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ABSTRACT

This research report focuses on the possible epistemological exclusion of Black learners in South Africa who experiences ancestral callings within a selected school in Gauteng, South Africa. This research report further discusses how the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of educators, toward learners who experience ancestral callings are at risk of the possibility of epistemological exclusion, however this research has not definitively proven epistemological exclusion. The positive and negative belief of educators towards their learners are shown to be a detrimental factor that can result in either inclusion or exclusion of learners in a classroom (Kearney, 2011). The research takes the stance that the legacy of colonization as well as apartheid do not allow diversity to be fully realized and accepted within many schooling environments, drawing on research that agrees with this (Meier & Hartell, 2009). This research will observe instances of discrimination, both direct and nuanced towards Black learners and how these instances have the possibility of resulting in epistemological exclusion. One broad theoretical framework has been applied to this research. This is a critical race theory. It is coupled with indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) which complement and contextualize critical race theory within a South African context. Critical race theory emphasizes ideas of racist expression post-apartheid and post-colonization (Ansell, 2008). IKS is categorized as the inclusion of epistemologies from indigenous groups of people (Bredlid, 2009). It boosts ideas surrounding decolonization of curricula, inclusion and acceptance of the ways in which indigenous people view different aspects of education such as languages, histories and religions (Bredlid, 2009). The lack of inclusion of IKS within South African schooling systems may speak to ideas of epistemic exclusion (Go, 2020) as well as lack of acceptance in the way in which indigenous people are as well as the acceptance of diversity. As such a narrower focus is provided by looking at how educators respond to a more prevalent occurrence in South African schools (Kasa & Ruiters, 2022), ancestral callings. This research takes place in a Catholic school in Gauteng, South Africa. African indigenous cultures, spirituality and religious practices are not always fully accepted within South Africa due to aspects of neo-colonization which stems directly from colonization heightened by the remnants left over from apartheid (Lephakga, 2015) which include the absence of IKS. Educators' views as well as beliefs on African indigenous cultural and spiritual practices, specifically ancestral callings may result in an environment of epistemological exclusion towards learners who experience ancestral callings if they are not

fully accepted within their schooling environment. Acceptance of diversity is one of the cornerstones of inclusion (Meier & Hartell, 2009) it allows for culturally relevant teaching and good pedagogical practice. This presents an issue in schooling because the views and beliefs of educators are vital as their discourse, negative feelings, stigma, acceptance, and general beliefs can result in the epistemological exclusion of learners within schools (Kearney, 2009). Epistemological exclusion was chosen within the scope of educational exclusion as it is often overlooked. It further sheds light on ideas that learners can be physically present within a school or classroom but still be excluded from gaining access to education (Ball & Collet-Sabe, 2022). The research methodology involves interviewing educators who have witnessed and experienced learners with ancestral callings, autoethnography and document analysis. Thematic analysis of all research methods from the above will be applied to gain an understanding of how educators at this institution view and treat Black learners first and then how they view indigenous African practices, cultures and spirituality as well as if their attitudes and perception can relay an environment of possible exclusion of these learners. The findings present within the semi-structured interviews, autoethnography and document analysis did reveal negative attitudes, beliefs, and stigma towards not only Black learners generally but learners who experience ancestral callings, although it is not evident that these feelings, perceptions, and stigmas resulted in epistemological exclusion at this school as learners were not interviewed however, they do reveal that there is a possibility that these learners were epistemologically excluded.

Keywords: Diversity, African indigenous culture, ancestral callings, apartheid, colonization, schooling, indigenous knowledge systems, epistemological.

Glossary

This glossary pertains only to how the words or phrases are used within context of this research report.

1. **African indigenous cultures**- pertaining to indigenous cultures and practices of indigenous peoples, primarily Black Africans, before, during and after colonization.
2. **South African indigenous cultures**-pertaining to indigenous cultures and practices of Black South Africans, before, during and after colonization and apartheid.
3. **White supremacy**- defined by Wilson (2018) “white supremacy undergirds the way we organize our society, and the ways in which we distribute resources and power” (Wilson, 2018, p.3). Where White people control power and other racial groups are subordinate to this. Power then dictates what is acceptable and what is not (Wilson, 2018). However, when discussing issues of White supremacy within this research report, it must be noted that it does not relay that only White educators discriminate towards Black learners but rather, the ideas of white supremacy are so far rooted within ALL educators that even educators of colour can express negative attitudes towards Black learners around specific issues.
4. **Nuanced racism**-Indirect acts of racism, often forms of discourses that are trying to come across as funny. Different from discourses or acts that are intentionally racist seen present during apartheid and colonization, such as segregation laws or using the ‘K’ word. Nuanced racism shows a lack of self-awareness and a lack of conscientiousness.
5. **Diversity**- Diversity refers to the inclusion of groups from different backgrounds. Within the scope of this research report diversity is referred to the inclusion, involvement, and acceptance of Black learners.
6. **‘People of Colour**- This pertains to individuals that are not of European descent. Within a South African context these individuals are Coloured, Indian and Black individuals. However, this research focuses on how ancestral callings have affected Black, South Africans.

7. **Ancestors/ Amadlozi-** Forebearers or predecessors, who have passed away however continue to have influence of the lives of some of their decedents. They offer guidance and protection and have ways of communicating with the living. The concept of ancestors is deeply rooted within the lives of many indigenous South African peoples (Ainslie, 2014).
8. **Calling/ ubizo-** The idea that an individual has been chosen to become a traditional healer. The callings are present in the form of powerful dreams.
9. **Umuthi-** Traditional medicine
10. **Sangoma-** Traditional healers.
11. **Trances/possession-** These can manifest within different ways and is also dependent on the calling. During this process, individuals can take on many states, such as anxiety, depression, catatonia, hallucinations and violence.
12. **Beads-** Beads play an important role in many African cultures as stated by “Culture is partially based on symbols which represent certain ideas, beliefs or behaviours that people of a particular culture understand and are able to communicate effectively with.” (Nyambura, R., Campus, N., Nyamache, T., & Nyabisi, E. p.36, 2012).
13. **Initiation-** creating a relationship between the person who received the calling (student) and the ancestor (spirits) who wish to work through them.

Chapter Outline

This research report is structured into six chapters, each designed to build upon the central research aims which is to investigate educators' beliefs and perceptions about Black learners who experience ancestral callings, and how these may lead to epistemological exclusion.

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

This chapter introduces the research topic, providing contextual background on ancestral callings within South African schools as well as the purpose for this research. It further outlines the research problems, objectives, rationale, and key concepts discussed in this research. It also highlights the historical and cultural significance of indigenous African spiritual practices and the potential marginalization they face within Western-oriented schooling environments.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The second chapter critically engages with literature on ancestral callings, colonization, apartheid, exclusion, and epistemological exclusion. It situates these concepts within broader debates on coloniality and cultural marginalization. By emphasizing how these concepts create and perpetuate epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents and justifies the use of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as the two theoretical lenses guiding the research, which have been used in an interwoven manner. It explains how these frameworks are applied to this research to interpret educator perceptions, power dynamics, and the systemic nature of exclusion in educational settings.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

Chapter Four describes the qualitative research design, including the interpretivist paradigm, and outlines the methods used: semi-structured interviews, autoethnography, and document analysis. It discusses sampling strategies, data collection procedures, and ethical considerations, as well as limitations of the research design.

Chapter Five: Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents the data gathered from the fieldwork and provides an analysis informed

by the research questions and theoretical framework. It identifies key themes from the interviews and documents and offers interpretations that explore how educator beliefs may foster environments of inclusion or exclusion for learners with ancestral callings.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter summarizes the key findings and reflects on how they relate to the research questions and theoretical concepts. It discusses the implications and limitations of the research.

Chapter One

Background

As a novice educator, I was not taught or prepared to manage and deal with forms and expressions of religious, cultural or spiritual events in the classrooms. I was never taught on how to manage the realities of diversity within a South African schooling environment, and I do feel as though many of my former colleagues were not well-versed on these either.

I started teaching at the institution where the research took place in 2019 and by 2022, the occurrences of ancestral callings had increased in frequency and severity. On further investigation, these ‘occurrences’ were happening in many schools across South Africa. Due to the frequency of the occurrences in both my classes and the classes of other educators, discussions on how to manage, cope with or deal with these occurrences started. Fear, panic, and disgust were often at the forefront of these discussions among other staff members at the school. It appears there was utter lack of acceptance towards the learners who had experienced these occurrences, no empathy, understanding or acceptance towards something that can be seen as a common practice not only globally but among many indigenous peoples of South Africa, which becomes the forefront of the discussion of epistemological exclusion. It seemed to me as though there was some overlap between accepting learners who had these occurrences in class and the treatment they received from their educators. This had resulted in wanting to gain an understanding if the perception, attitudes and beliefs of educators towards their learners can result in epistemological exclusion, by looking at learners who experience ancestral callings.

The school where the research has taken place was decided upon for several factors. I was an educator at this institution for almost 5 years. I am aware that this school has experienced ancestral callings. From observations at the institution as a past educator, it is something that many educators have not experienced before, and the occurrences of ancestral callings have revealed perhaps the true nature, feelings, beliefs, and perceptions many educators at this institution have about learners with ancestral callings and further how the feelings expressed towards learners, by their educators, who experience ancestral callings may result in the lack

of epistemological access which can ultimately lead to exclusion of these learners within South African schools.

In South Africa, the legacy of apartheid and colonialism impacts the education system up until present day. Argued by Nekhwevha (1999), although most of Africa has been formerly decolonized, education is still used as a primary force to maintain colonial control in Africa, where Western epistemologies are prioritized as a façade to ‘modernize’ Africa. As Western centric epistemologies are prioritized, these perpetuate cultural marginalization of Black Africans specifically (McKeever, 2017). This can then result in the epistemological exclusion of African epistemologies. Black learners then face unique challenges trying to navigate through existing in South African schooling environments that prioritize Western-centric views on an education system that often disregards their indigenous knowledge systems and indigenous cultural, spiritual and religious practices (Ndimande, 2016). As a result, there is a possibility that learners who experience ancestral callings may face epistemological exclusion.

Ancestral callings can be seen as a common phenomenon among Black South Africans, which refers to the spiritual experiences and visions that guide individuals. However, these experiences are often dismissed or pathological within the dominant Western education system (Van Duijl, Cardena, & De Jong 2005), leading to cultural dissonance and exclusion which can further result in epistemological exclusion. Furthermore, although the South African education system has undergone significant reforms since the advent of democracy in 1994 (Gumede & Biyase, 2016). Despite these efforts, the system remains characterized by inequality, inadequate resources, and a lack of cultural responsiveness and representation. Black learners continue to face significant barriers such as cultural marginalization (Sayed, & Soudien, 2021), which plays a significant factor in epistemological exclusion.

Educators play a critical role in shaping the educational experiences of learners (Guerra & Wubenna, 2017). Focusing on Black learners, many educators within a South African setting lack the cultural competence and understanding to support a diverse group of learners (Rowan, Bourke, L’Estrange, Lunn Brownlee, Ryan, Walker, & Churchward, 2021) and as such learners who experience ancestral callings. The inability of educators to accept and

understand their learners can result in epistemological exclusion (Kearney, 2009). This lack of understanding can lead to further marginalization and exclusion of Black learners.

Despite the significance of ancestral callings in indigenous South African spirituality (Paris, 1995) in the lives of Black learners, there is a dearth of research on this topic within the South African education system. This study aims to address this research gap by exploring the perceptions and beliefs of educators regarding Black learners who experience ancestral callings and epistemological exclusion.

