical Race Theory (CRT)

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Education is understood globally as a gateway for opportunities through which people acquire skills, experience, and knowledge. However, in Ireland and many nations worldwide, education is notably unequal, with significant disproportionalities in terms of opportunities between the minority and the majority ethnic groups raising concerns. Scholarly evidence also indicates that the gap between ethnic minorities and majorities is widening despite the increasing proportion and number of minority-certified teachers in many countries (Gealy, 2021; Ingersoll et al., 2021; O'Connor, 2010; Worth et al., 2022). Demie and Huat See (2022) attributed this pattern to education underachievement among many people from minority ethnicities in England. The authors further suggested that the underachievement gap in England is directly associated with significant disproportionalities in England's teaching workforce.

Miller and Callender (2018) noted that the English teaching workforce comprises only 230 Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) headteachers from more than 24000 primary and secondary schools. Based on the most recent data from the UK government, 85.1 percent of teachers in England's state-funded schools were White British. By comparison, only 1.0 percent of the teachers were Black Africans at the time of the Census (UK Government, 2023). In the Irish context, various scholars have posited that Irish adult learning and education (ALE) is characterised by homogeneity, with 98-99 percent of the teaching workforce being White, the settled communities, and the indigenous Irish (Heinz & Keane, 2018; Keane & Heinz, 2016; Keane & Heinz, 2015; Ní Dhuinn & Keane, 2021). However, there is an absence of literature discussing this racial representation gap in Ireland, especially in the ALE teaching workforce.

Ethnic and cultural diversity in Ireland has its roots in the surge in immigrants from the 1990s. According to Rolston (2004), minority ethnicities, linguistics, and religious groups have been at the core of the evolution of Irish society. However, Daly and colleagues (2016) stated that most Irish people, especially the dominant ethnic groups, harbour an "Irishness" perspective, which largely contributes to racial disparities in the country. According to O'Connor (2010), an Irishness perspective represents a view in which cultural diversity is excluded and the indigenous Irish ethnicities feel entitled to all opportunities in Ireland. As a result, White Irish majorities shun ethnic and cultural diversity (O'Connor, 2010), while the minorities continually feel isolated in a society that seldomly recognises their efforts and abilities (Michael, 2015). For instance, McGuire

(2021) stated that concerns associated with the inability to secure jobs in Irish schools escalated among migrant teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic despite many schools struggling to recruit the right teachers to help schools bridge the impacts of the pandemic. Consequently, Michael (2015) stated that Black people often experience negative attitudes and feelings (Afrophobia) aimed at dehumanising and denying them their personhood, dignity, and humanity.

According to the available research studies conducted between the 1970s and the first decade of the 21st century, most Irish people do not entertain hostile attitudes and views from minority groups (Ahmad, 2006; Davies, 2002; Lahav, 2004; O'Connor, 2010). Thus, O'Connor (2010) established that 16.7 percent of the Irish community believed Black people could not become part of them due to the latter's temperament. Besides, 10.8 percent of Irish people believe Black people are inferior and could never be on the same level as White people (O'Connor, 2010). The study also showed that only 13.5 percent of the participants could welcome Travelers into their families through marriages, with close to 60 percent indicating they would not consider having Traveller neighbours. However, O'Connor quoted this data from a 1977 study, with the most recent scholarly studies not providing quantifiable data associated with this context.

Nonetheless, O'Connor indicated that this has been translated to the ALE sector, with the experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector encompassing extreme instances of racism. O'Brien (2009) stated that from the inability to secure jobs to contributing little to adult pedagogy and organisational efficiency, Black teachers' experiences in the ALE sectors reflect what Irish society has become. O'Brien further stated that the education sector is a leading employer in Ireland; thus, when minority teachers struggle to acquire jobs in the industry, their socioeconomic status depreciates. Besides, the meagre representation of Black teachers in the Irish education system also discourages Black students from pursuing adult learning and the teaching profession, which Demie and Huat See (2022) believes impacts the academic achievement of other Black students. Adult students know the impact of racial discrimination and can feel it through the institutions they go through. Therefore, witnessing very high admissions of Black students in the under-subscribed DEIS institutions, where they are over-represented together with other learners from disadvantaged backgrounds in Ireland, would be unsurprising (Byrne et al., 2010; Kavanagh et al., 2017; McGinley & Keane, 2021; Ní Dhuinn & Keane, 2021). The challenges of these institutions and the barriers to subscribing to better schools due to their inability to acknowledge

the input of Black teachers implies that Black students cannot fare any better in life by joining these institutions (Demie & Huat See, 2022; McGinley & Keane, 2021).

## **1.2. Context and Rationale of the Study**

The current study explores Black teachers' racial experiences in the ALE systems. As is provided in this chapter, investigating the experiences of Black teachers in the ALE context is essential due to many reasons. Notably, racism plays a significant role in the experiences of Black teachers in Ireland (Chonail et al., 2022; Daniel, 2018; O'Connor, 2010); employing Black teachers could significantly counter racism and racial segregation in Ireland (O'Brien, 2009); and racism and segregation continues to characterise Irish education (European Parliament, 2022), impacting academic achievement, especially among students from the minority ethnicities (McDaid & Nowlan, 2021; O'Brien, 2009; O, Connor, 2010; Worth et al., 2022). Based on the report by Worth and colleagues (2022), all ethnic minorities in Ireland, including Blacks, are under-represented at all the job stages of the teaching profession, while the ethnic majorities, mainly Whites, are over-represented at all the career stages of the teaching profession in the country.

Racial segregation in the ALE sectors has been a problem in the past and continues to be a present challenge. O'Connor (2010) highlights that teachers are segregated by race in the country's ALE sector, a problem that also affects students in schools. Based on the existing literature, this is an issue experienced in the entirety of the Irish teaching workforce, with many scholars indicating that the current Irish teaching workforce experiences racial and socioeconomic segregation (Hickman, 1994; Irish Human Rights and Equity Commission, n.d.; Lodge & Lynch, 2004; McDaid & Nowlan, 2021; McGinley & Keane, 2021; Worth et al., 2022). Moreover, despite Ireland's increasing diversity and inclusivity, the Irish teaching force remains highly monoethnic, with recognition barriers high among migrant teachers (McDaid & Nowlan, 2021). Based on the analysis by Lodge & Lynch (2004), the current Irish system of higher education and teaching transparently fails to provide equal opportunities to the minority ethnic groups in Ireland. For instance, Worth and colleagues noted that among the education leaders in Ireland, Black teachers are under-represented by approximately 75 percent, while mixed ethnic groups are under-represented by about 60 percent. The report further shows that Asian ethnic groups are under-represented by 83 percent while the other ethnic groups are under-represented by about 88 percent.



Education and teaching have become globalised like many other professions and aspects in today's society. Teachers from different parts of the world would wish to work in Ireland. Similarly, students from many parts of the world would also want to pursue higher education in Ireland. These circumstances require scholarly research to inform the global society of Ireland's ALE systems. According to O'Connor (2010), fears of institutional racism have been espoused in the Irish's entire education and teaching systems; however, there is little scholarly evidence and explanation as to the impact or consequences of such a level of racial discrimination. Besides, O'Brien (2009) indicated that one in ten students across several schools in Ireland come from the minority ethnic backgrounds; however, the teaching profession is far from reflecting this extent of student representation. Therefore, it is evident that pursuing education is a real possibility for students from minority groups in the country; however, many aspiring teachers are discouraged by the lack of their ilk within the ALE sectors. This presents an issue for the Irish government, especially in the current globalised education and work environment (Adebayo & Heinz, 2023; McGuire, 2021). Hence, this research dug deeper into the ALE systems to unearth the Black teachers' racial experiences within the ALE sector. Understanding these impacts will help chart the path for reforms and spark discussions about potential racial diversity in ALE.

### **1.3. Research Aim, Question, and Objectives**

Based on the racial disparities experienced by Black and teachers from minority ethnicities in Ireland, this study sought to explore the racial experiences of the Black teacher's workforce in the ALE sector.

#### **1.3.1. Research Question**

The current research was grounded on the following research question to achieve the research aim of the current paper;

- i. Why are there very few Black teachers in the ALE sector?

This research sought to achieve the following three objectives:

- i. To highlight the experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector.
- ii. To highlight the impacts of racial discrimination experiences among Black teachers in the ALE sector.

### **1.4. Definition of Terms**

The following terms were operationally used in this thesis

#### **1.4.1. Black**

The term Black was used to define people of African descent, encompassing Black Irish and any other Black backgrounds. I chose to capitalise the “B” in Black to limit the negative stereotype and prejudice associated with Black people.

#### **1.4.2. White**

Consequently, the term White was used to classify people of European ancestry and other White backgrounds. I chose to capitalise the “W” in White to appropriately describe the race associated with people of European ancestry.

#### **1.4.3. Blackness**

The term Blackness was used in the current thesis to identify the cultural and social experiences and identity associated with Black people.

#### **1.4.4. Whiteness**

Whiteness as used in this thesis referred to the way white people, their beliefs, culture, and customs function as the standard by which all the other ethnic groups operate. The thesis further used Whiteness to refer to a social mechanism allowing white people advantage over all the other ethnic groups.

#### **1.4.5. Critical Race Theory**

The Critical Race Theory was the theoretical foundation that underpinned the current research. It provided a way of understanding how racial experiences have shaped Irish adult learning and education’s public policy and how race is a divisive discourse that pits Black teachers against their White counterparts, leading to negative experiences among Black teachers in the Irish adult learning and education.

#### **1.4.6. Adult Learning and Education**

Adult learning and education is defined for the purposes of the research as areas of third level education which are specifically designed as adult education spaces, community education, continuing and further education and training, and any other systematic learning opportunities for adults. I chose to abbreviate adult learning and education as ALE to simplify and enhance the readability of this manuscript. It was also essential to meeting the strict word count targets for this thesis.

#### **1.4.7. Adult Learning and Education Sector**

A sector is used to describe a portion that is distinct from others. I chose to use ALE sector to differentiate adult learning and education from all the other levels of education, such as primary and high school levels of education.

#### **1.5. My Experiences**

I am a Nigerian woman who has lived in Ireland for many years. I have studied in Ireland through the ALE system, getting recognised as a teacher through the Irish Teaching Council. This has been achieved over the past six years, starting my academic journey in Ireland from the QQI level 5 Award to attain a healthcare qualification and another QQI level 5 culinary art that earned me a catering qualification. After this, I completed a four-year teacher's education course at Dublin City University- Institute of Education, achieving a Bachelor of Science in Education and Training (BSc.).

However, throughout my years of study in Ireland, I have not learned under any Black skinned teacher, despite the multicultural face of Ireland. This created the foundation for the current research because I wondered why the Irish teaching workforce encompassed very few Black teachers. While at Dublin City University, I studied with few Black skin learners in the same department besides seeing several Blacks in the Institute of Education. Besides, I have also witnessed how black graduates experience complex and challenging compliance in the labour market, balancing their teaching education between their racial and cultural selves and fitting in the White-centric requirements that characterise Irish teaching opportunities.

The author of the current study is well qualified as a teacher and recognised through the Irish teaching council. I am currently taking my Master's Degree in Adult and Community Education at Maynooth University; however, I am yet to secure any teaching position within the Irish teaching system. I have been involved in many volunteering roles, attaining the 2-year work experience required by many institutions but yet unable to get any recognition in adult teaching and learning education. Primarily, I have volunteered to teach the English Language to international students and migrant centres and has accumulated placement experience teaching communication, personal effectiveness, workplace practice, and social studies. This experience level qualifies any graduate, especially the White majority in Ireland, for a teaching role in the ALE sector.

Besides, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when institutions experienced unplanned teacher shortages, forcing them to hire even second-year student teachers. This author and other Black teachers experienced very high racial discrimination, where many Black teachers failed to get employment opportunities while undergraduate Whites were employed within the ALE sector. Furthermore, throughout my studies to qualify as a teacher, I have received many remarks from White teachers suggesting I must relocate after graduation to achieve my career aspirations. This escalated my curiosity, leading to the current investigation. The author critically notes her experiences in the present investigation, believing that irrespective of her experience, it is biased to discriminate against Black teachers, hindering their chances of attaining their career goals. Due to a lack of opportunities, the author currently provides volunteers by mentoring Dublin City University Students as part of her contribution to Irish society and a way to help other ALE learners and uphold her career aspirations.

#### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

With the difficulty of access to teaching job opportunities, Black teachers who have pursued the teaching profession find it difficult to sustain their families (Heinz et al., 2023; Keane et al., 2022a). The situation is not different among the teachers who qualify for teaching jobs in the ALE sector. These consequences contribute to the reduced socioeconomic status of Black teachers' families (Keane & Heinz, 2015). The current study put these impacts into perspective to encourage significant reforms in the ALE sector geared toward racial diversity and inclusivity in the teaching workforce. The participation of more Black teachers could strengthen the ALE system, produce multiculturally competent graduates, and make globalised education more significant to populations seeking to study, live, and work in Ireland (McDaid & Nowlan, 2021).

It has been argued that Black teachers endure the worst in terms of professional growth and social progress in Ireland (Keane et al., 2022a). Most Black teachers have achieved relevant qualifications to be admitted into the ALE framework but continue to suffer joblessness (McGuire, 2021). As a result, the psychological and social effects of joblessness for Black teachers are worth studying. The current study also investigated the psychological and social impacts of Black teacher absence in ALE. A thorough portrayal of the negative impacts could inspire debate into a diversified adult teaching fraternity. Relevant government agencies such as the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education, and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland could initiate

reforms in line with the impacts discussed in the current study. Therefore, the present study was a significant reference point for ALE reform to accommodate more Black teachers in Irish adult education.

### **1.7. Scope of the Study**

The current study was limited to the ALE sector; however, the problem of racial discrimination and segregation is widespread in the Irish education system. ALE provide higher learning opportunities for many in Ireland. ALE system teachers are more qualified and join a highly regulated workforce. Therefore, the current study sought to understand why the Irish education system encompasses fewer Black teachers. The study's findings and recommendations strictly applied to the ALE sector instead of the entire education and teaching system.

Besides, the current study was also restricted to discrimination and segregation as the primary contributors to the Black teachers' negative experiences within the ALE sector. Although the minority prism is larger in Ireland, the current study focussed on the experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector. The Irish Black communities face different social circumstances from other immigrants, especially white immigrants. The current study exclusively drew from the views of Black teachers qualified to practise through the Irish education system. Nevertheless, the recommendations in the current study could aid reforms in the ALE sector at large.

### **1.8. Research Approach**

The current study embraced qualitative research methodologies to understand the racial discrimination and segregation experienced by Black teachers in the ALE sector. According to Lewis (2015), qualitative research techniques such as interviews elicit participants' thoughts and opinions regarding the subject of study. The current study interviewed several Black teachers in the ALE sector. The selected participants have witnessed the pains of getting involved in the system so they can express their thoughts, opinions, and attitudes objectively. The recruitment process of the participants was achieved through the snowball technique, where the primary researcher relied on the support of one participant who was recruited through a connection in the EPAL community. The current study also embraced Critical Race Theory (CRT) to understand how wrong the Irish education policies are responsible for the frustrations experienced by Black teachers seeking to participate in ALE in the country (Milner IV et al., 2013).

## **1.9. Structure of the Study**

After the introduction, the current study reviewed literature associated with the study topic. In the next chapter, the study methodology followed qualitative research methods and snowball sampling technique. An analysis of the qualitatively determined data obtained during the study is presented in Chapter Four. The last chapter of the study was the conclusion, which presented a summary of the study findings, implications, and the study recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1.Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature on this study's research topic, conducted in Ireland and other international contexts. The section is organised on the theoretical and empirical evidence applicable to the current research. The main aspects of the study discussed in this section include an evaluation of the theoretical and scientific evidence underpinning the investigation, a review of relevant empirical evidence, the development of conceptual frameworks, and research gaps.

### **2.2.Theoretical Review**

This study was guided by the Critical Race Theory (CRT). The reason for underpinning the current research with the theory was because there exists a strong correlation between segregation, racism, and CRT. This author used CRT to examine the impacts of race on Black teachers' abilities to get employment opportunities in the ALE sector. In this context, the study discussed the endemic nature of racism, the maintenance of colour-blindness and White privilege approaches in the ALE sector, and the resulting heightened and open discriminatory practices against Black teachers. In this context, the author examined the experiences of qualified Black teachers who are exposed to silent racial structures and practices within the ALE sector. The author further used CRT to explore the literature and discuss Black teachers' experiences in the ALE sector. Provided below is a detailed overview of the theories.

#### **2.2.1. Critical Race Theory (CRT)**

The theoretical foundation of the current study is based on the Critical Race Theory (CRT), which provides a broad social and scientific approach to understanding society, racism, and race. CRT assesses the appearance of racism and race across the leading cultural modes of expression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). By adopting the CRT, researchers often attempt to deconstruct how racism victims are impacted by race's stereotypical cultural perceptions and how they can represent themselves to counter discrimination associated with their race (Milner IV et al., 2013). According to McCoy and Rodricks (2015), many critical race theorists trace racial behaviours in the US through the country's Civil Rights Movement, slavery legacy, and recent events, with scholars such as Derrick Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw popularising the theory in the mid-1970s and the 1980s within the subfields of critical legal studies. Crenshaw and Bell posited that despite the US adopting civil rights legislation, African Americans' economic and social conditions remained the same (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Using the concept of interest convergence, Bell posited

that the US adopted the civil rights legislation since it served White Americans' interests rather than improving African Americans' economic and social conditions (Milner IV et al., 2013).

Critical Race Theory is increasingly used in education to investigate structural, ideological, and institutional racism (Braveman et al., 2022). Structural racism refers to the systemic mistreatment of minority ethnic groups, leading to material shortcomings, while institutional racism is associated with social and political influences or forces or racial behaviours in institutional settings, leading to unconscious or conscious racism through policies and practices (Ugiagbe et al., 2022). CRT defines racism and racial behaviours within the institutional and hierarchical structures of education (Braveman et al., 2022), making it a vital tool in understanding the racial experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector. According to Ugiagbe and colleagues (2022), CRT is based on three concepts associated with institutional and structural racism. CRT argues that racism is a daily occurrence for people of colour, is often not recognised, and is challenging to eliminate. Based on this perspective, CRT theorists argue that by not acknowledging racism, Whites fail to identify themselves as racist or part of racist institutions and structures (Clarke & Garner, 2010). Secondly, Ugiagbe and colleagues (2022) indicated that CRT theorists argue that the inability of White people to perceive themselves as racists lead to their inability to identify the interests they accrue, such as economic and political interests. Third, Diangelo (2018) indicated that CRT perceives race as a social construct with no link to biological discourses.

While the proponents of the Critical Race Theory disagree on several aspects of the theory, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) noted that they all agree with its core precept that racism is not a societal anomaly but a daily occurrence. Based on the CRT theorists, responding to racism, which is deeply entrenched in many societies, with actions and attitudes, such as equal treatment regardless of race and colour, may not completely alleviate racism. Based on the analysis by Delgado and Stefancic (2001), since racism benefits both the White elites, the majority has little motivation to alleviate it. The current study goes beyond racial ethics, which is a dominant discourse in education. It explores the racial experiences of Black teachers who are pursuing or have pursued employment opportunities in the ALE sector. The study follows the three precepts of CRT, that is, racism as a daily occurrence for people of colour and that it is often not recognised, the inability of White people to perceive themselves as racists, leading to their inability to identify the interests they accrue; and the perception that race is a social construct with no link to biological discourses.



In the Irish education context, Kitching (2013) stated that CRT theorists trace racism in several ways, including looking at the historical works of white Traveller politicians and activists such as Nan Joyce and Sean Maher to investigate the racial othering in the formal curriculum, instances where the Travellers' attempted to set up schools outside the state structure and were suppressed, contemporary austerity measures in education for Travellers and other minority groups, and the ongoing attempts to absorb Travellers as cultural genocide. These aligns with the current research's aims, which aim to explore Black teachers' racial experiences in the ALE context to help improve the participation and involvement of Black teachers in the sector. Besides, CRT is observed in Irish education in its relative Whitening and classed approach since the country's complex struggles in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Rolston, 2004). These positionings established key means and classifications through which many Irish movements began a process of political, education, and linguistic Whitening. This led to the modern differential racialisation and hierarchies that impact the minority ethnicities and immigrants' employment opportunities in Ireland, including the ALE sector. It also cultivated the now rampant endemic nature of racism and the maintenance of colour-blindness and White privilege approaches (O'Connor, 2010).

Furthermore, racism is the creation of hierarchies supported by institutionalized power. CRT is a legal theory designed to counter race-evasive and meritocratic theories that blame the communities of colour, damning social and economic problems. Annamma et al. (2017) refer to it as colour-blindness, or neglect of the reality of racism, to promote the status quo. McKay (2010) indicated that when CRT and critical pedagogy act in concert, adult and community education allows the learners to express themselves. Based on this perspective, CRT challenges governance that is coined around socially constructed reality and is detached from reality. The theory has encountered hurdles in the White majority environment, where policies and laws protect Whiteness (Joseph, 2017). For instance, in Ireland, Whiteness is a carrier of the right to power and property (Annamma et al., 2017). Institutions that promote race and racism ignore the importance of racism and race altogether, inadvertently promoting inequalities. CRT exposes systematic racism and tries to disrupt its structures by promoting the needs of visions of the community of colour. As a result, CRT has been adopted to analyse the racial environment of teacher candidates of colour (Ní Dhuinn & Keane, 2021), institutional racial policies (McDaid & Nowlan, 2021), and institutional response to racial inequalities (Jeffers & Lillis, 2021). Therefore, the CRT legacy is an important foundation for understanding Ireland's current teacher racial environment.

## **2.3. Empirical Review**

An empirical review of the literature on the experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector is presented in this section. To find out the issues related to the study topic and its objectives, several studies have been reviewed and debated.

### **2.3.1. Racism in Ireland**

#### **2.3.1.1. *Institutional and structural Racism***

Institutional racism or systemic racism emerged in the late 1960s thanks to the reasoning put forth by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton in their book: *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. According to Carmichael and Hamilton (2008), institutional racism refers to the perpetuation of White superiority as captured in daily thoughts and actions at the systems level. Institutional racism can happen in one or more institutions that define society, including education, health care, art, and religion. Institutional racism is concerned with how the wider society should operate in the interests of the dominant majority (McCluney et al., 2021; O'Connor, 2010). In many cases, such racism prevents minorities from accessing critical institutions. Punitive laws and regulations could be in place to frustrate minorities from ascending to these institutions (McCluney et al. 2021). Accordingly, Carmichael and Hamilton captured institutional racism by stating that when a Black family moves into a home in a White neighbourhood and is stoned, burned or routed out, they are victims of an overt act of individual racism, which most people will condemn. Nevertheless, it is institutional racism that keeps Black people locked in dilapidated slum tenements, subject to the daily prey of exploitative slumlords, merchants, loan sharks and discriminatory real estate agents. Society either pretends it does not know of this latter situation or is incapable of doing anything meaningful about it (Carmichael & Hamilton, 2008).

Structural racism is viewed as embedded in the interconnected practices, policies, and norms that enable the operationalisation of systemic racism in the education sector (Braveman et al., 2022; Kohli & Pizarro, 2022). This suggests that structural racism is associated with inequalities in structures, institutions, systems, and manifestations that lead to racially unequal results. For instance, many scholars have indicated that differences between Blacks and Whites in the education-level domains represent structural or systemic racism (Kohli & Pizarro, 2022). Systemic racism leads to dangerous conscious or unconscious thinking, escalating assumptions of White supremacy in people's capacities or institutions. Kohli and Pizarro (2022) further indicated that since the 1970s, most teachers, adjunct instructors, and tenured/tenure track instructors have

been White. Based on the existing scholarly evidence, structural racism manifests in education when racism is normalised within the structures of the teaching workforce and teacher education (Marom, 2019). Souto-Manning (2019) indicated that by making systemic racism invisible or accepted in the teaching workforce and teacher education, white interests are furthered.

From the Irish adult education perspective, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA, 2006) defined institutional racism as prejudiced provisions entrenched in regulations, legislation, and other formal practices. Consequently, the Department of Education and Science (2000) noted that Travellers and other minority ethnicities experience institutional racism by facing serious educational challenges, especially in adult education. Their analysis highlighted two specific challenges that the minority populations, such as Blacks and Travellers, experience, including dismissing their cultural patterns in adult education settings and insufficient language education and basic literacy. The Department of Education and Science (2000) stated that some minority ethnicities in Ireland have challenges accessing educational opportunities, impacting language, curricula, course materials, teacher selection and education modes. The White Paper reiterated the need for inclusivity and diversity to allow the marginalised ethnic groups to participate in policy formulation and shaping; however, according to O'Connor (2010), little has been achieved to allow the marginalised ethnic groups to shape policy in the Irish education sector, especially adult education.

Furthermore, Wiesyk (2023) indicated that in the Irish labour market, persistent structural racism significantly contributes to the endangerment and exclusion of minority ethnic groups, such as Black teachers. For instance, Wiesyk noted that the overall unemployment rate for Blacks is 19 percent higher than White Irish people. This indicates that when all factors are constant, non-EU migrants, especially Blacks and other minority ethnic groups of African descent, are more likely to face unemployment than Irish Whites. The country and the ALE sector often experience discrimination, segregation, and prejudice against people of African descent, as highlighted by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD, n.d.). CERD recommends that the Irish government take effective measures and controls to address segregation, prejudice, and discrimination against people of African descent in the country's education and employment sectors. Persistent structural or systemic racism in the Irish education and employment sectors was visible during the COVID-19 pandemic when concerns associated with the inability to secure jobs

in Irish schools escalated among migrant teachers despite many schools struggling to recruit the right teachers to help schools bridge the impacts of the pandemic (McGuire, 2021).