This background provides a broad context for the research, highlighting the historical and systemic factors that contribute to epistemological exclusion and cultural marginalization of Black learners in South Africa focusing specifically on those learners who experience ancestral callings.

Introduction

In late 2022 a news article was published by Mclean (2022) on News24, illustrating a plea from the Department of Education for guidance on how to manage the ever more common occurrence of ancestral callings within schools in South Africa. Ancestral callings, although a common practice and occurrence within Black ethnic groups in South Africa, this can appear problematic within schooling environments as it can result in classroom disturbances which impede teaching and learning. A general lack of acceptance from educators, admin staff and other pupils who do not understand the practice. Ancestral callings can be defined in a multitude of ways and are very specific to each individual culture (Sodi, 2023). It is something experienced throughout ethnic groups in South Africa such as AmaZulu, Basotho, Vhavenda, and amaXhosa groups however, these ancestral callings are experienced differently throughout different ethnic groups. An ancestral calling can be described as a way in which a person's ancestors are trying to connect with them (Sodi, 2023) as well as pass down information from the past and to be called to become a traditional healer. As according to Sodi (2023), "In South Africa, it is estimated that between 60% and 80% of the population consult with indigenous healers at some point in their lives" (Sodi, 2023, Pg 1). Although consulting with indigenous healers is not the same as experiencing ancestral callings, the above notes that many Black South Africans participate and believe in ideas surrounding indigenous healers.

However, there are also critiques of the callings themselves. Kasa and Ruiters (2022) believe that on the other hand, that these ‘ancestral callings’ are just mass hysteria and hold no actual religious or cultural bearings. Kubeka (2016), does discuss that having an ancestral calling can appear like mental illnesses or aspects such as mass hysteria. These may include symptoms such as hallucinations, anxiety, fear, delusions and mood swings (Booi, 2004). Although they can appear as the same thing they are not, and the similarity of expression should not be confused or conflated as being the same (Kubeka, 2016) but rather be recognized for what it is and treated in that way.

Kasa and Ruiters (2022) highlights the desperations of schools to find suitable ways to adequately manage and deal effectively with ideas surrounding learners experiencing ancestral callings. This is emphasized by Kasa and Ruiters (2022) in “As repeat incidents of “ancestral callings” continue to disrupt schools in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, calls for concrete plans to address the phenomenon have polarized the sector.” (Kasa & Ruiters, 2022). Despite the South African constitution stipulating that no one should be discriminated against based on their religion or culture (National Policy of religion and Education 2003), this research argues that learners who experience ancestral callings may still face epistemological exclusion regarding the attitudes and beliefs of school culture that is influenced by larger social and cultural settings in South Africa as well as the views and perception of educators that have stemmed during colonization and apartheid. This may be throughout age groups as well as race of educators. We may consider looking at student teachers and how their lack of exposure before becoming educators may not prepare them for the needs of a diverse classroom (Robinson& Rusznyak, 2020). Robinson et al (2020) further express that a central aspect of teaching is the understanding of one’s learners, and their needs both educational and social. With this in mind, it is not to say that educators display racist attitudes purposefully but rather are unable to adequately manage and deal with the needs of a diverse classroom, in post-apartheid South Africa. As a result, learners’ needs may not be met as classroom pedagogical practice may not be adjusted adequately for a diverse classroom, hence resulting in epistemological exclusion. As a Western-centric way of education may be prioritized in South Africa (Johnson, & Van Schalkwyk, 2022), any educator may fall victim to lack of acceptance of a more African-centric way of life which ultimately may result in forms of exclusion.

Exclusion is a central concept of this research. It is quite complex deliberating on what the concept of exclusion entails which also requires thought about what inclusion entails (Kearney, 2011). All aspects of inclusion results in aspects of exclusion (Sayed, 2005).

Explained by Hansen, Molbæk, Schmidt, Jensen and Lassen (2018)

“From this perspective, the relationship between individual and society can be seen not just in terms of society failing individuals, but also in terms of individuals failing society. In order to secure the cohesion of a given social practice, the balance between individuality and collectively must therefore be negotiated so as to define how much diversity a particular social practice can accommodate while securing its social structure. In other words, all communities constitute themselves through inclusion and exclusion processes” (Hansen et al, 2018, p11).

The above explains how although inclusion is needed for a society to function, all inclusion cannot be allowed as society and societal elements may not be able to function as a collect (Hanse, et al , 2018) By focusing on inclusion purely, the point of a society as a collective would be ignored. Inclusion in this regard needs to be purposeful and possible and often factors of exclusion are relayed in order to create a more inclusive for the majority. Although these trends have changed and evolved throughout history. Political struggles and aspects of social justice of people of colour, women, the poor, immigrants, the mentally ill, and children have stemmed from marginalization (Hall, 1999). It is tied to a white supremacist notion of normality, where those who are perceived to fall outside the boundaries of normality come to be seen as outsiders by those who do (Messiou 2006). The concept of exclusion is closely related to the concept of marginalization. Marginalization is often described as a sociopolitical process (Hall, 1999) that results in inequality and disadvantage towards marginalized groups. In the same line of thought, ancestral calling, according to the western views of normality, as it is different, may result in marginalization and ultimately, exclusion. This is further tied to ideas stemming from colonization and apartheid that fall in with a general idea on white supremacy is (Almaguer, 2023).

Referring to the above, ancestral callings then when looking perhaps at a Western form of diagnostic criteria can be a form of mental illness (Kubeka, 2016) where learners may appear to be clinically insane and need ‘fixing’, medication, and diagnosis rather than the fact that they are experiencing something that is real within some African cultural, spiritual, and

religious practices. As some of the criteria for a person experiencing an ancestral calling can appear as other forms of what can be coined as Westernised forms of mental illness such as schizophrenia, anxiety disorders or conversion disorders (Van Duijl., Cardeña, & De Jong, 2005). Van Duijl et al (2005) further relay that if one was to use a western form of diagnosis or diagnostic criteria it should be tied in with a cultural environment and belief and that some western diagnostic criteria are both invalid and unrealizable in diagnosing people who experience trance and go into a trance-like state common seen by those who experience ancestral callings.

Furthermore, this can be tied in with ideas of coloniality through ideas surrounding white supremacist normalcy regarding African cultural practices and religious practices is left for Western ideals. In education, however, it refers to the practice of removing or leaving out learners in schools, be it physically or emotionally as well as the inability to receive epistemological access to education (Kearney, 2011). The most outright form of exclusion is when a learner is physically left out of a classroom or is not present within a classroom. In this way this learner or learner has no way of participating in their education as they are either partially or wholly excluded physically from the process (Rawal, 2005). However, exclusion can also be present when learners do not have epistemological access to education (Kearney, 2011). This is presented when a learner can be physically present within a classroom but not have ways of gaining meaningful access to education.

This research report will focus on the aspect of epistemological exclusion. Where a learner is physically within a classroom but has no way of meaningfully gaining access to knowledge and consequently, education (Kearney, 2011). The impediments focused on within this research report are the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of educators. These can result in learners not receiving epistemological access to education. Educators play a major role in exclusion or inclusion of learners within a classroom (Dignath, Rimm-Kaufman, van Ewijk & Kunter, 2022). Beliefs and perceptions about their learners are one way in which they can produce an environment of inclusion or one of exclusion. Exclusion of learners can appear in many forms (Rawal, 2005).

This can happen in instances, for example in which there is a lack of resources, overcrowding in classrooms, bullying, or not having access to nutrition (Banks, 2021). For this research report, the beliefs, and attitudes towards learners by educators are just as a factor in aiding in epistemological access of learners. However, measuring epistemological access to education

is difficult, unlike physical exclusion, epistemological exclusion is more nuanced and deals more with how learners perceive their classroom environment based on the belief of their educators about them.

Educator's beliefs are an important factor in determining how they teach their learners, their classroom practices and, more importantly, how they behave towards their learners (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). If an inclusive environment is fostered that emanates aspects of acceptance, representation, and relatability within a classroom it can allow learners to excel academically however, when educators reveal attitudes and beliefs that do not foster these, learners may not excel within these classrooms which results in epistemological exclusion (Krstić, 2015). These beliefs can also influence the relationship between learner and educator. A positive relationship between educator and learner is also a vital factor in ensuring inclusion, this is emphasized by Krstić (2015) in "Positive teacher–student relationships act as protective factors for children's social and academic development" (Krstić, 2015, p.170). Learners who experience ancestral callings within a schooling environment, may then be excluded from a classroom physically because they can cause a disruption to learning and teaching, their actions may be regarded as scary or unknown which results in negative attitudes and stigma toward them in the form of discourse or behaviours which can result in epistemological exclusion.

Due to the horrors of apartheid, seen within Bantu education, which will be properly introduced later, the South African democratic government has created educational policy within its constitution to rid South Africa of unjust educational practices introduced during apartheid. These are introduced within the South African's schools act (SASA) as well as the education act of 2003 (National Policy of Religion and Education 2003) which stipulates the freedom as well as respect of religious practices within schools. However, these policies are often ignored due to decentralization (Sayed, 2005) especially within religious schooling environments, hence the decision to use a Catholic school for the purpose of this research. Furthermore, this can threaten inclusion and even more so the way in which educators' function within these religious schools can result in exclusion of learners. Both physically and epistemologically. Sayed (2005) discusses that, "Under the terms of the SASA, all children have a right to be admitted to school. However, implicit in the approaches taken by each of the schools were specific attitudes about who had rights to admission, what constituted valid reasons for exclusion and so on." (Sayed, 2005 p. 120). Policies are often

construed and understood differently within different educational institutions, and this can result in exclusion of learners both physically and epistemologically as there are no ways of enforcing the way in which educators react to learners at such institutions.

However, regardless of policies that do stipulate inclusion, Fang (1996) relays that “There is significant research suggesting that teacher beliefs are often strongly related to the teaching practices that teachers implement in the classroom and therefore are also related to student beliefs and learning experiences.” (Fang, 1996, p.3). Therefore, beliefs and perceptions of learners by their educators, that are created from stigma as well as lack of acceptance of issues such as diversity within South Africa, may result in the inability to gain epistemological access within a classroom which can result in exclusion of targeted learner groups, such as those learners who experience ancestral callings. Moreover, cultural beliefs as described by Guerra and Wubben (2017) are how one sees the world, others and oneself and are also present in what we do and what we say. They encompass attitudes and beliefs. Different societies and ethnicities are governed by their own cultural beliefs. Beliefs are thus created “in persons by their experiences and the overlapping of notions during the learning processes” (Gilakjani & Sabouri 2017, p 79) this further ties into the ideas that will be expressed in interpretivism. South Africa presents as an extremely diverse country. There are a vast number of cultures, religions and ethnicities found in all societal spheres. Schools being no different. However, due to perhaps conflicting beliefs because of cultural and religious backgrounds, there may have difficulty accepting the way in which other religion and cultures express themselves.

The above is enforced due to coloniality that may still be rooted in the belief of many contemporary educators within South Africa as they may be influenced by ideas surrounding the religious, spiritual and cultural practices of Black South Africans. These have stemmed from apartheid and colonization. A common example of this can be seen in the importance on English language education within schools in South Africa and that other South African languages are ignored and overlooked. Webb, Lafon and Pare (2015) infer that “We contend that the strong preference for English as medium of instruction among Black learners is largely responsible for their inadequate educational performance” (Webb, Lafon & Pare 2015, Pg. 276). This highlights one example of the lack of representation of Black learners within South African schools. Furthermore, Meier and Hartell (2009), reinforce this in that “The socio-political history of South Africa has contributed significantly to the exclusion of

multilingualism. For many years English and Afrikaans were the official languages in South Africa, to the neglect of the Black languages.” (Meier & Hartell, 2009, pg.187). There are single medium schools in South Africa however many of them still use English and Afrikaans as the medium of instruction with 6483 teaching English, 1261 teaching Afrikaans and only 163 teaching IsiXhosa and 31 teaching Isizulu. However, Zulu and Xhosa people are the largest ethnicities in South Africa (Webb, Lafon & Pare 2015) and they are not, in this regard, adequately represented. These statistics mirror apartheid policy, in that access to languages spoken by the majority are made to be very scarce within South African schooling system and these then mirror aspects of coloniality present within contemporary South African schooling, which can further influence the attitudes of educators to the importance of inclusion regarding diverse groups. There is culture and susceptibility of exclusion of Black learners within South African schools in general and will further be highlighted focusing on ancestral callings in particular.