Besides, Ireland further experiences Anti-black racism. According to Wiesyk (2023), Anti-Black racism is associated with segregation, prejudice, or discrimination of people perceived as Black or African. Rolston (2004) noted that Irish anti-black racism emanates from the global legacies of slavery and colonialism and can manifest through individual racist behaviours or societal microaggressions, such as being “*where are you really from?*”. Anti-black racism also manifests through structural racism in Ireland, such as in the job market, where Black people are denied opportunities because of their colour or ties with African descent (Wiesyk, 2023). These negatively affect a person’s physical and mental well-being, safety, and family. These negatively impact individuals and their families’ mental, physical, and emotional health and safety.

#### **2.3.1.2. *Minority Presence in the Irish Education Sector***

O’Connor (2010) noted that cultural diversity is advancing in Ireland if using terms such as celebrating difference is a measure of inclusivity. However, in today’s liberal societies, such terms are never celebrated or respected. Many scholars have highlighted the even balance of students in the Irish primary and secondary levels of education (Adebayo & Heinz, 2023; Jeffers & Lillis, 2021; O’Connor, 2010). However, scholarly evidence has also highlighted the inequalities between the majority and minority ethnicities in the teaching workforce in Ireland (Kempny & Michael, 2021; McDaid & Nowlan, 2021; Murphy et al., 2016; Smyth et al., 2009). Besides, evidence also shows inequalities in access to education and learning and other opportunities, such as teaching vacancies in the ALE and higher education sectors, as suggested by the low number of Blacks, Asylum Seekers, Travellers, and non-EU residents (O’Connor, 2010). The Irish Government’s policies of distribution and direct provision of access to ALE have been less impactful in preventing structural, anti-black, and institutional racism in the Irish ALE sector, with the population accessing ALE services and opportunities comprising more Irish Whites than the minority ethnic groups (O’Connor, 2010). For instance, Kempny and Michael (2021) noted that diversity and inclusivity were more prevalent within the student population than within Ireland’s teaching workforce and staff. The authors highlighted the need to introduce policies to improve diversity and inclusivity among the academic staff. Kempny and Michael suggested introducing new hiring policies, revising employment criteria, encouraging diversity and inclusivity through outreach activities, and adopting pro-active equality, diversity, and

inclusivity (EDI) policies. On their part, the Department of Education and Science (2000) noted insufficient data relating to the presence and participation of minority ethnic groups in ALE. The authors noted that the Traveller community is the largest minority ethnic group in Ireland; however, discerning their presence and participation in the Irish ALE sector was challenging due to limited scholarly data.

### **2.3.1.3. *Pedagogies and Cultural Identities in the Irish Education Sector***

The structured pedagogies around the world advocate for the local cultures despite the growing globalisation of education. Curricula content and teaching styles from America to China mirror local cultural requirements. The Irish learners are taught locally relevant content just as their Chinese counterparts in China. The Irish curriculum follows the common core state standards for math, language arts, English, geography, history, and science (Kempny & Michael, 2021). As a result, all teachers must undergo local training to understand these standards before they are recognised by the Irish teaching recognition council and admitted to teach at any private or public school (Darby, 2022). This suggests that the curriculum is racialised, providing the learners with a Eurocentric approach to teaching and learning (Andrews, 2019).

Pedagogical differences frustrate minority teachers, especially immigrant teachers trying to fit into the local instructional atmosphere. In Ireland, immigrant teachers must undergo training to master the common core state standards before starting work (Casey, 2021; McDaid & Nowlan, 2021). These systems fail to recognise foreign teacher qualifications because they might dilute local cultural identities deeply embedded in local curricula. Due to these barriers, immigrant teachers must first assimilate into the local instructional culture through fresh training or practice (Casey, 2021). Immigrant teachers end up losing their home identities by embracing foreign instructional practices. Unless there is global unification of pedagogies, immigrant teachers have to surmount the barrier of assimilation before land teaching jobs in Ireland.

### **2.3.2. *Racism in the Irish Education Sector***

The Irish government has consistently promoted diversity and inclusivity within the country's education sector (Adebayo & Heinz, 2023; Banks & McCoy, 2017; Fischer, 2016). Several policies have been enacted in the last few decades to escalate achieving inclusivity in the education sector, including the Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), the Equality Act (2004), and the Equal Status Acts (2000). However, these policies have largely focused on integrating learners with learning

disabilities (Adebayo & Heinz, 2023). Less emphasis has been placed on implementing intercultural inclusion policies to improve diversity within the Irish teaching workforce in any education category (O'Connor, 2010). While many scholars agree that inclusivity is an important part of sustainable education, allowing it to meet the educational needs of learners from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, a gap between practice and policy has been highlighted by several scholars (Shevlin et al., 2013). This is often associated with a lack of competency among policymakers and school leaders with regard to championing and implementing culturally inclusive pedagogies, policies, and approaches (Adebayo & Heinz, 2023; Faas et al., 2018; Shevlin et al., 2013). O'Connor emphasised the need for education policy and practice transformation to prevent institutional racism in the Irish education sector.

Historically, the Irish school population have always been homogeneous, predominated by Whites, Catholics, and the Irish (Keane et al., 2022b; Heinz et al., 2018); however, this study could not determine the most predominant population among the Whites, Catholics, and the Irish people in the ALE sector. Consequently, the majority of the Irish teaching workforce is also dominated by the majority ethnic groups in Ireland, who lack the prerequisite competency to manage diverse religious, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds (Smyth et al., 2009). Calls to diversify the Irish teaching profession to reflect the country's student population have recently escalated due to the rapid influx of migrants (Adebayo & Heinz, 2023; Keane et al., 2022b; McGuire, 2021). Based on the research conducted by Ní Dhuinn and Keane (2021), the country's poor diversification of the teaching workforce exposes learners from minority ethnic backgrounds to identity battles, encompassing the feeling of not being recognised as Irish, lack of teachers of their ilk, racist experiences of inadequate teacher response and bullying, and the self-construction of self as deficient students. In this context, the Irish Teaching Council (2020) indicated that inclusivity, including inclusive education and the teaching profession, is essential to realising equality in access to education opportunities. According to Hammond (2015), this is because teachers are responsible for the learners' cognitive development, irrespective of their religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.

### **2.3.3. Racism in the ALE Context**

Despite the continuing global rhetoric of equality, the teaching experience of many teachers from Black and other minority ethnicities in many White predominant nations is substantially unequal and separated (Darling-Hammond, 2000). According to Jeffers and Lillis (2021), all

schools receive the national educational framework and policies; however, they differ in what they accept and reject and how they integrate the policy framework into their cultures and traditions. In other words, educational policies are influenced and shaped by various school-specific factors in Ireland and many parts of Europe. However, despite acknowledging sensitivity to school challenges, O'Connor (2010) noted that teachers from the minority ethnic groups struggle to get opportunities in the country's education system, disadvantaging students from the minority ethnicities.

Grummell (2007) noted that Ireland has experienced the growth of market competitiveness, consumerism, and individualism discourses in the ALE sector. This encourages the belief that individuals are responsible for enhancing their employability and life opportunities. Grummell (2007) further noted that this has promoted an approach to Irish adult learning that advantages the marketplace, enhancing economic flexibility for the adult, casualised labour force. However, Grummell indicated that (quoting the Department of Education and Science's Charting Our Education White Paper) the Irish adult education policymaking has been unstructured. The author linked it to the UK's lifelong learning, which focuses on the learner's employability and social inclusion skills at the expense of equality in policy priority. Based on the analysis by Brine (2006), these competing discourses move ALE towards skills privileging, contributing to increased racial segregation and discrimination in access to opportunities. Besides, it results in high knowledge-skilled and low knowledge-skilled differentiations. Brine (2006) noted that the high knowledge-skilled category comprises the White dominant and privileged teachers, while the low knowledge-skilled teachers are those from minority ethnicities, positioned in a society where they are viewed as at risk and risk.

Furthermore, Grummell (2007) stated that the country's emphasis on equality of life chances is joined closely with the aspect of interculturalism, using ALE as a tool for cultural and social inclusion. The author continued that the Irish Department of Education and Science provided the significance of state policies supporting the ideals of ALE, including societal transformation, participative democracy, and empowerment. However, the adult education system employs the narrow practice of increased access for specific groups in society, paving the way for the Whitening and colour-blindness approach to accessing employment opportunities (Grummell, 2007). Learning opportunities for the minority and Black populations are a second chance. Grummell (2007) indicated that adult learning and education are viewed as a second chance since

it offers adults an opportunity to retain new educational knowledge or re-access the education system. Somers and Bradford (2006) stated that viewing adult learning programs as a second chance provides a model that is not concerned with equality, advocacy, politicisation, and solidarity among the marginalised population, such as Black teachers. Grummell noted that this approach promotes individualism, where opportunities are diverted from their civic and social roles to promote the White's interests.

O'Connor (2010) stated that the aspect of racism in the context of Irish education, especially ALE is relatively untouched by Irish scholars to date. Based on O'Connor's analysis, the country's ALE sector experiences institutional racism, where ethnic minorities endure silent discrimination and segregation caused by intrinsic ALE sector structures. This is affirmed by O'Brien (2009), who posited that Irish's current ALE system significantly fails to guarantee opportunities for teachers from minority ethnicities, including Black teachers. According to O'Connor (2010), many educators from minority ethnicities, including Black teachers, lack the necessary skills and appropriate teaching methods to teach in the country's adult education sector and meet the learners' needs. However, O'Connor further questions how these teachers can acquire the required skills when these skills, such as suitable English language courses, are only available to a specific group of people. However, O'Connor (2010) affirmed that the sector is revolutionising due to the increased opportunities for teachers with intercultural work experience, the use of authentic teaching materials to meet the needs of all learners, and the significance of conflict resolution skills to help teachers handle conflicting situations, such as a case of racial abuse among learners.

This suggests that inequality in the Irish adult education sector is a recurring theme. According to Jeffers and Lillis (2021), the core of the challenge regrettably has been attributed to a lack of attention in the prejudiced system and the need for more political priority on the pursuit of egalitarian citizenship. For the past two decades, adult education and employment opportunities have mainly benefited the majority middle class, the Whites, and moderate farmers (Heinz & Keane, 2018). For instance, various scholars have posited that ALE is largely characterised by homogeneity, with the majority of the teaching workforce being White, the settled communities, and the indigenous Irish (Heinz & Keane, 2018; 2016; 2015; Ní Dhuinn & Keane, 2021). Consequently, O'Brien (2009) indicated that several aspects of the Irish adult learning system were institutionally racist, and the issue was inadequately addressed. Keane and Heinz (2015) stated



that attempts to diversify the Irish teaching workforce are more recent, despite being a contentious international issue for the past few decades.

O'Connor (2010) stated that the existing scholarly resources have indicated that the correlation between racism or racial segregation and education is very complex. The author continued by indicating that in the Irish context, institutional racism or institutional racial segregation has been reported. However, it occurs indirectly and is often not acknowledged as racial segregation or racism. According to O'Connor (2010), the entire concept of institutional racism in the ALE sector has been entangled with moral and intellectual standards, allowing ALE institutions to operate with a colour-blindness approach and rarely admitting practising institutional racism. This is reinforced in the OECD (2021) report, indicating that foreign-born adults, including professionals in the education sector in Ireland, experience more challenges finding a job than their native peers. This is due to several challenges associated with the sector's endemic racism and maintaining a colour-blindness and White privilege approaches. Notably, the OECD (2021) posited that these approaches, in the Irish education context, lead to discrepancies in credential recognition and skills and language assessment, reducing employment prospects for foreign-born adults. Similar sentiments are echoed by O'Connor (2010), quoting the 2000 *White Paper on Adult Education*, which indicated that the minority teachers in the country's ALE sector continue to face serious challenges, including cultural patterns not acknowledged in the entire education system and the need to maintain the Whiteness status quo, equating to institutional racism in ALE.

#### **2.3.4. Race Impacts on ALE Work Dynamics**

Racial identities are crucial elements of the general structure of an individual's collective uniqueness (Daniel et al., 2014). First, there is a deep conscious engagement that an individual has with their cultural traditions and values, which makes an individual's collective uniqueness. These aspects instil a positive perspective of racial identity and confidence. Secondly, in contrast, individuals establish racial identity from the adverse treatment and media information obtained from others based on their racial identity (Brown et al., 2014; McClain et al., 2016). Race is a critical factor that influences the workforce dynamics in ALE in different ways.