Moreover, Guerra and Wubben (2017) reaffirm this notion in that “research, however, suggests the existence of disconnect between teacher and student backgrounds, which can affect teachers’ beliefs about diverse student populations.” (Guerra & Wubben, 2017, p.38). In the case of apartheid, multi-racial classrooms were non-existent, whereas post-apartheid schools, reveal a more diversification of learners, that educators, regardless of race, have struggle to accept (Meier & Hartell, 2009). Ideas of stigma towards Black Africans and indigenous African cultural practices started before apartheid, however.

Much of Africa was colonized in the late 1800s by European nations, who imposed their colonial cultures and religions onto the people of Africa (Falola, 2003). The imposition of European colonialism resulted in the breakdown of indigenous African culture and practices (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). These all changed when colonial settlers vilified the indigenous cultures and religious practices of African people. In an article by Lephakga (2015), it is shown how the loss of African people’s land during colonization, had relinquished them from their faith, beliefs, and culture this is shown in “Colonization also conquered the Being of Africans, that is their existence in connection with their land, which formed an integral part of their identity and faith central to the notion of belonging.” (Lephakga, 2015, p. 149). Apart from the breakdown of the being of who African people were, their beliefs were often stigmatized and frowned upon. African peoples’ beliefs were often seen as ungodly, pagan, or demonic by western powers that colonized Africa (Fage, 2015), including common beliefs

centering around ancestors, deities, spirits, and God (Ikuenobe, 2014). Christianity then became the 'tool' that not only stripped African people of their cultures but also created ignorance and stigma towards these indigenous beliefs as well. Europeans then, attempted to rid Africans of their 'ungodly' beliefs and guided them into a belief in Christianity (Voosloo, 2015). This is a very complex and nuanced issue within many Black South African communities as well. Although there are a range of beliefs, Christianity practiced by both all South Africans are at odds with indigenous practices that encompass aspects such as ancestral callings.

Consequently, the beliefs and stigma constantly reinforced by colonial powers greatly influenced how even contemporary Black Africans view indigenous African cultures today. This is relayed in stigma of the Black South African community towards African ancestry, religious practices and spirituality. Two recent online news articles from NEWS24 and SAfm, discuss an incident of the burning of a woman in Soweto, a township in south of Johannesburg. The two articles recall different explanation as to why she was burnt alive although both articles cite that she was considered a witch. NEWS24 cites that this lady was mentally ill and was thought to be a witch due to her behaviour. The SAfm article cites that she was also wearing 'traditional' attire, coupled with her mental illness which resulted in people assuming she was a witch. I use this case as one of many examples (Hamrin-Dahl, 2003) as this can be spoken to violence within some Black communities towards one another that stem from ideas that were created about the belief of Black South Africans regarding practicing ancestry and spirituality. An interesting observation made by Hamrin-Dahl (2003), is that women are burnt as witches in township like areas often by men, as they are trying to assert dominance and protect these areas as during apartheid Black men has very little power or control of their being. Hamrin-Dahl (2005), explains that "Witchfinding can therefore, in many ways, be understood as an attempt by young males to pre-empt the mystical power of their elders and the structures of gerontocratic authority, by constituting a kind of masculine "imagined community"." (Harmin-Dahl, 2005, p 60).

Furthermore, Thorton (2014), expresses that even "conservative African Christians, on the other hand, revile them as 'primitive', dirty, and spiritually dangerous." (Thorton, 2014. p.17). This highlights ideas that even some Black South Africans have been misled regarding the beliefs surrounding indigenous African beliefs, cultures, and practices. The imposition of colonial and Western religious views still leaves African indigenous beliefs eroded (Igboin,

2011) and often rejected in the lack of acceptance of indigenous African cultural practices in certain settings such as schooling and the adherence to some forms of African cultural practices being seen as witchcraft, which will further be elaborated on. These are just some of the ways African cultural practices are eroded. Furthermore, if colonial beliefs are presently deconstructed it often resulted in cultural confusion among African people (Arowolo, 2022). This again, relays ideas of stigma and confusion regarding learners who experience ancestral callings as it can either be viewed as demonic or it can be viewed as hysteria or mental illnesses.

South Africa can be seen to have been colonized twice. Primarily by the Dutch in 1652 and then by the British in 1806 and when the National Party won the election in 1948, apartheid started. Apartheid can be argued as a form of colonization of its own and created much stigma surrounding African indigenous culture and religion and was heavily based on Christian beliefs (Vosloo, 2015). So much so that in 1957 any cultural practice, performed by a Black South African, was labelled as witchcraft and was rendered illegal as stipulated by the Witchcraft suppression act of 1957.

Apart from propaganda surrounding Black people by the apartheid government, the apartheid government also ensured segregation of races. This was seen in the Groups Areas Act of 1950, which ensured, “ The acts assigned racial groups to different residential and business sections in urban areas in a system of urban apartheid. An effect of the law was to exclude people of colour from living in the most developed areas, which were restricted to Whites” (Maharaj, 2020, p.47). This becomes relevant to this research as when apartheid ended and South Africa became more diverse and there was more exposure of different races in school areas specifically, increasing diversity within schools became difficult to manage and relay inclusive environments for all learners (Meier & Hartell, 2009). Issues surrounding the lack of diversification towards Black learners in schools can be seen in the structure of South Africa’s curriculum in that vernacular languages are seldom used, school culture, how schools are embedded into larger social contexts, and attitudes and beliefs of educators towards these learners within diverse classrooms in South African schools (Fleetwood, 2012). These ideas will be discussed at greater length regarding critical race theory. Fleetwood (2012) discusses how attitudes of educators regarding issues of diversity of contemporary classes in a South African setting can impact learners and further influence their views on these matters. Fleetwood (2012) highlights this by stating that,

“In addition to the emotional fallout from the past, many participants also draw attention to the ways in which the older generations influence young people’s attitudes and views. For many learners, this is also a significant contributing factor to the perpetuation of racial divisions and discrimination in the country.” (Fleetwood, 2012, p.147).

Therefore, lack of acceptance and certain attitudes towards diversity can impact learners negatively. Many schools within South Africa practice assimilation of diverse learner groups rather than creating an environment where difference can be explored (Meier & Hartell, 2009). Learners are often assimilated into practices of coloniality, where they are not allowed to openly express themselves, in the languages they speak and cultural and spiritual practices they adhere to. This results in exclusion of Black learners as they cannot openly express their culture, themselves and be comfortable with who they are within educational spaces. This lack of representation within their educational environments becomes a driving force behind epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings in schools.

This is reaffirmed in Meier and Hartell (2009), “...process of desegregation in these schools is primarily a case of assimilating black learners into the school and its culture, with the result that the status quo is kept intact.” (Meier & Hartell, 2009, p.181). Furthermore Modiri (2012) speaks on issues regarding status quo in that “In the end, the result will always be the same: neutrality always normalizes the status quo, and in situations where material inequality suffered by blacks is the status quo, neutrality can have disastrous racist consequences.” (Modiri, 2012 p. 28). These instances seen in keeping the ‘status quo’ intact reveal lack of conscientiousness in actively representing Black learners in school but it also mirrors forms of nuanced racism by trying to exercise neutrality (Modiri, 2012). Instances of lack of acceptance as well as stigma towards diverse groups may stem directly from apartheid, as post-apartheid neutrality is detrimental to Black learners. Therefore, perhaps a visible show of diversity within schools in South Africa became central in 2022, given that more and more Black learners in schools were having ancestral callings. In the institution where I was teaching at, ancestral callings had become a more prevalent occurrence since 2020, and it was not something that could be ignored by the educators and the school, due to the way in which ancestral callings were expressed. The onset of ancestral callings in this school, also revealed feeling, beliefs, and perceptions of some educators towards these learners as it expressed

aspects of disdain, discrimination and general discomfort educators had either with this learners as individuals or teaching them.

This research project will be underpinned by critical race theory (CRT) to express ideas regarding why there is lack of acceptance of learners who experience ancestral callings, in South African schools. CRT deals with the relationship between race, racism, and power (Ansell, 2008). Furthermore, it highlights institutional and social dynamics that are often nuanced acts of racism, which can be present in, for example, beliefs and perceptions of educators towards diverse [Black learners] groups in school and furthermore, ancestral callings of learners. Critical race theory can allow an explanation as to why certain groups even post-colonisation and post-apartheid, in a diverse country such as South Africa, where the majority of citizens are Black, in school arenas specifically remain marginalised, still stigmatised and still excluded due to indigenous African cultural practices. Furthermore, CRT will be coupled with IKS, to allow for a better understanding and application of CRT within a South African setting and environment.

Subsequently, the research methodology used applied to this research focuses on semistructured interviews, document analysis and an autoethnography. These were decided upon as they coincide with the research design and research paradigm being qualitative research design and interpretivist research paradigm. These both allow for the investigation of the beliefs, perceptions of educators at a Catholic institution in Gauteng, South Africa. This institution was specifically decided upon as this institution prioritises the practices of Catholicism over other religious and cultural practices and will allow for the expression of coloniality in that a Western religion is deemed more important than other forms of South African indigenous cultures and religions. This reiterates the exclusion of Black learners from the school and aids the perceptions of educators towards learners who experience ancestral callings.

Problem Statement

Despite the diverse cultural backgrounds of learners in South African schools, the dominant Western epistemology often marginalizes indigenous knowledge systems and ancestral beliefs of some learners in South African schools (Meier & Hartell, 2009). The lack of involvement of African and indigenous epistemologies have left those whose religions, cultures and beliefs are rooted in African spirituality, vulnerable.

However, there is a lack of understanding of how educators perceive and address ancestral callings and how these may result in learners who experience suffer, epistemological exclusion which is defined as learners being physically present within a classroom but may not receive access to knowledge and education due to the beliefs and attitudes of educators towards them (Kearney, 2011).

This study aims to investigate the perceptions and beliefs of educators regarding black learners who experience ancestral callings, and how these perceptions impact the learners' educational experiences and if these beliefs and perceptions can result in epistemological exclusion.

This problem statement highlights the issue of epistemological exclusion and its potential impact on Black learners who experience ancestral callings. It also emphasizes the need to understand educators' perceptions and beliefs, which can inform strategies to create a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment.

Aim

The aim of this research is to investigate educators' perceptions and beliefs about Black learners' ancestral callings and epistemological exclusion in a selected Catholic, semi-private school in Gauteng. This aim statement clearly outlines the purpose and scope of the study, focusing on the educators' perspective and the potential impact on learners' experiences, academic access and cultural identity within this institution who experience ancestral callings.

This understanding is based on investigating educators' perceptions surrounding learners who experience ancestral callings in schools in South Africa but also the stigma surrounding cultural indigenous practices of Black South Africans more broadly, in order to gauge the environment beyond precise perceptions. The forms of exclusion can be epistemological exclusion, often portrayed in attitudes towards learners (Kearney, 2011). This research will use the perceptions around South African indigenous cultures, spirituality and religions that were formed during colonization and apartheid as a basis to further understand the perceptions and beliefs educators may have to learners who experience ancestral callings.