Racism and racial segregation present several repercussions and implications to those experiencing it. In the context of teachers, racism impacts the teachers' wellbeing and socio-economic status, besides leading to job or career dissatisfaction, mental and emotional burden, and

increased turnover. Based on a study conducted in England, about 64 percent of teachers from the minority ethnic communities who had experienced racism reported being dissatisfied with their career choice, while about 75 percent considered leaving the profession (Haque & Elliot, 2017). Besides, O'Connor (2010) indicated that institutional racism, especially those associated with a lack of anti-discriminatory policies and intensive anti-discriminatory campaigns, can impact the culture of an educational establishment, influencing, in this case, ALE teachers and leadership's views, commitment, and responsiveness to anti-discriminatory and racist practices. However, based on the analysis by Banks (2016), this can be averted by implementing several dimensions, including equity pedagogy; empowering teachers from all races and restructuring classrooms to accommodate teachers from all ethnicities; prejudice reduction, especially in teacher recruitment; and content integration, especially how ALE teachers use examples and integrate with their colleagues and students of colour. Incorporating these dimensions into the ALE sector would provide huge steps forward to combating institutional racism experienced by Black teachers and other teachers from minority ethnicities in the sector.

According to Tsri (2016), Carmichael and Hamilton's 1967 analysis observed a trend where the White's opinions, interests, and attitudes affected the critical institutions that established American culture, terming it institutional racism. Since then, racism and racial segregation have remained a multifaceted concept that has remained powerful in contemporary living dynamics. On the contrary, education is perceived as a critical aspect that could influence anti-racism and liberation (Arneback & Jämte, 2022). Tomasevski (2003) indicated that the objective towards which education is moulded is to help build tolerance. It helps set the limits of the intolerable, helping create space for diversity, inclusion, and teaching and learning tolerance. However, the education systems have been known to contribute to the various racist issues which are experienced currently (Corcoran, 2020). Understanding the racial impact of the teaching-learning transaction in the workforce is crucial in enhancing effective teaching.

The OECD (2020) indicated that ALE is publicly funded to enhance and maintain social order, economic stability, and a competitive position in the global economy. Support for ALE leads to maintaining an informed, educated, and efficient workforce. ALE also help reduce the unemployment rate, illiteracy cases, and the number of underemployed adults who exist as a potential threat to the stability of the social order. The mission of ALE is to satisfy the needs of various institutions, individuals, and the larger society (Knowles, 2020). However, adult educators

mistakenly interpret this perception as a need to preserve the status quo of the country's democracy. The underlying status quo cherishes independence, individualism, and equal opportunities for everyone in Ireland (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). This assertion presents ALE as exclusionary and elitist, leading to social injustice, which has continued marginalising ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities such as Blacks in the country (French, 2019; Royer & Chang, 2020).

Due to the effects of racism on Black people, Black teachers' classrooms often allow Blackness advocates to practice anti-racist, intersectional, and critical pedagogy (James-Gallaway & Harris, 2021; Kynard, 2020). For Black teachers in ALE, anti-Blackness is engrained behind the premises of colour blindness; however, the result is the disregarding, disdain, and devaluing of Black colour and culture (O'Connor, 2010). Kynard (2020) indicated that Black teachers often reject the status quo and embrace creative alternatives to continue their careers and significance to society to counter this phenomenon. Besides, Warren and colleagues (2020) indicated that this leads to the persistent advancement of social justice initiatives and agenda by interweaving historical and international lessons to conceptualise future visions.

Furthermore, despite the good intentions of Black teachers pursuing careers in the ALE sector, persistent racism negatively affects their retention. Keane et al. (2022b) noted that Black teachers enter the teaching workforce and profession to transform the lives of Black communities; however, they often encounter racism, hindering their effectiveness. This leads to discontent and a feeling that the institutions are not designed to serve the best interest of Blacks, especially in relation to discipline, curriculum, and support (Kohli, 2016). Besides, a lack of inclusivity, diversity, and implied responsibility to freely express the views and perspectives of the race leads to professional dissatisfaction and isolation (Matthews, 2019; Meens & Bakx, 2019). This continued demand and awareness to represent and defend the Blacks' positionality and race leads to burnout, reduced performance, and turnover intentions (Matthews, 2019). Consequently, Black teachers often must weather subtle and insensitive cultural comments and feedback or entirely dismiss their culture due to the colour-blind settings showcased by many adult learning institutions, adding to their professional burnout and fatigue (Kelly, 2020).

Besides the status quo and the colour-blind approaches implemented by most adult learning institutions, Black teachers also encounter microaggressions that cause frustrations, burnout, dissatisfaction, and turnover intentions. According to Frank et al. (2021), microaggressions are the

negative exchanges that teachers encounter, including feedback, insults, and comments. Common examples of microaggressions experienced by teachers include cultural slights (white cultural norms are placed above others), insensitive feedback and comments from White colleagues that demean Black teachers' cultural, emotional, and physical traits and characteristics, and dismissive behaviours, such as refusing to acknowledge the occurrence of a racial incident (Kohli, 2016). Frank et al. (2021) added that pathologizing cultural communication and feeling norms and having to prove one's ability are other instances of microaggressions in education. Darby (2022) stated that this leads to battle attrition and racial battle fatigue. Racial battle fatigue was described in 2008 by William Smith as the emotional, psychological, and physiological toll of dealing with racism and racial practices (Pizarro & Kohli, 2018). The authors stated that battle attrition or racial battle fatigue leads to self-doubt, anxiety, exhaustion, low self-esteem and confidence among Black teachers.

Moreover, Black teachers experience racism from different angles in the Irish ALE context. Besides societal occurrences such as lack of job opportunities and recognition, race is an unavoidable discussion within the ALE and Irish teaching workforce context. O'Donoghue (2022) used the narration by Emer O'Neill that there has never been a Black or deputy principal in Ireland to demonstrate how the issue of racism is entrenched in the Irish education sector. The author associated this trend with a lack of support in terms of empathy, discussions, and action plans or policies to address racial inequalities in the Irish education sector. This suggested that the Irish education sector, including the ALE sector, has left Black teachers to devise ways of dealing with racial incidents and inequalities. According to Jeffers and Lillis (2021), policymakers, administrators, policies and procedures, advocates, and peers' actions could significantly help support the retention of Black teachers; however, the existing lack of action, support, and policies continue to advance racial battle fatigue and increased turnover intentions among Black teachers. Based on the analysis by Kohli (2016), hostile racial climates at institutional and interpersonal levels significantly contribute to Black teachers' increased dissatisfaction and turnover. O'Donoghue (2022) acknowledged the need for more representation in the Irish education system to provide necessary platforms, policies, and action plans to advance inclusivity and diversity for the wellbeing of Black teachers and others from minority ethnicities.

Several adult education teachers assert that the education system for adults is an unbiased educational environment free from the influences of the existing power structures (Carver-

Thomas, 2018; Plachowski, 2019). Although many adult education teachers believe that racial concepts do not influence the educational environment, some studies have discredited this assertion (Closson, 2010). In Ireland, Black teachers are prone to prejudice and discrimination in the education system. For instance, O'Brien (2020) conducted an analysis to determine whether the problem of racism exists in Irish schools. The author analysed the case of a Black teacher in the Irish adult education system known as Christelle Bekombo. O'Brien noted that the cleaners were the only Black adults working in the institution where Bekombo taught. However, O'Brien (2020) noted that Bekombo had beaten all odds to become a teacher in the school and was now a role model to the Black students and aspiring Black teachers. The teacher noted that being a teacher in the school made a significant difference for the Black students, and they became happier. As a Black teacher, Bekombo noted that you must go to the system if the system does not acknowledge you. The issue of racism in the Irish education system is a societal problem, and the schools only represent a fraction of it. The teacher asserted that the discrimination against Black teachers originated from their homes. She recommended that parents be responsible and inform their children that they are bound to meet diverse people with different skin colours, hair textures, and backgrounds. The variation in such characteristics does not mean Black teachers are less intelligent than Whites. Bekombo also noted that most Black students were discouraged by their families from taking teaching courses since it was not regarded as a profession that suited their kind. O'Brien found that despite the classrooms in Ireland being more diverse for the past decade, the same is not seen in the teaching profession. However, O'Brien (2020) suggested extensive systematic research to determine the extent of racism in the Irish teaching workforce.

#### **2.4. Research Gap**

Like in many nations, literature provides that the ALE sector is clouded with racial prejudices. The major gap in research about the dearth of Black teachers in the ALE system is unquestionable. It is evident from the literature that Black teachers struggle to find their way into the ALE teaching workforce, besides other negative experiences. However, scholarly research is limited on these experiences. For example, the Department of Education and Science (2000) openly point out the absence of data pertaining to the involvement of teachers from minority ethnicities in ALE in Ireland. The authors noted the absence of similar data for the Traveller community (the largest minority group in Ireland) in ALE, indicating the dire need to investigate

these populations' experiences in the context of Irish ALE. Under such circumstances, the present research could contribute immensely to obtaining data on minority group involvement in ALE.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1.Introduction**

Research methodology deals with the systematic reply to a research question. Besides, it can be regarded as a study of how research is carried out scientifically. Research methodologies are important because they indicate the methodology and techniques used to support research practices. This chapter restates the objectives and research questions that formed the basis for these studies. The chapter will then describe the research methodology, research design, data collection instruments, research participants, sampling techniques and data analysis methods used in the present study.

### **3.2. Study Methodology**

Based on the current study's aim and objectives, this author sought to provide a general route to foster inclusion, diversity, equality, and empowerment for Black learners and teachers in the ALE in Ireland as a social change movement. As a metaphor for this, this author considered interviewing a few Blacks who qualify for employment opportunities in ALE to determine how to inspire and motivate others to pursue teaching careers in ALE. The author sought to understand the experiences of those who have scaled the diversity and inclusion barriers to getting employment opportunities in the sector and those still trying to provide a critical and empirical understanding of the racial experiences of Black teachers in ALE. This was achieved by adopting the Critical Race Theory, which was essential in deconstructing how the participants' experiences were impacted by stereotypical, prejudiced, and racially discriminatory cultural perceptions in the Irish ALE.

This study utilised qualitative research methods and design, using interviews and counter-storytelling to collect data. Qualitative research methods vary based on the methods used for collecting data. The qualitative research method concentrates on explaining social phenomena. Therefore, it allows researchers to better understand the social universe and why different things exist the way they do (Mohajan, 2018). Additionally, a qualitative research design addresses how people regard and interpret different encounters to understand people's social reality. A qualitative research design is crucial in allowing a researcher to obtain detailed analysis and comprehension of a concept based on primary experiences. This can only be attained using a relatively small, focused sample since data collection could consume more time. Qualitative information usually focuses on in-depth findings, unlike quantifiable analysis. With a qualitative research method,

researchers target to obtain answers relating to the “how and why” of the concept in question (Mohajan, 2018). Qualitative research is subjective, and the findings are assembled in a written design and not in the form of numerical. This implies that data obtained from qualitative research cannot be analysed using quantitative mechanisms, such as statistical methods, since there is a possibility of the absence of commonalities between the different findings obtained from the collected data.

However, qualitative research allows coding if common categories are obtained during analysis. Azungah (2011) indicated that qualitative research is essential in deductive reasoning. It is rooted in diverging from the general proof toward developing a conclusive theoretical model that supports quantitative research. Creswell and Creswell (2017) indicated that in a qualitative research design, people seek to understand the world where they live and work as well as the way they develop the subjective meaning of their experiences to search for the complication of views instead of narrowing them to a few and unrealistic ones. This research aligns with Creswell's indications regarding data analysis and interpretations through detailed data collection. This is because the targeted participants are few, and according to studies, a qualitative research design is appropriate for exploring and understanding the details of this inquiry.

The current study selected a qualitative research design since it sought to analyse a phenomenon and the participants' experience based on how they influence others (Mertler, 2021). Based on the aim and objectives of the current study, a qualitative research design allowed this researcher to assess Black teachers' racial experiences in ALE and describe those experiences and the nature connecting them (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). This included interpreting the individual perspectives of the Black teachers in ALE and maintaining close contact with the participants' experiences to establish a subjective understanding of their experiences and answer the research question. The research design further allowed this author to connect broad ideas across experiences since the author utilised open-ended interviews to collect and thematic analysis to analyse the collected data.

### **3.3. Data Collection**

Scholars have used different methods to gather qualitative data. This includes observations, case studies, interviews, counter-storytelling, narratives, visual/text analysis, action research, and focus groups (Gill et al., 2008). Many scholars have used interviews and counter-storytelling to collect participants' perceptions of social events or issues (Gill et al., 2008). Primarily, scholars



have adopted interviews to investigate the participants' experiences, views, personal beliefs, and motivations concerning the social event issue. Gill et al. (2008) further posited that interviews are effective when the investigator lacks adequate knowledge of a social issue since interviews allow the participants to provide detailed information about the issue. However, this author had a solid racial experience with the Irish ALE sector.

The current research explored the racial experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector. This researcher envisaged that the current study's findings would act as an eye-opener for policymakers and advocates to prioritise the issue of diversity, equality, and inclusion in the Irish adult education sector. Due to limited resources, this researcher considered interviews and counter-storytelling as the most appropriate data collection tool since they allowed the interviewees to provide deep insights about their racial experiences, opinions, and perception of racism in the ALE sector. Primarily, this author chose counter stories since it allows the participants an avenue to use their own words and tell their own stories, helping them establish a complex and informed narrative that represents their experiences and realities. This was essential to the current research since it guided the author's voice to collect authentic narratives that highlight the existing racial inequalities in the ALE teaching workforce, which is largely characterised by White human capital. The instrument used in this research for collecting data was semi-structured, open-ended interviews. The topic addressed in this research was interesting, and the participants were easily involved in this research through counter-storytelling.

Using a qualitative research method implied a critical inquiry into a series of conditions that sought the individual perspective of various participants. The aim was to understand why there are no Black teachers in ALE. To obtain relevant data, sending questionnaires to the participants by email, post, and google drive before the interview was deemed suitable. This ensured that the participants were aware of the interview's contents. Interviews and counter-stories were conducted in person or virtually, depending on the participants' preferences. Interviews are essential in qualitative research since they help explain, enhance a better understanding, and explore the research participants' behaviours, ideologies, phenomena, and encounters (Brooks et al., 2018). Interview questions are often open-ended to allow the collection of in-depth data. According to Adhabi & Anozie (2017), interviews are common instruments applied in qualitative research. They can be administered as structured, unstructured, or semi-structured. Besides, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) indicated that counter-storytelling is a method of narrating the experiences of individuals

whose stories are often untold. It is an important tool for exploring, assessing, and challenging the majoritarian accounts of racial privilege.

This study depended on semi-structured, open-ended interviews, which allowed the researcher to engage with the participants through a face-to-face conversation. The interviewees had been sent the interview content before the interview day. Therefore, they responded to a series of pre-set questions (open-ended), which were connected to the study's purpose. The author further allowed space for counter-storytelling, where the participants told stories about their racial experiences within ALE and contextualised the within the study objective. This included listening to the participants' stories on opposition and resistance to the status quo, indicating the power of the participants to identify ways to create change in the ALE sector and institutions (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This researcher completed the thirteen interviews between January and March 2023, utilising the University and the participant's places of choice to complete the face-to-face interviews. The interviewees articulated their views on the experiences of Black teachers in the ALE system. The interview transcript contained a total of fifteen open-ended questions that had a direct linkage to the purpose of the research. Each session of the interview took between 35 minutes to an hour since the investigation employed open-ended interview questions, allowing the participants to provide detailed responses associated with their racial experiences in the ALE sector. The interviews further lasted approximately 35 minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes due to the application of counter-storytelling. All interview responses were audio-recorded and transcribed to enhance data analysis.

### 3.4. Research Participants

Number	Background	Graduate	Qualified Teachers
4	Nigerians	2	2
3	South Africans	2	1
3	Congolese	1	1
2	Irish Born Blacks	2	0
1	Kenyan	1	1
<b>13</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>

*Table 1: Participant Demographics*

The participants for this research study were thirteen and composed of five teachers and eight graduates. The five teachers interviewed were qualified to teach in the ALE system.

However, three had been forced to be creative due to a lack of opportunities in Ireland, while two were employed part-time. Consequently, the eight graduates were struggling and had never been recruited to be teachers despite them having all that is required to teach in the ALE sector. The reason for choosing a small sample is that few Black teachers are in Ireland. Obtaining the feelings and experiences of those teachers in their profession could be crucial in inspiring more Black teachers.

### **3.5. Sampling Techniques**

Sampling techniques are the procedures that researchers utilise to determine and select the appropriate sample population or participants for a study. Sampling involves the processes that determine eligible subjects, the sample size, and the sample composition (Malterud et al., 2016). The participants were recruited for the study through a snowball sampling to give the researcher ideal participants. The sample size depended on the data saturation, which implies that the interviews went on to a point where no new insights or themes emerged. The researcher also depended on the existing participants to help identify other suitable participants for the study (Parker et al., 2019). It is useful when studying hard-to-reach populations, such as those that are small in relation to the general population. According to the Central Statistics Office (2022), the population of Black people in Ireland is estimated to be 1.2 percent, making the snowball sampling technique suitable to identify suitable participants for the study.

The main participants for this research were Black graduates and teachers in Ireland's ALE sector. The study did not consider the participants' employment status or their countries of birth. The aim was to recruit Black graduates and teachers qualified for employment in the ALE sector to help explore the racial experiences of Black teachers in ALE. The recruitment process of the participants was done mostly by relying on the support of one potential participant, who was recruited through a connection in the EPALe community. The participant connected the researcher with other Black teachers she was in connection with. The research was conducted on the days each participant agreed to be assigned interviews. It was recommended that the interviews occur when the participants were off duty. By explaining the aim of the research, there was a higher possibility of motivating other teachers and graduates to want to be part of this research. Gatekeepers play a critical role in the research study since they protect the interviewees and the interviewers (O'Reilly et al., 2013). In this study, the supervisor who played the gatekeeper role

was updated on all the fieldwork steps. A thematic analysis technique was adopted to ensure proper data analysis.

### **3.6. Data Analysis Methods**

The current study used qualitative data because it relied on interviews and data from counter-storytelling. According to Borgstede and Scholz (2021), interviews and counter stories provide descriptive, interpretation-based and personal interaction/language data, which are tenets of qualitative data. Therefore, using a thematic analysis mechanism to analyse the data was appropriate. A thematic analysis is a mechanism through which qualitative data is analysed by reading a set of data and identifying patterns in the meaning of that data to identify themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Thematic analysis is highly applied in qualitative research since it focuses on recognising, evaluating, interpreting, and reporting themes, trends, and patterns obtained in qualitative data datasets. With thematic analysis, researchers can examine the meaning of the information collected and identify the patterns and themes that might be important to the research questions and objectives. The analysis method is flexible and can apply to various qualitative data, including focus groups, interviews, and observational data. The thematic analysis enabled the researchers to recognise the themes, patterns, and trends within the responses obtained from the interviews. Ultimately, the researcher could interpret and formulate proper inferences from the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a significant tool that allows researchers to understand the perspectives and experiences of the subjects in a research study.

The information collected during the interviews was analysed using Braun and Clarke's step-by-step approach. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined six thematic analysis steps. These included familiarising with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. To grasp the information, the investigator first conducted a thorough review of the collected data. Second, the information was coded by highlighting the portions of the interview responses related to the study's goals to reduce the collected data into small and meaningful information. The current study was a theoretical thematic analysis rather than an inductive thematic analysis; thus, it coded the data segments relevant to the study's research aim and objectives. For instance, the issue of not being able to get employment opportunities was highlighted by many participants and was very relevant to the current research; therefore, it was coded. Besides, the issue of equal access to opportunities also emerged from several responses and was relevant to the current research; thus, it was coded. Third, this researcher

created codes that described the highlighted interview responses. Fourth, this researcher identified the recurring patterns in the coded data. Fifth, based on the purpose and goals of the research, the investigator combined the detected codes to develop themes. Sixth, the investigator checked to see if the identified themes adequately represented the collected data. Seventh, the themes were titled and defined to create precise and understandable labels for each theme that was consistent with the information already available and the goal and objectives of the research.

### **3.7. Ethical Considerations**

Researchers must adhere to ethical standards to protect the subjects' rights, dignity, and welfare. An ethics committee reviews all research that involves human beings to ascertain that the required ethical principles are upheld (Hasan et al., 2021). Ethical considerations are essential in ensuring that all activities involved in the research study involving human beings are carried out ethically and responsibly. The ethical considerations for a research study include the principles of beneficence, justice, and respect for people (Hasan et al., 2021). Reasons for ethical considerations include the protection of subjects, ensuring informed consent, protection of confidentiality, enhancing research integrity, and compliance with laws. The informed consent form was obtained from the Department of Med-Maynooth University in this research study. Reflexivity was implemented in this research to create a safe space for the participants.

The research aimed to explore the experiences of Black graduates and educators. The data collected was safe with a secure code and pin that was not accessible to anyone apart from the researchers and the research supervisor regarding general data protection regulations. The data collected was stored for six months, after which all information would be shredded and discarded completely and securely. The participants were informed that the interviews were recorded for transcription and that the information would not be used for any other purpose. All potential risks in this research were managed by enhancing the confidentiality of all participants by protecting the collected data and storing it in a secure place. All the participants were well informed about their participation in the research, including their willingness to participate and the freedom to withdraw their consent if they felt they never wanted to be part of the study anymore. The researchers respected the views of the participants with all dignity. A reference was included for the supervisor if there was a need to clarify anything in the process. The research did not pose any conflict of interest, and it was anticipated for the benefit of all. The research was a voluntary

exploration that promoted inclusion, diversity, equality and empowerment in the adult and community education sector.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### 4.1.Introduction

The current study was guided by the Critical Race Theory (CRT) to investigate the experiences of thirteen Black teachers certified through the recognition of the Irish Teaching Council. The study used CRT to examine the impacts of race on Black teachers' abilities to get employment opportunities in the ALE sector. In this context, the study discussed the endemic nature of racism, the maintenance of colour-blindness and White privilege approaches in the ALE sector, and the resulting heightened and open discriminatory practices against Black teachers. The interview responses and counter-stories obtained from the participants provided the foundation of the thematic analysis.

### 4.2.Core Themes and Sub-themes

Using the grounded theory, three main themes linked to the study's aim and objectives were analysed and classified according to the interview response. These themes were then interpreted and discussed to inform the aim and objectives of the study. Notably, the three themes included racial experiences during the teacher education, in the labour market, and the overall impact of Black teachers' racial experiences.

Themes	Sub-themes
Racial experiences during teacher education	i. Experiences during work placement ii. Stereotypes and assumptions of minorities iii. Lack of safe and inclusive spaces
Labour Market	i. Getting a job ii. Recognition iii. Equal opportunities and support
The Overall Impact of the Black Teachers' Racial Experiences	i. Psychological and Social Impact

### 4.3.Interpretation of Emerging Themes

Using semi-structured and open-ended interviews, this study asked the participants to describe their racial experiences within the nation's ALE system. In their responses, all the participants reported a lack of opportunities for Black teachers, inequalities, community support, and several socioeconomic and health impacts. Many indicated that they had lost hope of

succeeding in their careers while still in the adult school system since they experienced extreme forms of racism and racial segregation from the teaching staff and the White learners. Besides, other participants noted that creativity had become a fundamental aspect of Black teacher's life in Ireland, especially Black teachers in the adult education system, not to advance their careers but rather to invent opportunities to enhance their survival in the country since they cannot be employed through the mainstream system.

#### **4.3.1. Racial Experiences during Teacher Education**

The Black-qualified teachers interviewed by this researcher reported several instances associated with negative racial experiences during teacher education as Blacks aspiring to be teachers. Based on their responses, several sub-themes emerged, including experiences during work placement, stereotypes and assumptions of the minorities, and a lack of safe and inclusive spaces for black teachers.

##### ***4.3.1.1. Experiences during Work Placement***

Eleven of the thirteen participants interviewed by this researcher described their experiences with their White peers and learners during work placement as very poor. Specifically, from most of the eleven participants' perceptions, Black teachers experience reinforced cultural attitudes, including colour blindness and whiteness approaches, during work placement. Due to the existing cultural attitudes, colour blindness, and White privilege approaches, many participants reported a lack of trust in their abilities by other staff members and the students, especially since they are required to teach White learners, with the reigning perception being that they negatively impact the organisational culture. For instance, Paul explained that *“while interning, many White people believe that we are aggressive and offer limited in terms of expertise and skills due to our immigrant background and skin colour. You are questioned and over-supervised if given an opportunity since they do not believe in our ability to deliver quality and world-changing educational content compared to our White peers. This automatically lowers your options of employment because the employer believes they are better off without you.”* He narrated an instance when a student reported that he was not the best teacher for a specific module because the student could not stand being taught by a Black teacher with limited teaching experience. The student argued that he always did not understand what Paul was teaching due to his African accent and linguistic presentation. Paul indicated that this instance lowered his teaching motivation, especially since the management did little to protect Paul from what he recognised as racial



profiling. According to Paul, he was subjected to direct monitoring, which he viewed as promoting racial behaviours among the learners in ALE. Paul continued by indicating, *“I still interacted with that student in the class and within the institution; however, I never felt motivated to continue teaching because I was afraid of a similar occurrence. Besides, I have never enjoyed being a teacher since this experience and cannot advise anyone to pursue a teaching career in ALE”*.