With an increase of ancestral callings viewed within South African schooling environments (Kasa & Ruiters, 2022), it is an aim of this research to identify causes of exclusion of learners

that stem from educators not being adequately prepared to deal with these instances as well. By investigating historical perspectives of the suppression of African indigenous cultural practices as well as contemporary stigma surrounding these ideas, the aim is to shed light on how attitudes towards ancestral callings in the South African education system and schools overlook diversity and support colonial stigma, which perpetuate ignorance and result in exclusion. This research will focus ideas of coloniality in this school surroundings and how the nuanced forms of racism and discrimination from a CRT framework perpetuate neocolonial ideas which enforce stigma surrounding African indigenous practices.

Rationale

The rationale for this study is to address the knowledge gap regarding educators' perceptions and beliefs about black learners who experience ancestral callings in a selected school in Gauteng, South Africa. Ancestral callings are a vital aspect of many Black learners' cultural and spiritual identities, yet these experiences are often marginalized or excluded from the educational environment (Bae, 2007). These forms of exclusion can result in epistemological exclusion. Understanding educators' perceptions and beliefs is crucial because they play a significant role in shaping the learning environment and influencing learners' experiences (Yan, Li, Panadero, Yang, Yang & Lao, 2021).

This study is significant because it addresses a critical aspect of inclusive education, namely, the recognition and valuing of diverse cultural beliefs and practices. By investigating educators' perceptions and beliefs, this research can inform the development of culturally responsive teaching practices, ultimately enhancing the educational experiences and cultural identity of black learners who experience ancestral callings.

What thus needs to be investigated is the stigma towards learners in a country where many people believe in African ancestry in schools.

Indigenous African cultural practices are deeply embedded into many of the lives of South African people that pre-dates colonization (Kouega, 2022). However, the stigma towards learners who experience ancestral callings within schools is perplexing and as such needs to be investigated and understood.

The presence of ancestral callings in many South African schools has become more prevalent. Many cases were reported in 2021 and 2022 (Ruiters & Kasa, 2022). This has caused much

confusion in South African schools regarding how to cope and deal with what appears to be an epidemic of sorts, as described by some, as it has become more frequent. The Department of Education is unable to appropriately approach ancestral callings in schools, leaving many schools to address ancestral callings by themselves. They are perhaps unable to respond to, due to the sensitive nature of what ancestral callings is, these without appearing to exclude or be seen as racist or discriminatory. Although, various South African religions and cultures are widely practiced within South Africa, not having ways to recognize indigenous cultural and religious practices within South Africa speaks to neo-colonial ideology. Diversity should be accepted and embraced to allow for an inclusive schooling environment (Kearney, 2011) however, South African schools rather ignore diversity (Meier & Hartell, 2009) and would rather create a mould for children so that they can fit in, which leaves those that do not exclude. These ideas further aid in discrimination and prejudicial treatment of Black learners with ancestral callings.

Furthermore, this research aims at answering the following questions based off of the above rationale.

Main research question

1. How do the beliefs and attitudes of educators influence epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings?

Sub-Questions

1. How do educators in the selected school perceive and understand ancestral callings among black learners?
2. In what ways has the school made accommodation for learners with ancestral callings?
3. In what ways have educators at the school created an environment of exclusion for learners who experience ancestral callings?

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The following literature review discusses important works that further explain and agree with the research questions. The structure of the literature review is as follows; an explanation of ancestral veneration on an international and national scale coupled with the occurrence of ancestral callings within South African schools. Next, I discuss colonization and apartheid and how both these historical occurrences have resulted in possible stigma towards African cultural, religious practices as well as spirituality narrowing this down to focus on ancestral callings. Lastly, I discuss exclusion, broadly at first, discussing what exclusion is and narrowing this down to include epistemological exclusion and how negative educator attitudes and behaviours towards learners can result in epistemological exclusion.

Ancestral Callings.

Ancestral callings within a schooling environment are the focus of this research. They are a relatively new occurrence with very little documented knowledge on the phenomenon as well as the policy from the Department of Basic education or schools on how to manage these occurrences. As such the literature review chapter of this research focuses on ancestral callings first to allow an understanding of these occurrences in schools in South Africa. The chapters that follow allow an explanation and understanding of what ancestral callings are. It is important to highlight that ancestral veneration as well as ancestral callings are expressed in a variety of ways across different cultures. These have been expressed and explained in the chapter below. What is further expressed is that ancestral callings and veneration are fundamentally different and may even go against many contemporary religions such as Christianity and as a result their expressions may not be as accepted globally as well as nationally.

Before defining ancestral veneration and ancestral callings the literature provides a few definitions that will be investigated and discussed from a global perspective as well as from a South African perspective. I found that providing a few definitions was important as it speaks to the scope of practice of ancestral veneration globally as well as speaking to the many variations of ancestral veneration and ancestral callings across ethnic groups both internationally and nationally. These further create a conversation for how spiritual, cultural

and religious practices of indigenous groups are often ignored and stigmatized by western cultures.

Ancestral veneration takes place globally among different indigenous groups (Quijada, 2011). What will be expressed below is that the idea of ancestral veneration is widely recognized and practiced on a global basis. In this regard it is something that should not only be recognized but respected when expressed or practiced in social spaces such as schools.

In Mongolia an ethnic group known as the Buriat people practice a form of ancestral calling which is described as a Shamanic calling (Balogh, 2010). In this process the prospective Shaman becomes 'ill' and in combating the illness and overcoming it, the Shaman is then termed a healer that may now heal others (Quijada, 2011). This is quite like the way in which some South African Black cultures express ancestral callings, by seeming ill (Hewson, 1998).

Whereas in Hawaii, the people of Hawaii share a connection with their ancestors. Three tribes within Hawaii practice ancestral worship or veneration. These tribes are known as Kane, Lonu and Ku. The ancestral Gods of these three clans have passed down their spirit of humanity (Mokgobi, 2014). Like what will be expressed in Zambian ancestral veneration (Mokgobi, 2014), in these Hawaiian clans, ancestors play an integral part of their spirituality (Kupihea, 2005). Zambian ancestral veneration does offer the importance of ancestors from the viewpoint of other African countries. Within Zambia ancestral veneration is important. There is a relationship of reciprocity seen between the people of Zambia and the ancestors in which the worship. Living offers recognition, appraisal, and remembrance and as result their ancestors offer help, protection and security in living (Mokgobi, 2014). Perhaps a commonality between ancestral veneration in Zambia and ancestral callings in South Africa (Kubeka, 2016) is the idea that when ancestors are ignored and not offered the proper recognition in which is the responsibility of the people, this may anger ancestors and as a result aspects such as punishment may take place (Mokgobi, 2014). Furthermore, and what will be discussed when looking at South African ancestral callings however in short, an ancestral calling happens so that an individual may become a traditional healer or Sangoma (Thornton, 2009). The practice of traditional healing as well as a relationship with ancestors are a global practice. Expressed and practiced in similar and different ways. To offer a general understanding of traditional healing, expressed by Moodley, Sutherland, and Oulanova (2008), "In traditional healing philosophy, illness does not simply refer to the problems associated with the body and mind, but also the spirit, where the ancestors, gods,

spirits, deities and the environment are all legitimate points of reference for understanding causation and treatment” (Moodley et al p 156, 2008). This definition offered by Moodley et al (2008) speaks to how important the idea of spirituality is when it comes to ancestral veneration. Ancestral veneration and spirituality work together. This further reinforces ideas that indigenous peoples of many different countries had their own beliefs prior to colonial control and power.

The concept of both traditional healing as well as the aspect of connecting with one’s ancestors, ancestral callings as well as ancestral veneration is a global practice and perhaps further highlights and contextualizes the practice of these within a South African context.

The above further sheds light on ancient practices that are still something that exists today by many cultures across the globe. However, Reuter (2014), argues that because ancestral worship does not have a distinctive individual that is worshipped such as Christians have God or Muslims have Allah and that there are no definitive rules and guides as with more contemporary religions, it is something that is under studied and noticed as expressed above, ancestral veneration globally differs between indigenous groups. However, because it may not align with contemporary religions it is often stigmatized and shunned from society especially societies with greater colonial influence such as South Africa. However, in its entirety, ancestral veneration may be the most practiced religious and spiritual practice globally (Reuter, 2014). This is an important concept to keep in mind when reading through the findings chapter of this research and when one gets a general understanding of ignorance displayed by educators about ancestral callings when in a general sense it is a widely common, practiced form of the spirituality of many cultures and ethnicities worldwide. However, the worship of ancestors within many countries have been stigmatized and broken down due to the impact of colonization (Kaplan, 1995).

In pre-colonial Fiji people had their own spiritual beliefs and religious practices (Campbell, 1985). Beliefs that also regarded ancestors and ancestral worship at the forefront. However, when British colonial forces entered Fiji, these beliefs were seen as primitive and in short, the peoples of Fiji souls’ needed saving (Kaplan, 2005). Kaplan (2005) explains that “Beginning in the 1830S, the missionaries introduced to Fijians the idea of eternal life and offered Fijian converts eternal life through Christ's grace, and the resurrection of the dead. They also introduced the figure of Christ who made possible these miraculous blessings. Eventually the missionary concern for the salvation of the soul became a concern for Christian” (Kaplan,

2005 p 109). Referring to the above, religious and spiritual practice of people indigenous to Fiji were replaced by what was thought to be the 'correct' religion, imposed onto them by colonial forces which resulted in defragmentation of the spirituality practiced in Fiji. Similar occurrences took place in African countries such as Zimbabwe as cited by Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2009). Christian missionaries were the first to arrive in Zimbabwe. Christianity was used as a tool to gain control of the minds of African individuals and guide them toward a western worldview (Windborne, 1983). The introduction of Christian missionaries was the driving force behind how colonial powers were able to unravel the cultural and spiritual beliefs of many African people. This is discussed in "Christian teachings emphasized individual accountability to God alone, thus undermining African ideologies of divine leadership that combined political, judicial and religious powers." (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009 p 42). This has resulted in the breakdown and defragmentation of indigenous peoples' spiritual practices. Although not an exhaustive list, the above two of many are examples in which colonial powers, like in South Africa, were instrumental in resulting in breakdown of indigenous religious and spiritual practices as well as stigmatization.

South African indigenous peoples practice ancestral worship and veneration. Ancestral worship plays an integral part of the practice of not only many Black South Africans but Black Africans in general. Defining ancestral veneration according to Bae (2007) is:

"In the broad sense, ancestor worship comprises a variety of religious practices and beliefs focusing on the spirits of ancestors. It is most often persons who used to be important, such as the head of a family or clan and the chief of a tribe or state, who are revered in these rites. Ancestor worship in a narrow sense refers to the specific actions which are performed during the rites relating to the propitiation of deceased relatives and/or ministrations to their needs. Ancestor worship here is an attempt to preserve good relations with the departed kin. These actions, on the part of the living who are in a position to render help, try to pacify or oblige the spirits of the dead – by offering them what they may need in their new existence." (Bae, 2007 p.21).

This definition reveals an overview of what ancestral veneration comprises within a South African context. It also highlights a connection between the living and the dead and emphasizes the importance of familial ties within indigenous Black cultures (Bae, 2007), which as I have expressed above is a reoccurring theme among ancestral spiritual practices

globally. Ancestral worship is thus vital in maintaining traditionalist views and carrying them on (Mqala, 2003). Bae (2007) also relays that ancestral worship is a common practice among many Black South African ethnic groups as well. For clarity, South Africa has nine different Black ethnic groups. Namely, amaZulu, amaXhosa, Bapedi (North Sotho), Batswana, amaNdebele, Basotho (South Sotho), vhaVenda, Vatsonga and Emaswati (Adams, et al 2012). Although there are differences within ancestral veneration among the Black ethnic groups mentioned above, regarding ancestral worship, there is also a commonality in that “It is interesting to note that although there are significant differences in terms of social organization which have a bearing on the practice of ancestor worship between the different groups, there is also common ground in the general function and significance of ancestors.” (Bae, 2007, p 40). Referring to what Bae (2007) speaks on, one must understand the importance as well as how much of an integral part ancestral callings and veneration play within the spirituality and culture of indigenous groups of South Africa that predates colonialism.

Ancestral callings on the other hand speak to ancestral veneration in a different way (Jebadu, 2007). Sigida and Sodi (2023), highlights that a person receives an ancestral calling as they are chosen to become a traditional healer or Sangoma. It must be noted that this is prevalent within the amaXhosa ethnic group in South Africa but will be highlighted as an example. A further definition as provided by Sigida et al (2023) is “the ancestral calling as a process that involves rituals to invite ancestors into the life of an individual going through the process to transform the individual from a life of misfortunes with a new identity as a healer that assists people.” (Sigida et al, 2023, p 3). Those who have been called to become traditional healers from ancestors, experience dreams. These dreams show them the place they should go to receive training (Mfusi, 1984). This is also something that Shaman healers experience when they are chosen (Quijada, 2011).

Moreover, ancestral callings do appear across Black ethnic groups in South Africa, but they are an individual experience and are or can be expressed differently. When going through the process of ancestral calling one must receive training to guide them and the way in which learners experience ancestral calling appears to be different as well. They enter a transient state (Sigida et al, 2023). People can also experience a calling that can start with a state of anxiety which ultimately takes a form of a vision. The manifestation of ancestral callings takes on different forms as well such as psychological, social, and physical (Sigida, 2022).

Further explained by Sigida (2022) in,

“Explained that the call may come in the form of illness, characterized by body pains, loss of appetite and subsequent loss of weight. The symptoms include among others anxiety, auditory and visual hallucinations, delusions, mental confusion, mood swings and social isolation. There may also be presence of aggression, restlessness, violence, the neglect of personal hygiene, becoming physically ill and disappearing for days.” (Sigida, 2022, p.11).

To conceptualize the above better, it may also speak to why many believe across racial groups that having an ancestral calling is having some form of western diagnosed mental illness (Kubeka, 2016). Tandon, Gaebel, Barch, Bustillo, Gur, Heckers and Carpenter (2013), when looking at the DSM-V criteria for diagnosing schizophrenia, discussing that some of the symptoms are hallucinations, delusions, catatonic behaviour, social dysfunction, and mood disorders (Tandon et al, 2013). These criteria are very similar to those cited by Sigida (2022). Another diagnosis may be conversion disorder which is a neurological disorder with symptoms such as seizure like episodes without the neurological explanation for seizures, dizziness, fainting, pain as well as sensory deprivation or distortion (Nicholson, Stone & Kanaan, 2011). These again are some of the instances that take place when an individual has an ancestral calling (Kubeka, 2016). These are important to mention for two reasons. Firstly, the disregard for ways in which some ancestral callings are expressed and turning to as well as relaying, believing and trusting western forms of diagnosis over acceptance of certain spiritual, religious and cultural practices of indigenous peoples.

These also speak to the confusion people may have when they witness a person experiencing an ancestral calling and can often conflate it with mental health issues and may be more inclined to relay on a Western form of diagnosis over a spiritual occurrence, regardless of the commonality of the practice across South Africa (Kubeka, 2016). This is why other scholars, reveal that an ancestral calling, however, is hysteria or other mental illness (Nyati, 2019) and rather that those learners should seek professional help from ideas founded in Western medical diagnostics as it may be reasoned with better, better understood and generally more accepted as it is perhaps more believable.

It is then important to explore the prevalence of ancestral callings within schools in South Africa over the last couple of years and to explore the nature behind these and the beliefs of

schooling systems regarding them and to further iron out confusion of what may appear as a mental illness but is indeed an ancestral calling. What will be discussed below emphasises that there is not much literature on the prevalence on ancestral callings in South African schools but rather that there are a few online newspaper articles that cite these increasingly common occurrences.

There have been multiple news articles highlighting the prevalence of ancestral callings within a South African context across different provinces in schooling institutions. These online news articles include “News24”, “Press Reader”, “The Citizen”, “Cape Talk”, “Times Live” and “IOL” and were published online between the years 2021 and 2022. These articles discuss similar occurrences of ancestral callings within schools in South Africa. These articles mostly report on how common of an occurrence ancestral callings have become within schools in South Africa and note common themes such as mass hysteria.

Another commonality of these articles is the expression of hopelessness of schooling institutions on adequate ways to deal with these occurrences without appearing racist or exclusionary. Kasa and Ruiters (2022), discuss the need for the Department of Basic Education to intervene on policy for schools to manage these occurrences that seem to become more prevalent. In a similar online news article published by IOL, written by Rall (2022), the discussion is centered around two schools in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, where learners were said to be having ancestral callings. These learners were dismissed from these schools as there was no way to adequately cope with what was happening (Rall, 2022). In another online news article, written by Mclean (2022), it reveals a plea from the Department of Basic Education issuing for advice from the public as well as cultural leaders, on how to approach ancestral callings within schooling environments, in a way where teaching and learning can still take place as well to include, learners who may experience ancestral callings (Mclean, 2022).

In 2003, the Department of Basic Education approved a document stating the religious and cultural freedom of learners within schooling spaces in South Africa after six years of debating its legitimacy (van der Walt, 2011), further guaranteeing the intrinsic link between education, religion and inclusion (National education policy act 27 of 1996). Schools function as places that should foster democratic, equitable and just societies, with this in mind acceptance and diversification of religious practices within educational institutions reinforces this notion (Keddie, Wilkinson, Howie & Walsh, 2019).

This document cited the approval of religious and cultural practices within schooling environments. However, and what will be shown in the findings chapter of this research, is that although religious freedom and cultural practices should be accepted in schools, this acceptance does not necessarily extend to all cultural and spiritual practices. The news articles that were previously cited highlight disturbances when learners have ancestral callings of other pupils, dangers to these pupils in that when they are in a trans-like state, they cannot control their bodies, physical attacks such as vomiting and psychological wellbeing of other learners (Kasa & Ruiters, 2022). Schools are left in a very vulnerable position given the sensitive unfamiliar territory; they are left in regarding ancestral callings of learners. What may be further problematic is the lack of policy from the Department of Basic Education in aiding schools regarding these occurrences.

The National Policy of Religion act of 1996 is short of being 30 years old and does not take into account ancestral callings within schools and the complexities it has (van der Walt, 2011) and is perhaps dated as it is almost 30 years old and has not been adequately updated to consider more diversifying schooling environments in South Africa post-apartheid. This is something that is common with South African educational policy. It is often very ambiguous, idealistic and lacks framework for adequate implementation (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit, & van Deventer, 2016). Schools based off of religious ethos such as Islamic, Catholic and Jewish schools are indirect violation of the National Policy of Religion act of 1996 (van der Walt, 2011). The act states that “Social Honour: While honouring the linguistic, cultural, religious or secular backgrounds of all pupils, educational institutions cannot allow the overt or covert denigration of any religion or secular worldview.” (National Policy of Religion act 27 of 1996, p.7). As a former educator and pupil at a Catholic institution, it was not often that viewpoints of Black learners whose beliefs regarding ancestors or other religious, spiritual and cultural practices was accepted. This was due to their conflict with Catholicism. This is reiterated by Tayob, (2017), in that,

“Based on the research done by the former, they found school principals deeply committed to their own religious traditions and unable to deal with the diversity that they encountered in schools. Christianity for the most part remained a “moral compass” for principals, teachers and learners.” (Tayob, 2017, p5).

The above enforces ideas that although in theory there is religious freedom within schools in South Africa, it is often not exercised well, and the religious orientation of the school is often prioritized (Tayob, 2017). This can result in the exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings as their needs and an understanding of what ancestral callings are may be stigmatized.

Ancestral veneration is a worldwide practice among indigenous peoples. Moreover, ancestral callings and the belief of ancestry are proven to be a common practice among many Black ethnic groups inside of South Africa (Bae, 2007) and have become a more common and recent occurrence within schooling environments across South Africa, given the above news reports. Regardless of how commonly practiced it is in general and now within schooling environments there seems to be no way forward in managing these occurrences and dealing with them even with freedom of religious practices in schools (Tayob, 2017). Schools are left vulnerable to create policies and solutions, which if not done respectfully can result in exclusion both physically and epistemologically.

Colonization

Colonization informs this study as it can speak to where stigma, attitudes and beliefs may stem from in society and more importantly in schools when understanding and accepting ancestral callings. This section speaks on the acts of colonization more generally narrowing it into a South African context.

What perhaps needs to be conceptualized is that colonization was a global occurrence. Many European countries colonized in Africa, Asia, Australia, North America and South America (Collier, 1905). In this colonization is not specific to Africa. However, for the purpose of this research colonial rule and power in Africa will be focused on.

Rodney (2018) argues that the effects of colonialism on Africa are still very evident. Economically, Africa still suffers from the legacy of colonialism, with some of the poorest countries in the world being in Africa (Okon, 2014). European colonial powers stripped African nations of land, resources, cultural beliefs, and humanhood. Colonization resulted in mass genocide of people, lent its hand to civil war occurrences, led to the breakdown of family systems and cultural, spiritual, and religious practices of indigenous African people (Settles, 1996). When colonial power ended their physical colonial occupation in African countries, they kept a firm grip on the resources that was abundant in many African nations

(Okon, 2014) as well as aspects of psychological colonization. The cruelty and brutality of colonization is still present in the everyday contemporary life of many African citizens (Kouega, 2022). These instances can be noted in underinvestment in education, financial resources, environmental deprivation, poverty, ethnic rivalry, or tribalism as well as human rights violations (Okon, 2014). Colonization also cemented political influence and disruption within Africa, uprooting systems of governance of African people practiced prior to colonization (Kouega, 2022).

The basis of colonization was rooted in pseudo- scientific racism (Schmidt, 2015). The taking and violating of African countries was justified in that, indigenous peoples, Black people in this instance, were less than, subhuman, unable to govern their own land, with demonic and barbaric beliefs and ways, headed by the eugenics and pseudo-scientific movement.

Schmidt (2015) discusses that,

“...it was possible to ‘scientifically’ rank the various human races in order from the most primitive to the most advanced. This ideology helped to justify European expansion by suggesting that the conquest of Africa was ordained by nature and science because Africans were, according to this ideology, “inferior to Europeans” (Schmidt, 2015, p.5).

The eugenics and pseudo-scientific movement in the late 1800s and early 1900s, saw to it that people who were not white and European (Schmidt, 2015), were not superior and therefore, did not have the right to be treated as human and so European nations took it upon themselves, to ‘save’ Africa as it was their divine right and purpose to do so. The eugenics movement was a mockery as it attributed pseudo-science such as the features of people to identify where they fell in evolution (Naicker, 2012). Facial features that were different or body types that did not resemble that of Europeans were said to be more animal like and therefore people were treated as such (Gillham, 2001). Colonization cemented racism within contemporary societies (Oliver & Oliver, 2017). Furthermore, within an African context, colonization further cemented the stigmatization of, hatred towards, and propaganda of African cultural practices and beliefs of African people which can pay testament to stigma of learners who experience ancestral callings in schooling environments today (Oliver & Oliver, 2017). These occurrences were exercised in South Africa as well, with The Dutch

colonization of South Africa in 1652 (Oliver et al, 2017) and the British colonization of South Africa in 1910 (Dubow, 2009).