Besides, two other participants noted that work placement experiences in the country’s ALE sector was an extension of the hate and racial discrimination practices they experienced in their communities. Like Paul, Mary, who has a part-time role in one of the adult learning institutions in the country, noted that it was extremely difficult to establish a partnership with their White peers because they never appreciated the ability and contribution of Black interns. Based on her perception, this extended to the White students, making the classrooms and the administration areas uncondusive for black teachers. This made Mary to need to change professions or lower engagements with the learners and the teachers. Mary stated, *“while undertaking work placements within the ALE sector, though just a few months, you need a heavy heart to keep going. This is because the White adult students and many of the White teachers openly racialize Black interns and teachers from other minority groups. This comes in the form of increased scrutinising of your performance compared to the White peers and the view from students and other teachers that you are not good enough. This view is never objective but based on your skin colour because, as far as I know, no scholarly evidence posits that Black people or people from minority populations are incompetent or lack skills when they have the same qualifications as their White or majority peers.”* Consequently, Otomo stated that *“you are not respected by your White peers, both while studying to be teachers, during your work placement, and when you are already a certified and recognised teacher. Most of them view Black teachers as not ready for the teaching role and should pursue other low-cadre societal roles. This lowers our motivation and desire, leading to many Black teachers quitting the profession or becoming creative to have an input in society.”* These responses showed the impact of racism on Black teachers’ work placement experiences, with all eleven participants demonstrating dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, and reduced morale due to racial experiences from White students and peers during their work placements.

#### **4.3.1.2. Stereotypes and Assumptions of Minorities**

All thirteen participants indicated that being Black comes with many challenges, and being a Black student and teacher, especially in a White predominant society, adds its own challenges. Five of the thirteen participants argued that racism seemed permanent in the ALE sector, negating the available change indicators. They identified several stereotypes, such as “ghetto,” “acting black”, “acting white”, and “thugs”, as some commonly used stereotypes associated with Black teachers and black people. For instance, Miriam noted, *“I think the problems that we experience in the ALE sector as teachers are due to Ireland’s history with British colonialism and their traditional unwillingness to accept diversity and inclusivity, which I think is affecting the modern generation. Some students and even the teachers view Black learners as ‘thugs’ and/or ‘ghetto’ people, which shows the level at which we are not accepted. Being viewed as a thug does not mean well because, from what I know, a thug is a criminal and a very aggressive and violent criminal. In many cases, they use these stereotypes behind your back, but when you hear about it, it is really frustrating and demeaning.”* Miriam’s response highlighted the stereotypical and microaggressions that Blacks experience while training as teachers through ALE institutions and their impact on the stereotyped individual. Based on the response, Black students training as teachers feel demeaned and disrespected at the while studying for their teaching qualifications.

Like Miriam, Adufe reinforced this point of view by stating that *“many White students and teachers have coined specific terms to identify specific behavioural aspects, where bad behaviours are associated with Black skin colour and good behaviours associated with White skin colour. For example, most of these schools are predominately White, from the administration, and students, to the non-teaching staff. Thus, when you hear them say that ‘you are acting black’, they mean that the student is indulging in inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours; when they say ‘you are acting white’, the student is indulging in appropriate and acceptable behaviours.”* In adult education institutions, race is viewed as many different things, including how someone decides to behave. *It is really a struggle, and you ask yourself whether to blend in, take a stand, or act as a token representative for all the other black teachers. The students view sitting in the front column of the class and participating in class activities by asking questions and raising their hands to answer questions as ‘acting white’. On the contrary, if a black student ‘acted white’, you are worried that you will be viewed unfavourably by your fellow Black students, so you feel that you need to negotiate behaviours to be accepted by both races.”* Adufe noted that *“many of the Black*

*students try hard not to be part of the stereotypes in their relationship with their fellow learners. This is because when you fall into the stereotypes, you will be associated with the stereotypical statistics of Black and White, and you are never getting out of them unhurt.*” These responses show examples of the difficulties experienced by Blacks training as teachers in the ALE sector because of the negative connotations associated with being Black. All five interviewees noted that they had to put in additional effort to break away from the stereotypes in the eyes of their fellow students and the teachers to guarantee fair treatment.

#### **4.3.1.3. Lack of Safe and Inclusive Spaces**

Six participants explained that they expected the country’s ALE spaces to offer a community due to the increasing number of immigrants in Ireland. Instead, they noted that it was no different from White spaces in other White-dominated countries. Betty stated, *“I found myself in opposition to my classmates and the teachers since I had to always reiterate that not every Black person necessarily needs help. I kept reminding even the teachers that nothing justified the notion that Black people were less smart or White people were more intelligent, smarter, and special.”* She mentioned numerous instances when she had challenges with the teachers regarding course materials and when she was intentionally given lower grades due to her skin colour. This was further illustrated by the other five participants, who reported a lack of community and an increased sense of isolation for the few Black teachers in the ALE sector. As initially mentioned, stereotypes and assumptions such as associating Blackness with unacceptable and inappropriate behaviours, ‘acting black’ and Whiteness with appropriate and acceptable behaviours, ‘acting white’, made life difficult for most Black students training to be teachers. The other two participants noted that they found themselves as the primary advocates for all the Black students while training to be teachers through the Irish ALE system.

For instance, Mumo, who regarded herself as a race-ambiguous woman, noted that *“depending on the audience I am engaged with, I am always privy to many conversations people thought they had out of earshot. This is because my light skin allows me into spaces many Black people may not be welcome. In fact, I have watched many Black people in the adult education sector being denied the opportunity to freely interact or speak up about issues; however, this mainly occurs among Black learners because there are barely any Black teachers in the ALE sector. Many see me as a ‘good Black’ who represents the interests of the other Black students or check the diversity and inclusivity box.”* She mentioned several instances when she had been

pushed back while advocating for the interests of other Black students in the ALE sector. Mumo indicated that *“when I challenged the status quo, I was met with extreme resistance from the White colleagues and the management, with the leadership always believing that ‘that’s not what we signed up for. For instance, I was once shut down by one of the teachers when I sought for clarification on a subject at the end of the lesson, with the teacher insisting that I should allow the other learners to also ask questions when all the learners had no questions to ask. I was the only Black student in the class, making me to believe that the teacher shut me up due to my racial background and skin colour’*. This response showed the level of hostility experienced by Black students within the ALE sector, hindering their efforts to create safe and inclusive spaces for other Black students to pursue teaching careers through the country’s adult and community education channels.

Consequently, four of the six participants indicated that they believed the school and the education system were a remedy for racism and an extension of a caring community for people of all races, regardless of colour and socio-economic status. However, this was contrary to what they experienced. For instance, John noted that *“my worst experience stemmed from how I was once treated in school when I was a learner in ALE. I think that is where I lost hope of being a teacher in Ireland. Not even my fellow classmates and the learners from the other minority ethnic groups could empathise with what I was going through, making me feel very isolated.”* This response explains the nature of interactions within the ALE sector. Primarily, it espouses that interactions within the sector are centred primarily on racial status, indicating extreme systemic discrimination and racism. This inhibits any chances of building an environment that allows teachers of colour to showcase their intelligence, creativity, and confidence for the betterment of the country’s ALE sector.

#### **4.3.2. Labour Market**

##### **4.3.2.1. Getting a job**

One of the main factors that all the participants decried was getting a teaching job in the ALE sector. The participants highlighted several instances that showed negative experiences getting employment opportunities within the sector. For instance, Kaula indicated, *“I have graduated to organizing activities in our segregated neighbourhood to engage adults educationally. This helps me keep my skills and expertise instead of changing careers or staying idle as I keep looking for job opportunities in my area of specialisation, something that has high*

*chances of not materialising.*” Consequently, Terry narrated how he was ignored, and a vacancy he had qualified for was given to a 3<sup>rd</sup>-year White student.

Similarly, Monica also narrated how she volunteered in one adult learning institution for four years with no employment opportunities, while about three Whites were employed during the period in positions that she was qualified for and even applied for. Monica stated, *“Imagine being given a volunteering opportunity for four years, and when there is a job opening, you are ignored for their fellow White. To make matters worse, I had applied and was qualified for these positions and have been helping with the roles associated with the advertised positions. Worse still, classes were realigned, and we shared many of my classes with the new recruits, indicating that my abilities were not the problem”*. These responses show the experiences Black teachers undergo while searching for employment opportunities in the ALE sector. While many continue to harbour the hope that they will be employed within the sector, others, such as this author and Kaula, have been forced to invest their skills in other activities associated with their professional training to maintain their socio-economic well-being and uphold their career aspirations. This can be a positive impact; however, it is an outcome that comes not because of the Black teacher's choice but as a response to being segregated from mainstream opportunities.

Besides, three PhD teachers who have graduated and qualified through the Irish Teaching Council recognition noted that they have been able to find teaching opportunities; however, the provided opportunities are just tokens rather than teaching job opportunities. For instance, Mary stated, *“I cannot say I have a job because I only teach part-time. This is just a few hours of teaching per week, which I cannot survive with. I am still job hunting for a full-time teaching job to practice my skills. It has been two years since I landed the part-time role, and I have attended several interviews for a full-time opportunity, but I am yet to succeed despite having been interviewed for the same position in my current place of work. I have considered shifting to another profession, such as healthcare, which is absorbing many Black people, but you know you need funds to achieve these recognitions and awards.”* Consequently, Monica narrated that she was given a volunteering opportunity but was bypassed severally when the institution was hiring people for her position, with 2 out of the three hired having lesser qualifications. These participants decried a lack of awareness on the significance of diversity and inclusivity and the need to transform the sector's hiring policies to focus on mixing cultural pedagogy and multicultural competency for improved

cultural understanding between the majority and the minority ethnicities in Ireland and the ALE sector.

Two participants further noted that ALE leaders must be assisted and supported, including making multicultural competency an essential leadership trait, to avoid racial biases. This can be achieved by incorporating multicultural educational materials and training in the curriculum for adult learning, teacher training, and administration. The participants explained that this is essential because many ALE administrators implement a colour-blind approach in recruitment, management, and when undertaking other activities pertinent to ALE in Ireland, increasing racial disparities in ALE. For instance, Judith indicated that *“I think if the curriculum emphasised the need for diversity and inclusion at the workplace, especially for teachers, things could have been different now because both the Black, White, and other minority qualified teachers and leaders could understand the significance of incorporating all the races to help promote equality and quality and improve engagement among learners from the minority ethnicities.”* The other participant indicated that *“due to the nature of the Irish people of considering their interests before those of the minority and immigrant communities, we always have no chance of getting employed unless there are no other people to take the vacant positions.”* The participants in this research were unequivocal that there are widespread racial segregation, showing how the sector's colour-blind and White privilege approaches are leading to racist practices that limit the opportunities for Black teachers to be employed in the ALE sector.

#### **4.3.2.2. Recognition**

Ten participants indicated that diversity and inclusion campaigns are rare within the sector, and few or no people advocate for their inclusion into the system. Mante believed that advocacy for an increase in Black teachers' involvement in ALE in Ireland had remained the responsibility of Black teachers who have achieved token status and acquired employment opportunities within the sector. This has contributed to reduced focus on incorporating teachers from the minority ethnicities into the system and reduced focus on diversity and inclusivity in the country's teaching workforce, especially in the country's ALE sector. Mante stated, *“we do not have leaders within the system to advocate for our inclusion. How do you expect to be included when no people look after your interests? It is very difficult, and we always just hope to adhere to the status quo and hope we will be lucky if you are patient. I believe the government should embark on a major diversity and inclusivity campaigns, or at least NGOs and other agencies that advocate for an*

*inclusive society in Ireland should focus on advocating for diversity and inclusivity in the Irish teaching workforce to help improve our recognition and lower opportunity disparities among ethnicities within the sector.*” This response shows the lack of recognition, support, and advocacy for the inclusion of teachers from minority ethnicities, including Black teachers, in the country’s ALE sector.

While discussing the impact of adult education curriculum on Black teachers' experiences within the system, Olatunde also acknowledged poor recognition of Black teachers. He noted that *“the curriculum we teach does not recognise the minority ethnicities, apart from a few heroes and holidays. This does not help Black teachers’ teaching practices reflect the cultural values of the minority ethnicities and easily integrate with them. Besides, due to this shortcoming, many adult learning teachers, including Black teachers, do not understand many students’ cultural values or cultural heritage, relying on stereotypes and personal opinions for direction. I believe due to a lack of recognition for minority cultures, Black teachers have had challenges connecting with many learners, the curriculum, peers, institution leadership, values, and norms that largely characterise adult learning institutions in the country. What makes it worse is the fact that many adult learners are Whites, making it less visible when White teachers make a cultural mistake and severely visible for Black teachers.”* Based on these responses, adult learning requires extensive diversity and inclusivity campaigns and curriculum reforms to improve the recognition of teachers from minority ethnicities and the need to elevate learning to cultural pedagogy to enhance efficiency for all learners.