Coloniality

Coloniality can be described as the presence of colonization, within a decolonized country. Maldonado-Torres (2017) describes coloniality as “the logic, culture, and structure of the modern world-system.” (Maldonado-Torres, 2017, p118). This is comparative to adherence to Westernized cultures, politics, and societal structures in Africa post-colonization. Aspects such as capitalism, democracy and Christianity present within contemporary African countries reiterate this (Maldonado-Torres, 2017).

For this research report, the after-effects of colonization and presence of coloniality on indigenous African cultural and spiritual practices are important as it further highlights the root of contemporary stigma toward indigenous African cultural practices in South African thinking specifically about learners who experience ancestral callings. These stigmas are rooted in the presence of coloniality. Fuentes, Zelaya, and Madsen, (2021) discusses that “Classrooms often operate as a microcosm of greater society, and therefore, systems of oppression may be played out in classroom dynamics.” (Fuentes, Zelaya, & Madsen, 2021, p.71). This extract by Fuentes et al (2021) speaks to how the way in which society functions often present themselves with schooling systems therefore aspects such as coloniality that are present within South Africa become present within schooling environments and perpetuate oppression.

Described by McKinney (2022) is “that coloniality is what has “survived colonialism”, the “long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations” (McKinney, 2022, p.5). Therefore, in contemporary South Africa, the expression, realization, and acceptance of aspects pertaining to African cultural, religious, and spiritual practices such as ancestral callings may not be realized due to the remnants of colonial rule seen in aspects of coloniality.

Colonial religions such as Christianity, introduced during colonial times can still be seen to impact the expression of African religious and spiritual practices. One of the ways in which European colonizers were able to ‘take’ Africa was to obliterate the beliefs and cultural

practices of African people and impose Christianity onto them. As stated by Schmidt (2015) “Christianity can be seen as a force of pacification that helped to enable colonization and the cultural assimilation of Africans” (Schmidt, 2015, p3). In this Christianity was instrumental in the political, economic, and cultural control in Africa. Christianity, as described by Schmidt (2015), won the hearts and minds of African people. Although there were revolts, ultimately these revolts did not result in much success due to the strength of colonial powers in both weapons and resources. African people were made to believe that their religious beliefs were ungodly and the incorrect way of life (Fage 2015) and that the conversion to Christianity was preferred. Schmidt (2015) infers that “while Christianity came to represent the supernatural source of the white man’s power and assisted in delegitimizing indigenous sources of supernatural power such as kingship, chieftainship, and priesthood.” (Schmidt, 2015 p6). African people’s practices centered around ideas of ancestors, deities, spirits, and God (Ikuenobe, 2014) as well as folklore and tales. Colonial forces rejected these practices. Continued traces of this results in a stigma towards African indigenous beliefs, which may include ancestral callings.

Additionally, African people shared a connectedness to the land in which they inhabited (Lephakga, 2015). This is why African people’s loss of their land resulted in loss of cultures and identities. The loss of African people’s land during colonization through forced removal, stripping down of nature and the culling of animals, had relinquished them from their faith, beliefs, and culture. As described by Lephakga (2015) “Colonization also conquered the Being of Africans, that is their existence in connection with their land, which formed an integral part of their identity and faith central to the notion of belonging.” (Lephakga, 2015, p. 149). The above demonstrates that the forced removal of African people from their land resulted in a loss of who they were which included aspects of culture. The stripping of African cultural practices as well as the constant narrative pertaining to African indigenous cultures being demonic, pagan, or ungodly can pay testament to the lack of acceptance of diverse indigenous cultural practices, among African people in contemporary Africa. This further refers to the presence of coloniality within South Africa and how the presence of coloniality perpetuates acts of racism both direct and nuanced, in perhaps the lack of acceptance of African cultures, traditions and religious practices.

It must be noted for clarification that like most of Africa, South Africa was colonized by the British however, shortly after their colonial rule in South Africa, another form of colonization soon ensued, this was referred as apartheid.

Apartheid

Apartheid was a racist system implemented in South Africa in 1948, post-colonization. Apartheid, meaning apartness was a system of systematic racism that ensured people of colour and especially Black people, could not flourish. (Tabata, 1959). Apartheid centered around not only the segregation of different races but the surety that people who did not identify as European [white], received little to no human rights, no freedom of speech, often lived in slums, could not travel around South Africa freely, could not apply for any job they wanted, and were subjected to poor education that made sure that they could never flourish academically or economically (Mhlauli, Salani, & Mokotedi, 2015). There were laws and acts put into place to ensure these things. As well as laws and acts pertaining to the expression of indigenous cultures and beliefs. The Witchcraft suppression act is an example of this.

The Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1957 highlights this in part. The Witchcraft Suppression Act was a representation of how European colonizers in power truly viewed South African indigenous cultural practices. Furthermore, the witchcraft suppression act does not specify what is regarded as witchcraft and rather relays very far-fetched ideas of supernatural ideation. An extract from the Witchcraft Suppression Act that exposes the absurdity of the ‘crimes’ that could be committed is as follows

“For gain pretends to exercise or use any supernatural power, witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment or conjuration, or undertakes to tell fortunes, or pretends from his skill in or knowledge of any occult science to discover where and in what manner anything supposed to have been stolen or lost may be found” (Witchcraft Suppression act 1957).

What may constitute as supernatural? Sorcery? Enchantment? Or conjuration? What becomes rather evident however, is the targeting of Black South Africans that choose to practice their own indigenous cultural or spiritual practices perhaps over Christianity. The term witchcraft

itself is negatively connoted and can be traced back to witch trials that took place in Europe and the negative connotations with 'witch' meant (Leeson & Russ, 2018) citing ideas such as again being ungodly or demonic and those who may not follow or believe in Christianity and the church.

Apartheid, like colonization, was instrumental in stripping Black South Africans of their indigenous practices, beliefs, and cultures as well as further stigmatizing indigenous beliefs as witchcraft. As expressed by Hamrin-Dahl (2003), the belief in witchcraft and the target of women believed to be witches by men in modern day South Africa, stemmed from apartheid control.

Hamrin-Dahl (2003) explains this in.

“Black township youths have been historically excluded from the key resources of power and authority in the society. Particularly for young post-adolescent males, this leaves them frustrated, emasculated and generally disempowered; it is a generation of young people who have been actively marginalized and brutalized by society. Witch finding can therefore, in many ways, be understood as an attempt by young males to preempt the mystical power of their elders and the structures of gerontocratic authority, by constituting a kind of masculine "imagined community".” (Hamrin-Dahl, 2003, p. 60).

The above expresses how the apartheid system in South Africa has caused an equal power dynamic within Black communities particularly among Black males and how 'witch hunts' are an expression of oppressed masculinity that may post-date apartheid rule and enforces false beliefs in witches and witchcraft (Golooba-Mutebi, 2005).

The use of this propaganda that those who practice a different religion or adhere to a different form of spirituality are witches or practicing witchcraft, forms a relationship between coloniality in Africa and the use of religion as a guiding force to control indigenous people and that of apartheid where indigenous spiritual and cultural practices of Black South Africans, are deemed again, as pagan, demonic, ungodly, and associated with that of witchcraft. This can then relate to present ideas surrounding learners who experience ancestral callings in schools, where it can be viewed by educators in a negative light relating to acts of Witchcraft or at least something that does not adhere to western religions such as

Christianity or Catholicism. The Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1957 created stigma towards those who practiced forms of indigenous South African cultural practices (Raligalia, 2022).

When apartheid ended, laws did not prohibit South Africans of colour as it did during apartheid (Mhlauli, Salani, & Mokotedi, 2015), there was ‘equality’ in theory (Modiri, 2012). Practically however, looking especially at Black South Africans, many of the trials they had faced during apartheid were still present in democratic South African. In that the racist regime of apartheid ended but systematic racism still exists. Modiri (2012) highlights this in “...every day we still experience the legacy of apartheid on many levels” (Modiri, 2012, p.27). These can be realized in issues such as neo-liberalism in schooling, economic suffrage of many Black South Africans, language barriers that have not been properly realized and amended to proper include all South African languages. This can be further realized in the lack of acceptance of Black learners in South African schools (Meier & Hartell, 2009) which stems from educators and learners alike being unable to deal with diversity post-apartheid. Systematic racism is also present in ideas of neoliberal agendas, and very few laws that succeeded in uplifting Black South Africans in a way that made much tangible change, in that the expression of indigenous Black cultures and spirituality as well as opportunities present for many Black learners, mirror circumstances of that of apartheid (Modiri, 2012) and the result of coloniality. Which ultimately results in epistemological exclusion.

Exclusion.

This section focuses on the generalized explanation of exclusion while narrowing it to focus on aspects of epistemological exclusion.

Educational spaces are not exempt from exclusion or exclusionary practices. Exclusion is a complex aspect with many definitions. The Chamber-Macmillian South African dictionary defines exclusion as the action of preventing somebody from sharing or taking place in something. To further define exclusion and perhaps contextualize it better, is that certain groups of people are pushed to the margins of society, and this prevents them from participating fully in certain aspects in life (Peace, & Mohammed, 2015). As these people have very little power, control or influence in decisions or policies that affect them (Kearney, 2011). Exclusion can be defined as an idea or concept where a person is excluded because they often fall outside of what is socially acceptable (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). Let’s consider what counts as a norm. This can be expressed in a manifold of ways. People can be excluded

on the basis of gender, race, religion, class, or culture, how they look or which language they speak. Norms exist in ways such as what is beautiful, what is acceptable, what constitutes useful knowledge or acceptable religions or religious practices. The exclusion then, is that a person or people are often marginalized and receive lack of representation within a certain space because of difference and because they do not fit the status quo (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). Historically for example, Black people in a South African context during colonial rule and apartheid were excluded from politics, economic gain, and human rights because they were of a different race. Exclusion results in ripple effects that can be seen throughout generations and have detrimental effects on the life of the person who was excluded. This is shown in the way in which the legacy of apartheid still directly affects the lives of many South Africans of colour, as their parents and grandparents were excluded from gaining access to education, which meant they received poorly paying jobs, which then means the education their children had access to within democratic South Africa, was of a poorer standard. Exclusion further impedes individuals from access to aspects such as education, healthcare, and human rights. These can further play into factors such as dignity, equality, respect, and protection of excluded and marginalized groups of people (Rawal, 2008).

The United Nations in chapter one describes exclusion as, as cited by Mathieson, Popay, Enoch, Escorel, Hernandez, Johnston and Rispel (2008):

“Consists of dynamic, multi-dimensional processes driven by unequal power relationships interacting across four main dimensions—economic, political, social and cultural—and at different levels including individual, household, group, community, country and global levels. It results in a continuum of inclusion/exclusion characterized by unequal access to resources, capabilities and rights which leads to health inequalities”, (Mathieson et al, 2008, p. 2).

Exclusion as stated above also deals with aspects seen within power dynamics. Those who ‘control the narrative’ relay what is deemed fit for those who should be included and then those who should be excluded. This can be further emphasized where Black learners lack representation within South African schools and as a result are excluded from gaining meaningful access to education, hence epistemological exclusion. For the purpose of this research, it will be further highlighted how the attitudes of educators towards Black learners result in the being excluded from gaining meaningful access to education within South

African classrooms and furthermore, how learners who experience ancestral callings are further excluded due to these attitudes and stigmas.

Exclusion serves a purpose in society and may almost be a sorting system, allowing for maintained control from those who want to control and maintain power structures, to save limited resources and maintain power dynamics (Kearney, 2011). Creating a “them” and an “us” for the upkeep of control and maintaining power structures. Educational systems can perpetuate the cycle of exclusion as they may even encourage it and as they often serve as a microcosm for society. Certain policies, systems and practices contribute to exclusion (Kearney, 2011) some examples of these include neoliberalism in schools and maintaining the status quos of institutions.

Another reason for exclusion is the projection of the interest of the majority. Which might speak to why learners who experience ancestral callings may face exclusion, as having an ancestral calling can be disruptive to the learning and teaching process and impedes the majority from receiving an education or that ancestral calling does not serve in the interest of a majority religion or culture. This has been explained within the ancestral callings chapter, however when a person has an ancestral calling, they go into a trans-like state (Bae, 2007). This trans-like state ranges between individuals and sometimes, learners who experience ancestral callings may start shouting or screaming or moving around. This can impact on teaching and learning if this takes place within a classroom. Using the definition Kearney (2011), exclusion may take place to maintain the interest of the majority, it may be the case that learners who experience ancestral callings in a classroom due to its disruptive nature, at times, may be excluded. This will be emphasized later as well when discussing the findings. Nevertheless, Kearney (2011) discusses there is a direct link between protection of the majority and exclusion of marginalized groups. The way in which difference is viewed creates exclusion as well. Slee (1999) states that difference needs to be recognized and legitimized. Often difference is ostracized from communities and as a result from schools. Social stigmas influence largely what we view as different and what we view as acceptable and the norm (Kearney, 2011) these views of difference create exclusion of certain groups of people.

Educators are not immune to seeing differences and acting towards them in the same way society may. Ballard (2001) suggests that the degree of difference dictates the number of rights one receives which again is a direct link to how certain groups are marginalized.

Exclusion has its own language, the way in which we describe certain groups of people, an example is using the term 'special needs' (Kearney, 2011). Terms like these are a practice of exclusion and the language we use to describe certain groups should be reconsidered (Ballard, 2004). This type of language can be used to devalue and exclude those assigned labels. Discourse towards learners can result in epistemological exclusion.

Exclusion within educational spaces impedes access to education of learners and can be seen as a form of discrimination (Dignath, et al 2022). Kearney (2011) discusses the concept regarding ideas of exclusion, rather than that of inclusion. To realize inclusive education, factors that result in exclusion must be identified first (Kearney, 2011). Kearney (2011) discusses ideas where to create inclusive education practices, acts of exclusion must first be identified. Exclusion in education initially started with the focus surrounding children's education of those with special needs. These learners were classified as those that may have mental or physical disabilities. As often initial discourse, surrounding students with disabilities was often portrayed as those children have a deficit or illness and need fixing or are inept (Kearney, 2011). Learners with disabilities were often seen as the most excluded or marginalized group when referring to inclusive education studies because of the need for special schools, and segregation of these learners (Alan & Slee, 2008). However, as inclusive education became a more prevalent field of study, excluded groups of learners started to grow or rather became recognized. This will be discussed further reviewing ideas of Alan and Slee (2008), that it is not only learners who have disabilities that are excluded from the classroom and are only one group who is marginalized.

Alan and Slee (2008) discuss two models regarding marginalized groups within educational spaces. The special needs model and the social model. For this research report the social model will be discussed as it focuses on groups outside of disabled learners. The social model of education is a different approach towards viewing differences among learners. The social model considers that learners who are differently abled are not the only ones who may face exclusion with a schooling environment (Alan & Slee, 2008). Meier and Hartell (2009) deliberate that being different within a schooling environment can result in exclusion. Being a specific, gender, race, or culture, may result in issues such as discrimination from educators seen in educator attitudes, not fitting into the school culture or status quo, or experience language barriers (Meier & Hartel, 2009). These are issues prevalent in many South African schools' post-apartheid. The attitude of educators will be focused on, as stigma and attitudes

of educators towards learners who experience ancestral callings may result in the exclusion of these learners.

Epistemological Exclusion

The above discusses what exclusion looks like within society while narrowing focus to exclusion within educational spaces. Epistemological exclusion will be a focus on the type of exclusion Black learners who experience ancestral callings may face due to the beliefs and perceptions of educators regarding these learners.

It must however be further emphasized that this research does not discuss the aspect of epistemicide as it denotes the deliberate suppression of certain knowledge systems (Bennett, 2007). For example, we can look at how much of African history and literature is left out of the CAPS syllabus in South Africa which would be considered epistemicide. However, this research discusses lack of access to knowledge [epistemology] because of the way in which educators perceive learners or behave toward them, rather than the idea that certain knowledge systems are left out or not taught. Epistemicide is not a central discussion of this research.

Epistemology refers to theories relating to knowledge (Steup & Neta 2005). It also refers to cognitive success in that knowledge is known, understood, and mastered (Steup & Neta 2005). This can be understood as the primary function of schools. To educate learners about certain forms and aspects of knowledge so that it is known, understood, and mastered. These are tested in exams and when a learner passes a subject, they can be competent in understanding a certain epistemology. Expressed by Puteh, Che Ahmad, Mohamed Noh, Adnan and Ibrahim, (2015) “Teaching and learning should take place effectively to enable students to acquire knowledge and develop skills for their future career needs.” (Puteh, et al 2015, p.237). However, factors both inside and outside a classroom, can then influence the acquisition of knowledge [epistemology] is adequately delivered and received by learners (Kearney, 2011).

It is then epistemological exclusion that is the inability to gain meaningful access to education due to certain factors (Kuchah, Adamson, Dorimana, Uwizeyemariya, Uworwabayeho & Milligan, 2022). These factors stress that although there may be the

presence of a learner within a classroom as well as the presence of an educator in the classroom regardless of the types of knowledge being taught, they may not always gain meaningful access to their education. Factors such as hunger, fear, lack of resources and for the purpose of this research report, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of educators about their learners can result in them not gaining access to education and in that are excluded from epistemological access to education (Kuchah, et al, 2022). The rest of this section discusses how educators play a vital role in the epistemological inclusion or exclusion of learners based on their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions towards learners.

Beliefs and attitudes of educators can also play a role in whether learners are excluded from a classroom. Educators then play a major role in practices of inclusion or exclusion of learners. Some factors that can influence them such as low expectations of teachers (Kearney, 2011) can cause epistemological exclusion within the classroom and these expectations are guided by stigma. Namrata (2011) infers that “based on these attitudes and expectations, prejudiced teachers behave with children differently.” (Namrata, 2011, p851), this emphasizes that preconceived notions and ideas about certain learners by educators dictate their behaviour to these learners and if this behaviour is negatively represented in the classroom, then learners can be excluded from gaining meaningful access to education. This research report focuses on the perceptions, stigma, and beliefs towards Black learners who experience ancestral callings which may be due to lack of acceptance of cultural practices and spirituality of Black learners which stem from ideas around coloniality and apartheid. Liu, Çolak, and Agirdag (2021) discusses further that,

“Positive awareness of cultural diversity may lead to higher trust in students, greater acceptance of students’ home cultures, and more culturally responsive teaching.

However, teachers with low cultural consciousness are likely to show insufficient respect to their students’ cultural experiences and home culture identities, which can hinder the school success of culturally diverse students” (Liu et al, 2021, p675).

Therefore, by referring to the above extract some beliefs, expectation and behaviours can be driven by lack of skill and knowledge about learners (Kearney 2011), and these can result in hinderances regarding school success (Liu, et al 2021). The acceptance and realization of diversity of Black learners in some South African schools, is still not fully realized (Meier & Hartell, 2009). In this regard many educators in South African schools may not know enough about Black learners, their cultural, spiritual, and religious practices enough to behave

towards them in a way that fosters acceptance. Integration of Black learners into previously all white schools is an ongoing occurrence, which some educators across racial groups are still trying to manage and accept regarding growing diversity (Davids & Waghid, 2015) Many Black learners especially are migrating towards formally White and Indian schools. Some educators experience inabilities to cater to more diverse classrooms which can result in epistemological exclusion (Davids & Waghid, 2015). The way in which educators may not be able to cater to diverse classrooms is present within an aspect referred to as pedagogical practice.

Pedagogical practice of educators can also result in epistemological exclusion. The reason I have highlighted pedagogy within this research report is to highlight how belief in difference and diversity of learners can result in exclusionary practices of educators. That the inability to represent the needs, histories, language barriers and experiences of their learners, educators create an environment that fosters exclusion (Kupar, 2018). Pedagogical practice encompasses the way in which educators teach. For pedagogical practice to be successful educators should consider aspects such as the use of multiple resources, methods, materials, and principles (Kupar, 2018). In this way pedagogical practice creates an environment that is inclusive of the needs of all the learners of a classroom (Kupar, 2018). The way in which educators choose to deliver content is very important in whether learners can access education and knowledge. Stated by Liu et al (2021) that,

“Increasing cultural diversity in schools demands that teachers adapt themselves to meet students’ distinct learning needs and promote their academic motivation. In response to this challenge, a wide range of pedagogical approaches (e.g., culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy) has emerged to transform teachers’ beliefs and practices so that they can accommodate students’ cultural background and promote educational equity” (Liu et al, 2021, p.672).

Pedagogical practice regarding the above extract is vital in creating an inclusive classroom, for diverse class spaces. More than this when educators create spaces that foster culturally responsive teaching and pedagogy, diverse learners are better included and are able to gain epistemological access (Liu, et al, 2021).

However, although an idealistic notion, pedagogical practice can create transformation and awareness and more importantly inclusion. This notion is reiterated in that “Teacher’s

classroom practices and how they implement educational reform account substantially for students' academic learning and achievement" (Dignath et al, 2022, p2610). Educators do have an agency. They may not have an agency regarding the content that they teach but they do when making decisions regarding how that content is delivered (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015). However, there are factors that influence whether an educator chooses to exercise agency in their classroom or not. One of the factors that influence educator agency is beliefs of educators (Biesta, et al 2015). These beliefs can be both personal and professional in nature (Priestley et al, 2015). Therefore, although educators do have the ability to exercise agency in their lessons which can create an environment of inclusion, they may not always enact on it, which can result in exclusion. When educators relay a form of inclusive education through pedagogical reform and practice, they create a space that allows their learners to excel academically (Dignath, et al, 2022) however if an educator is unfamiliar with the needs of the diverse learners, that is a reality in South African schools (Davids & Waghid, 2015), they may not be able to adjust pedagogical practice that's fosters inclusion. This can result in epistemological exclusion of learners.

Although this does not refer to a South African context but an Indian context, I have taken an example from an article by Poudel (2007), that can be used as a reference and guide when applying the importance to pedagogical practice within schooling environments and that the inability to adjust pedagogy may then result in exclusion. Poudel (2007) explores the attitudes and beliefs of educators in a school in India. There is a system of social classification in India that is referred to as the caste system (Sathaye, 2015). The caste system dictates a sort of social hierarchy that essentially dictates your place in society, who you can marry and the jobs that you can work (Sathaye, 2015). Poudel (2007), discusses the Dalit people, who fall as the lowest within the caste system. Poudel (2007), further discusses discrimination of Dalit people within social arenas in India but also their treatment within schools. Poudel (2007) infers that "classroom teachers do not consider students' from diverse backgrounds. In the classrooms there was hardly direct discrimination towards the Dalits. But due to ineffective and non-diversified classroom practices. Dalits have suffered more and faced exclusion." (Poudel, 2007, p 159). Although, educators may not directly discriminate against certain learners, poor pedagogical practices towards diverse learner groups can be just as detrimental in producing exclusion in a classroom (Poudel, 2007).