#### ***4.3.2.3.Lack of Equal Opportunities and Support***

Four participants reported that their lack of opportunities in the sector is attributed to the pervasive systemic condition or normal order of things that largely defines the Irish labour market. Besides, seven respondents indicated that racism and racial segregation in the country's ALE system are business-as-usual and so ordinary that their existence is often denied and unrecognised. This establishes neoliberal policies and procedures that focus on individuality and meritocracy, facilitating colour-blindness and Whiteness privileges in ALE institutions in the country. For instance, Mary noted that teachers qualified for employment in the country’s ALE sector experience institutionalised racism that continues to be a solid political tool to maintain the racial order and status quo. She stated, *“You can never compete with the native Irish White people here even if you had the leading credentials. We are undervalued, and our credentials, skills, and*

*language are overlooked during employment, making it extremely challenging to break into the system.”*

She further indicated that due to the subtle and complex nature of race and racism, its occurrence in ALE is easily hidden in everyday activities, making it harder to detect and challenging to counter. She stated that *“besides the Black people and other minority teachers seeking employment in the ALE sector, no one talks about the racial discrimination that is the norm in the sector. This is extremely challenging in the context of Ireland, a country with control and state power over policies and practices developed by a democratic government that has, in theory, abolished covert and overt racial hierarchies. Racism is a norm within the sector; though, it is silent, and no one dares mention it publicly.”* This response indicates that the abolishment of racism and racial segregation in Ireland does not guarantee equality and inclusivity for the Black teachers aiming for employment opportunities in the ALE sector, making the endemic nature of racism, maintenance of colour-blindness, and White privilege approaches significantly embedded at the core of racial discrimination in the ALE in Ireland.

Furthermore, two participants indicated that they navigate values, curriculum, norms, and institutional policies that produce and maintain social inequality and White supremacy in the ALE sector. For instance, the curriculum emerged as one of the tools used in education, including adult education, that does not include diverse and inclusive perspectives, promoting White supremacy while ignoring the accomplishment of all the other races. They indicated that this makes Black teachers “less than” White teachers, especially in terms of expertise, skills, and ability, while promoting White privilege and colour blindness. Mumo indicated that *“it is important that ALE resources, including the curriculum, incorporate culturally responsive practices to make adult learning more appropriate and effective. This should be achieved by realising the increasing cultural transformation of the country’s education sector, especially due to the continuing influx of other ethnicities into the country. The provided education should connect the classroom to the teachers’, and the students’ realities, emphasising how diverse the Irish society has grown.”* Consequently, Tamara indicated that *“there is some sort of a hidden curriculum among people in the ALE sector, which reinforces the country’s traditional social inequalities. For example, being given low grades due to your skin colour is rampant within the sector. Do we learn this? No. However, it’s the hidden curriculum that shapes adult learners, management, and teachers according to their social and class status.”*



### 4.3.3. The Overall Impact of the Black Teachers' Racial Experiences

#### 4.3.3.1. Psychological and Social Impacts

All the participants interviewed in this study agreed that experiencing discrimination and being segregated due to the colour of their skin can provoke stress responses similar to those experienced by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, and psychological stress patients. Paul provided that being denied an opportunity due to his skin colour automatically stresses him, and there is no point he has always been used to it because, in all the instances, the experience has always seemed new, indicating that racial discrimination is a clear stressor. The participants all argued that teachers who experience racism from colleagues, seniors, and employers are more likely to exhibit negative attitudes towards the profession, lowering their teaching motivation and performance and are at risk of showing increased turnover intentions.

For instance, Terry noted, *“at one point, I had applied for a tutoring job in one of the ALE institutions here, which I attended an interview but did not qualify. However, I was surprised that the person who qualified was an undergraduate (3<sup>rd</sup> year) White-skinned student. This was very stressful, especially considering that I was already graduated and certified while the employed student was yet to graduate and be certified for the position. I am telling you this because the person who got the job is my friend, and she has worked with that institution to date. This affected my confidence, and I have since questioned my teaching abilities because there is no way an employer can ignore a trained person for an untrained individual if they are good enough.”* Consequently, Mary indicated that *“we view our colleagues as a family or the teaching staff of an institution as a community. So, it feels really bad when a family or a community you coexist with five days a week, almost throughout the year, looks down on you due to your skin colour.”* This can significantly stress an individual, leading to severe mental health challenges, such as depression, psychological stress, racial trauma, poorer sleep, hypertension, and anxiety disorders.” These responses on racial experiences showed how racism could impact Black teachers' attitudes about their abilities, economically hinder their progress, and cause them mental health conditions. The responses provided evidence of a significant correlation between racial discrimination and people of colour's mental health, with most of the effects of racism, such as poor sleep, depression, and psychological stress, directly linked to poor mental health status.

Furthermore, all the participants agreed that racial segregation, lack of employment opportunities, inequalities in employment, poor recognition, and negative workplace experiences, among other racial experiences encountered by Black teachers in the ALE sector, impacts their social well-being. Primarily, some of the participants indicated that these experiences weaken Black teachers' social structures and effects. For instance, Mate indicated "*Black teachers' psyche in the society suffers negatively when we cannot get employment opportunities or when our peers and the students we teach look down on us due to our skin colour. Besides, when you no longer have faith in the set systems, your psyche and motivation really suffer.*" Two of the participants noted that due to these negative experiences, many Black teachers could not achieve their financial aspirations since these factors are at the core of poverty and reduced socio-economic status of a population. For instance, Terry noted, "*we do not live the life we anticipated while taking teaching courses or the life I anticipated while moving from Africa to Ireland. I do not have a job and am confined to poverty, relying on social support to support my family. It is very frustrating.*" Mary indicated that "*it is important that we get productive employment opportunities to ensure poverty reduction among Black teachers, especially those qualified for teaching jobs in the Irish adult learning institutions. This will improve the social well-being of Black teachers, motivate other Black teachers to pursue teaching careers, and significantly contribute to the Black teachers' population's sustainable social and economic development.*"

Besides, due to the effects of racism experienced by Black teachers in the ALE sector, ten participants indicated increased turnover, turnover intentions, and career or job dissatisfaction. Primarily, the participants indicated that they encounter multiple forms of racism often associated with their intersectional identities. This increases their desire to quit their careers or harbour turnover intentions. For instance, Terry indicated that "*when you are not satisfied with your career, what else can you do? I guess most people will look for an alternative because you need to survive and cover your basic financial requirements daily.*"

Consequently, Paul indicated that "*many Black teachers will follow the footsteps of those who have become innovative and found a way to practice their skills outside the traditional teaching space because when there are no opportunities and if you get one, you are racially abused, it becomes very difficult to continue going.*" These responses suggested that job satisfaction is vital to teacher retention in the ALE sector since it mediates the relationships between support and turnover intentions. With the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the

Ireland population and diversification of the country's education, the ALE systems can only effectively satisfy this diversity by assuring employment equity and increased diversity of the nation's teaching workforce as the population it serves.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

This study investigated the racial experiences of Black teachers in ALE. The study explored the racial experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector. This was achieved by interviewing thirteen graduate teachers certified through the Irish Teaching Council recognition. The responses were analysed and coded to represent four themes that aligned with the objectives of the current study. This section analysed and discussed the four themes to inform the study's aim and objectives. The current study determined that racism significantly impacts Black teachers' socio-economic status, mental health, and professional life. Primarily, the current study determined that racism leads to negative experiences at the workplace, stereotypes and assumptions of minority ethnicities, and reduced safe and inclusive spaces for Black teachers in the ALE sector. The study further determined that racist experiences affect Black teachers' labour market, leading to adverse psychological and social impacts.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **5.1.Introduction**

This is the study's final chapter, providing the study's conclusion and implications. The section also assesses areas of future research associated with the study topic to inform future researchers. It begins by restating the purpose of the study, overarching the study's research question and objectives, methodology, and a brief assessment of the study's theoretical framework (overview of the current study). The chapter then summarises the study's findings and the implication for research and practice. The chapter concludes by assessing future considerations and areas of future research.

### **5.2.Overview of the study**

The current study explored the racial experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector. The literature reviewed in chapter two of the current paper discussed the general empirical evidence of racism in Ireland, racism in the Irish education sector, racism in the ALE context, and the race impact on ALE work dynamics, assessing Black teachers' racism experiences in all contexts. The literature provided that racism has historically characterised the Irish education context; however, it remains silent, with most people opting not to recognise its existence. The literature further asserted that Black teachers and teachers from other minoritized ethnicities experience different forms of racial discrimination that impact their socioeconomic well-being in the education sector and the teaching profession. Besides, the literature further asserted that Black teachers and teachers from minoritized ethnicities face increased turnover intentions and turnover, mental health concerns, and job dissatisfaction compared to their peers from the dominant ethnicities in the Irish context education context, including the ALE sector.

This study sought to capture Black teachers' racial experiences in the ALE sector. The aim was to highlight the experiences of Black teachers, assess Black teachers' labour market, highlight the underlying impacts of racial discrimination among Black teachers, and assess the implications of the Black teachers' racial experiences in ALE. The theoretical lens of CRT was used to assess and contribute to the limited body of research on racial experiences faced by Black teachers in the Irish education context. The following research aim, question, and objectives were addressed based on this context.

### **5.3. Research Aim, Question, and Objectives**

Based on the racial disparities experienced by Black and teachers from minority ethnicities in Ireland, this study sought to explore the racial experiences of the Black teacher's workforce in the ALE sector.

#### **5.3.1. Research Question**

The current research was grounded on the following research question to achieve the research aim of the current paper;

- i. Why are there very few Black teachers in the ALE sector?

This research sought to achieve the following three objectives:

- i. To highlight the experiences of Black teachers in the ALE sector.
- ii. To highlight the impacts of racial discrimination experiences among Black teachers in the ALE sector.

The current study used a qualitative research method and design with data obtained from semi-structured, open-ended interviews and counter-storytelling. The study participants comprised thirteen unemployed or partly employed Black teachers who had undertaken the prerequisite courses and were certified to teach in the ALE sector. The sample comprised of 4 Black teachers from Nigeria, 3 from south Africa, 3 from Congo, 2 Irish-born Blacks, and 1 graduate from Kenya. They were selected via the snowball sampling method to give the researcher participants with racial experiences in ALE. At the time of the interviews and counter-storytelling, two participants had been employed part-time, while the remaining eleven were job searching or had turned to other income-generating options.

### **5.4. Summary of the Findings**

The data collected and analysed from the study interviews and counter stories with the Black teachers qualified for employment in the ALE generated useful perceptions about their professional experiences and perspectives. The study participants shared several examples and instances of their experiences with racial aspects in ALE. Unlike the focus of the majority of the literature review, the current study sought to explore racial experiences specific to Black teachers in the ALE sector. The views that arose from the interviews and the emerging themes formed the assertions presented in chapter four of the current study. The chapter demonstrated the association between the research questions and the emerging themes.

The endemic nature of racism and the maintenance of colour-blindness and White privilege approach largely shaped the participants' experiences, with other factors, such as intersectionality, also informing the participants' experiences with their career aspirations in the ALE sector. The participants provided several negative experiences associated with racism that affects their mental health, labour market, socio-economic status, personal life, and general wellbeing as Black teachers qualified to practice in the ALE sector. The findings showed that Black teachers are not incorporated into the ALE sector due to their skin colour, and if hired, the majority only settle for part-time roles, which do not satisfy their economic and career aspirations. This study further indicated that many Black teachers are forced to be creative and find other useful ways to continue practising their skills in the Irish community. Besides, the current study further provided that the Irish curriculum insufficiently prepares ALE teachers for the country's increasing diversity in schools, including ALE institutions, allowing its endemic nature of racism and the maintenance of a colour-blindness and White privilege approaches to build roots. These findings agreed with many previous scholarly findings that focused on the racial experiences of Black teachers in the Irish context.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

Based on this project's findings, it is evident that there are many Black teachers qualified for opportunities within the ALE sector. To improve recognition, diversity, and inclusion of Black teachers within the sector, this investigation recommends improving recognition of the existing human capital. The investigation further recommends that the ALE recruiting body should eliminate the preconceived notion about black backgrounds, Black teachers, and graduate. This is achievable by adopting a blind recruitment approach, where candidates will be shortlisted based on merit rather than their names and backgrounds. According to Rinne (2015), blind recruitment entails removing forms of identification from the candidates resumes and applications to allow the hiring team to evaluate candidates based on their knowledge, experience, and skills rather than factors such as names and background, which can lead to biased recruitment decisions.

According to McGuire (2021), Dr Garret Campbell, the project manager of the Migrant Teacher Project (MTP) at the Marino Institute of Education, indicated that children of colour are often motivated when they see themselves reflected in the teaching profession. Dr Campbell continued to explain that equal access to the teaching process is essential and must be assured to ensure equity and a widened pool of candidates for teaching. Furthermore, Smyth et al. (2009)

stated that Ireland has experienced a surge in the student population, especially students from minority ethnicities; however, the country's education system has failed to cope with these changes. Smyth and colleagues (2009) further explained that despite the increase in students of colour, most Irish teachers are not adequately prepared for the change due to limited training in handling learners with various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This investigation recommends an urgent policy alignment to help improve the diversity and inclusivity of the country's teaching workforce. This can be achieved by starting consultations with key stakeholders, including Government Departments and Non-Governmental Organisations with interest in the area, such as the Department of Justice, Trade and Employment, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, Equality and Law Reforms, and the Irish Human Rights and Equity Commission to help formulate educational and employment policies that is streamlined and focussed on equal access to educational opportunities in the context of the national policy measures. This investigation further recommends reducing inadequacies in teacher training at the ALE level to reduce constraints to establishing inclusive teaching workforce for the country's adult and community education.

Moreover, this study provided that the Irish adult learning and education sector is centred around endemic racism, colour-blindness, and White privilege approaches, encapsulating the sector to institutional racism. By operating through these racist principles, these institutions and their managements expose black teachers to racism and racial segregation, limiting their employment opportunities in favour of their white peers. McDaid and Nowlan (2021) noted that migrants and teachers from minority communities, including the black communities, are slow to engage in the formal accreditation process that allows them to qualify for teaching roles in the education sector, including the adult learning and education sector; however, when they begin the process, they face significant challenges associated with racism and racial segregation. This study recommends simplifying the teacher accreditation process to allow more Black teachers to be recognised as teachers in Ireland. The investigation further recommends structural reforms of the education sector's employment practices and procedures to help enhance diversity and inclusivity in the education sectors. For instance, ALE institutions can focus on merited qualifications to enhance merit-based competition among the teachers. This could allow ALE institutions to absorb more competent Black teachers.

This study further noted implicit bias against the black teachers' skin colour within the Irish adult learning and education workplaces despite the continuing rhetoric of diversity,

inclusion, and equality. Several scholarly evidence pointed out that few people realise that the Irish education and teaching system is one of the most unequal and segregated systems in the industrialised world and that teachers get opportunities based on their racial status. Jeffers and Lillis (2021) posited that all schools receive the national educational framework and policies; however, they differ in what they accept and reject and how they integrate the policy framework into their cultures and traditions. Besides, O'Connor (2010) stated that teachers from the BAME ethnicities, including black teachers, struggle to get opportunities in the country's adult learning and education system. On their part, McDaid and Nowlan (2021) and McGuire (2021) stated that migrants and teachers from the country's minority ethnicities, including blacks, point out that they have had issues securing job opportunities in the Irish education sector. The participants associated this outcome with a lack of adequate and appropriate support and implicit bias and targeted racialised experiences of Black teachers in a predominantly white workplace setting. Based on these assertions, ALE institutions and other interested Governmental and Non-Governmental institutions can enhance focus on incorporating teachers from the minority ethnic groups into the ALE system and increase attention on diversity and inclusivity in the country's teaching workforce. Incorporating teaching internship particularly with people of black skin colour as a metaphor for inclusion and diversified ALE teaching sector would lower the continued Whiteness of the sector and perceiving black teachers as negatively impacting organisational culture.

### **5.5.Implication for Research and Practice**

The study of racial discrimination in the professional context is underwhelming so far. Many professions operate under guarded policies and guidelines. It is assumed that those who achieve the set merits make it in the profession while the rest must be locked out or struggle to thrive. A profession such as nursing has its own set of principles, including a Code of Conduct that binds all registered and practising nurses. The professionalism in such professions has prevented deeper investigations into what goes on in terms of racial representation. A similar challenge is evident in the teaching profession. Teachers belong to national bodies that regulate acceptable credentials and other requirements for candidates to be deemed "appropriate" participants. On the contrary, the present study revealed the negative impacts of racism and racial segregation in the Irish adult education and learning sector. The study's findings are sufficient to inspire deeper research into the extent of racial discrimination in the teaching profession at national, regional, and global levels. The Irish case could be the tip of the iceberg, as millions of teachers from



minority groups and Black backgrounds worldwide suffer racial segregation when seeking job opportunities and within the teaching workforce.

Education in the global context has become increasingly complex. The Irish experiences of Black teachers denote the rot in the entire system. Whereas Ireland has its historic causes of racial discrimination against the Black minority, other places worldwide could be engaging in covert and overt forms of racial discrimination in the teaching profession. For example, the case of America illustrates a curriculum that locks out foreign teachers wishing to enter US classrooms to instruct learners. Such circumstances set dangerous precedents for the teaching fraternity that is increasingly globalized. As millions of students pursue teaching abroad, they anticipate finding jobs in those countries because of being accustomed to the local curricula and standards. Therefore, local discriminatory practices could thwart the overall goal of globalized education.

The need for an international body to regulate the teaching profession could be welcome. Having witnessed the Irish unfairness against Black teachers, the focus should move beyond Ireland to an internationally encompassing body that governs teaching from training to hiring. The urgency cannot be underestimated because of fast-paced globalization. As more students enrol on teaching courses in universities across the globe, there should be a means to prepare them for the daunting duties awaiting them in employment. This justifies the call for a global body that works with regional and national networks to guarantee teaching efficiency, particularly at higher levels of education. The existence of these structural forms could effectively realign national education sectors. For instance, the requirement for merited qualifications could see teachers competing based on merit instead of race. Countries like Ireland could absorb more competent Black teachers who train locally and apply for jobs at various adult learning institutions. This will be critical to achieving racial equity in the teaching profession.

Consequently, Black teachers in Ireland could develop survival mechanisms. One of the approaches they already use is freelance teaching, which entails offering skills to students outside the mainstream learning spectrum. Freelancers do similar things to their formally employed counterparts. Aggressive freelancing could cushion many Black teachers against economic meltdowns occasioned by joblessness and lengthy periods of job hunting. On the other hand, joining workers' unions to pursue collective bargaining with the relevant education department in Ireland could be a leeway to gaining significant employment in the racially segregated nation. Workers' unions have been effective at bargaining with employers in the public and private sectors

to secure better rights for their members. Thus, Black Irish teachers could try the unionization channel to bridge the employment gap between them and most White teachers.

### **5.6.Areas of Future Research**

There is still too wide a gap to fill in research regarding professional alignment to non-discriminatory practices. As established in the present study, racial discrimination in the worst forms exist in the Irish education sector. One would expect an advanced nation to be steps ahead in achieving racial equity in professional hiring practices. The experiences of Black teachers, as revealed in interviews, prove otherwise. Consequently, future research should explore ways to eliminate racism in the Irish teaching profession, especially among the ALE teaching workforce. Suggestions such as legislative changes and unionization of teachers could be explored further to find out how effective they could be at bridging the harmful racial gap in the teacher population. For instance, researchers could find out how a legally grounded staff quota could force schools to hire more Black teachers in the aggressive fight against racial imbalance in staff compositions. These areas have been underexplored in research, although they could yield impactful results within national and global teaching fraternities.

Researchers might also want to know the effects of racial discrimination on teacher productivity among Black teachers in adult learning. As revealed in the interviews of Black teachers working in Irish schools, having a job is not a reprieve for socioemotional stability. Black teachers are not equal to White teachers in their respective staffs. In many cases, Black teachers contribute very little to curricula or content development. They also do not hold leadership positions, such as departmental heads, capable of making critical decisions. Under such circumstances, Black teachers perform peripheral roles whenever they work. This environment can damage individual productivity due to a lack of motivation to perform better. Highly qualified Black teachers might not live up to the peak of their professionalism because of systemic discrimination that follows them to the workplace. Thus, researchers can dig into the loss of productivity and professional enthusiasm among Black and minority teachers arising from endemic discrimination.

The harmonization of teaching through national, regional, and international networks is also a grey area worth researching. In the wake of mass migrations worldwide, professional engagement and continuity have become the sole of survival and stability for many people. Teachers certainly occupy the core of society because they disseminate knowledge and skills to

the young and old. Accordingly, teachers moving with the masses should find their rightful employment wherever they go. Researchers can establish how prepared the world is for harmonized teaching. It is worth investigating whether standards regulating qualifications and hiring practices would salvage Irish teachers and their peers elsewhere. The modus operandi of an international academic governance body would also be a captivating aspect of research.

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## APPENDICES

### A. Appendix 1: Interview Transcript

1. As a graduate and a teacher, I was hoping you could tell me about your interest in teaching.
2. This is all about your experiences as a Black graduate and educator in the adult education sector, and I will like you to tell me all about your experiences.
3. Let me start by asking you to tell me all your experiences with getting admission into the teachers' education course. What was it like getting admission into the teaching course as a Black person?
4. Was there any time you felt you should better make another choice of study? And what were those situations that made you feel the way you felt?
5. I would like you to tell me about your experiences as a Black adult learner in an education course in Ireland.
6. Can you tell me your experiences/challenges in finding a placement and teaching practice during your placement year?
7. By any chance, in all your year of study in Ireland as an adult learner, how long did you learn under a Black teacher?
8. How does it make you feel sitting to learn under a Black teacher like you? and not ever learning under any Black teacher during your studies in the country? How does it make you feel?
9. Can you tell me if and how your experiences in your study year inspired you and encouraged you to want to be a teacher more in Ireland?
10. Now I was hoping you could tell me about your journey and experiences in teaching. How did you get your teaching job?
11. As a Black teacher, and now that you are teaching, I was hoping you could tell me about your experiences in practice with your learners.
12. Tell me your experiences with your co-teachers in the school as a Black teacher among them.
13. Tell me about your relational experiences with the school as a Black teacher. How inclusive can you describe that?
14. What would you be able to tell me about the issue of diversity in the adult education sector as far as you know?



15. Please tell me how willing you are to recommend other Blacks to be part of adult educators in the Irish adult education sector.
16. How can we inspire more Blacks to be part of the adult educator career in Ireland?
17. How and What adjectives would you use to describe your presence in the classroom as a Black teacher?
18. Is there anything you want to tell me in regard to this research that I have not asked you?
19. Would you like to know the outcome of this research?
20. If you have answered yes to the above question, please enter your email address below.

**B. Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form**

**CONSENT FORM**

*Title of the Thesis: Exploration of the Racial Experiences of Black Teachers in the ALE Sector*

*Please initial box*

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
3. I recognise that I can refuse to answer a question or set of questions
4. I agree to take part in the study.

*Please tick box*

*yes*

*no*

5. I agree to the interview being audio-recorded.

6. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.

Name of participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of researcher:

Programme of study: M.Ed

Faculty: Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University

Signature:

Date:

## **C. Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet**

### **Participant Information Sheet**

#### **Title of Research**

Exploration of the Racial Experiences of Black Teachers in the ALE Sector

#### **Introduction and Purpose of the Study**

This research explores Black teachers' racial experiences in the ALE sector. Specifically, the research will investigate the impact of racism in the sector, systemic racial experiences encountered by Black teachers in the ALE context, factors that Black teachers attribute to their negative or positive experiences in the sector, and the impact of racism on their well-being.

#### **Description of the Research**

Research participants will be required to participate in semi-structured open-ended interviews that will be expected to last up to 15-20 minutes. The participants will be required to respond to a set of twenty open-ended interview questions related to the purpose of the research. Each interview session will be conducted separately and recorded using an audio recorder.

#### **Subject Participation**

I estimate that the twenty participants who will participate in this research will be practising or graduate teachers with adequate experience and understanding of the ALE sector. These participants will be considered to have experienced either positive or negative forms of racism in the ALE sector.

#### **Potential Risks and Discomforts**

There are “no known risks or discomforts” for participation in this research.

#### **Potential Benefits**

Participants may not benefit directly from participating in this research; however, I hope the information you collected and the research findings will benefit all Black teachers qualified to practice in the ALE sector. These findings will help the Irish policymakers understand the challenges of Black teachers, especially those qualified to teach in the ALE sector and make appropriate policy recommendations and changes to allow diversity and inclusivity in the country's education sector.

#### **Confidentiality**

All information taken from the study will be coded to protect each subject's name. No names or other identifying information will be used when discussing or reporting data. The investigator will safely keep all files and data collected in a secured locked cabinet in the principal investigator's office. Once the data has been fully analysed, it will be destroyed permanently.

**Authorization**

By signing this form, you authorize the use and disclosure of the information you will provide during the interview session for this research.

**Voluntary Participation and Authorization**

Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. You can decide not to participate in this study.

**Withdrawal from the Study and/or Withdrawal of Authorization**

If you decide to participate in this study, you may withdraw from your participation at any time without penalty.

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Date:

Location:

**Additional Details**

You can contact the researcher directly at +353 89 400 2915 or [temmyjj@yahoo.com](mailto:temmyjj@yahoo.com) for further information.