The extent to which educator's attitudes and beliefs are portrayed within a schooling environment, may also be seen as bullying (Gomez-Baya, Garcia-Moro, Nicoletti, & LagoUrbano, 2022). Victims of bullying and exclusion may experience "greater personal insecurity, anxiety, depression, loneliness and unhappiness" (Gomez, et al 2022, p37). If a learner is at risk of these feelings, they are at risk of not excelling academically. Yu, Xu, Jiang, Hua, Zhou and Guo (2022) discuss that "...schools can present as a considerable source of stress, worry, and unhappiness, and hinder academic achievement." (Yu et al, 2022, p.2). Puteh et al (2022), discusses further, which reinforces the above, that there needs to be a level of comfort of learners in a classroom for them to gain access to knowledge. Negative teacher, learner relationships can decrease learner comfort within a classroom (Puteh et al, 2022), when comfort levels are decreased learners are unable to make meaning of the education that they receive and as such can be excluded from epistemological access.

Apart from educators, a school's principal is perhaps the most influential person at any school. There is a substantial amount of evidence regarding the role the principal plays in exclusion and inclusion within a schooling environment (Kearney, 2011). I mention this because in the finding section of this research report, when looking at the document analysis, the way in which the school as a whole view learners with ancestral callings leaves them vulnerable to exclusion. Their attitudes and beliefs as well as the general upkeep of a school factor into this. They can encourage training of educators and yield much power over a school influencing attitudes and beliefs of learners and educators (Kearney, 2011). They are also in control of who is allowed into a school and whether to maintain the market model of schooling to maintain a school's status quo (Meier & Hartell, 2009). School culture although overlooked is a vital aspect in whether a school practices exclusion or inclusion (Kearney, 2011) and these factor into the behaviour of educators as well. Attitudes, stigmas, and beliefs influence school culture and whether school culture is inflexible and rigid and does not allow for difference and the acceptance of difference effects if inclusion or exclusion is practiced (Kearney, 2011).

Being excluded from a school has short- and long-term effects on students (Power & Taylor, 2020). These learners can become involved in high-risk behaviour. Power and Taylor (2020) discuss that,

"Draws attention the fact that those who are most likely to be excluded are already the most vulnerable in society – four times more likely to have grown up in poverty,

seven times more likely to have a special educational need and ten times more likely to have poor mental health” (Power & Taylor, 2020, p.1).

Apart from the ethical implications of impeding educational access of learners to education, emotional implications and behavioural issues and are at risk of not achieving good enough results to enter university. Exclusion has detrimental well-being and the lives of learners.

The above chapter has allowed an explanation of how epistemological exclusion results in lack of access towards learners, based upon the beliefs and attitudes of educators.

In conclusion this literature review has highlighted the practices as well as relevance of ancestral callings on a global scale as well as prevalence within a South African context, this further explains its importance to indigenous peoples. I further discussed the prevalence and occurrences of ancestral callings within South African schools and how these occurrences have resulted in confusion by both schools and the department of education but also the hopelessness met by schools. Furthermore, I discuss that many articles reveal that these ancestral callings are mass hysteria which further enforce colonial stigma. This is subsequently followed by, how aspects of apartheid and colonization further cemented stigma surrounding ancestral callings in modern day Africa and South Africa. Lastly, I have discussed exclusion, broadly at first, discussing what exclusion is and narrowing this down to include epistemological exclusion and how negative educator attitudes and behaviours towards learners can result in epistemological exclusion.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework.

As defined by Lederman and Lederman, (2015). “A theoretical framework is a logically developed and connected set of concepts and premises—developed from one or more theories—that a researcher creates to scaffold a study.” (Lederman & Lederman, 2015) whereas Mensah, Agyemang, Acquah, Babah and Dontoh, (2020) defines a theoretical framework as a blueprint to guide one’s research by using an existing theory. Theoretical frameworks are in this regard the foundation on which research is built and are further used as an overall aim and guide for one’s research.

This research is grounded in two theoretical frameworks: Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) which have been linked and interconnected. Together, these frameworks allow for a deeper understanding of how issues surrounding systemic inequality, colonial legacies, and epistemological hierarchies continue to shape the lived experiences of Black learners, particularly those who experience ancestral callings within South African schooling environments.

The use of CRT and IKS allow for a critical analysis through a lens that comes from an African perspective in itself it is offering a decolonial view on this work. CRT provides the structural critique, identifying how racism persists through institutional practices both in a direct and nuanced fashion. IKS on the other hand, offers a cultural and epistemic intervention, which allowed for the re-centering of indigenous perspectives into this research. Together, they enable the research to interrogate not only how exclusion happens but also why certain groups of certain religious, cultural and spiritual practices are excluded and why.

Critical race theory was decided upon as it is suggestive of power dynamics are the root cause of inequalities that are often perpetuated through culture, society, and race (Litowitz, 1996). CRT focuses specifically on racial exclusion and acts of racism embedded in historical instances (Litowitz, 1996) such as apartheid and colonization. The integration of IKS has been used to further inform CRT as it allows this study to move beyond a solely Western critique of CRT and rather allows more nuanced understanding between race, culture and epistemologies within a South African setting.

To complement CRT and make the analysis more contextually grounded in African culture and spiritualities, this research also draws on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). IKS refers to the collective epistemologies, values, and cultural practices developed by indigenous communities over generations (Bredlid, 2009). In the South African context, IKS emphasizes the validity of African ways of knowing, being, and learning which include aspects such as spiritual practices like ancestral veneration.

IKS is particularly relevant in addressing the core concern of this research, which is the marginalization of learners who experience ancestral callings. While CRT highlights the systemic racial dynamics at play of learners who experience ancestral callings and again why this may be. IKS re-centers indigenous perspectives, challenging the dominant assumption that knowledge and practices must be secular, rational, and Western to be legitimate in the

world and more specifically in education. It also asserts that the inclusion of spiritual and cultural knowledge is necessary for meaningful educational transformation as well as inclusion. This research has affirmed many times that learners who see themselves in their education, content and schools feel included.

By applying an IKS viewpoint, coupled with CRT as a theoretical framework, will allow for the following. Firstly, by applying IKS to inform CRT, the centering of African epistemologies takes place, focusing on aspects such as how South African indigenous peoples view and practice ancestral callings and veneration rather than applying a westernized perspective of what it is viewed to be. This is expressed Breidlid (2009), “It is, however, imperative that African indigenous knowledge systems are understood in relation to a worldview which is to a large extent realized in religious ceremonies, rituals and other practices.” (Breidlid, p 141, 2009). African knowledges systems are at the forefront of the analysis and understanding of this research. CRT, as mentioned previously, stems from an American understanding. When applying IKS to CRT we can understand CRT from a specifically African viewpoint and perhaps how racism is exercised from a South African perspective given historical aspect such as colonization and apartheid. Where the nuances are differently practiced as well as the specific focus on ancestral callings and how ignorance and refusal to accept them may appear racist. IKS further allows for the challenge of western epistemology and recognizing the value of IKS in the understanding of Black learners’ experiences with ancestral callings. IKS further allows CRT to be understood and applied in a way where racism is contextualized within a South African setting given historical aspects such as apartheid and colonization. IKS is also vital and important in informing counter narratives that challenge discriminatory discourses of Black learners in schools, again within a South African setting, shedding light on South African specific issues. It is important to consider this research within a purely African gaze, allowing respect for the epistemologies that make up what ancestral callings are from an African perspective. The application of IKS allows for this while being coupled with CRT.

As described by Mutekwe (2015), the impact of colonization of African countries has fostered and perpetuated a very anti-African way of life, philosophy, thinking and education. Within a South African setting the apartheid regime had further cemented this. As a result, a western way of life and forms of thinking were prioritized and African philosophies, ways of life, and education were discarded. Leaving Africans with a disconnect between what is

deemed to be acceptable and what is not, due to a perpetuated western narrative (Mutekwe, 2015). It is with that, that IKS had emerged. In short IKS can be defined as promoting indigenous knowledge of a country, knowledge was perhaps overlooked or abandoned due to the impact of colonization (Breidlid, 2009). Further expressed by Chivaura (2017), is that

“The African worldview declares that our world has two aspects: They are the physical and the spiritual...The differences between African and European worldviews concerning earth and heaven relate to differences in their attitudes towards the material and the spiritual. Africans regard them as compatible ... The danger of adopting the European worldview to solve African problems is therefore obvious. It is hostile to our worldview and idea of development. African development can only be truly achieved through an African worldview” (Chivaura, 2006, p. 217).

The above is an important focal point of this research, it showcases that, Western views of the world may differ from IKS of African views of the world, and within that, certain issues within an African context, such as ancestral callings need to be understood and examined within an African indigenous understanding and scope. Therefore, when approaching this research, although IKS is not being used as a theoretical framework, it is coupled with CRT, to allow for an African gaze, on an issue that is seen within some South African schools, specific to an African context revealing then and always keeping in mind, the importance of African spirituality within the lives of many Black South Africans.

CRT been used as broad theoretical frameworks to inform this research as they can speak to the reasoning as to why educators may express negative attitudes and feelings towards those who experience ancestral callings. CRT allows for the explanation on how this might be further rooted in stigma created and cemented towards Black South Africans during colonization and apartheid. It further explains how these are often portrayed in nuanced ways, that could result in epistemological exclusion.

CRT can be seen to have started within legal systems in the United States of America and focused primarily on the injustices and inequality towards African Americans when it came to the law (De La Garza, 2016). However, the idea became something, applicable to a much larger set of issue rooted in power dynamics around race and racism (De La Garza, 2016). CRT is focused on aspects of race and racism particularly those that influence and affect the bodies, identities, and experiences of people of colour (De La Garza, 2016). This can be

relayed in ways such as the spoken word, the way in which discourse is used to talk about or to talk to people of colour and further how these can result in nuanced racism. De La Garza (2016) conveys this in “Critical race theorists argue that speech acts cause racism and that solutions to problems resulting from racism require the use of language to reshape reality” (De La Garza, 2016 p2). Acts of racism do not need to then be acts of segregation or human rights abuses such as those seen during apartheid or colonization but can also be expressed in discourses used, actions, facial expressions and a general attitude towards another person pertaining to their race (Delgado,2008).

Another important point regarded within CRT is the focus on structural racism. Lawrence and Keleher (2004) describes structural racism as

“Structural Racism lies underneath, all around and across society. It encompasses: (1) history, which lies underneath the surface, providing the foundation for white supremacy in this country. (2) culture, which exists all around our everyday lives, providing the normalization and replication of racism and, (3) interconnected institutions and policies, they key relationships and rules across society providing the legitimacy and reinforcements to maintain and perpetuate racism.” (Lawrence & Keleher 2004, p.2).

The above highlights the dynamism seen within structural racism, and that it is often nuanced. As expressed by Treviño, Harris and Wallace (2008) CRT “the daily microaggressions inflicted upon various oppressed minorities...” (Treviño, Harris & Wallace, 2008, p.7). Microaggressions emphasis again, the aspect that race and racism are not always expressed in a direct form and that there are systems that perpetuate this (Treviño, et al, 2008). For example, unlike apartheid which blatantly stipulated racist laws (Voosloo, 2015), contemporary aspects in modern day South African especially within schooling emphasizes more nuanced forms of racism. CRT speaks to these injustices (Cabrera, 2018) and informs the overall research report as such. Furthermore, this ties in with the idea rooted within the epistemological exclusion investigated in this research report, which unlike general exclusion, this epistemological exclusion speaks to a nuanced idea of exclusion, rooted in injustices towards Black learners who experience ancestral callings by their educators. Epistemological exclusion like nuanced racism maybe be overlooked as it is not a direct form of discrimination. However, both aspects can reveal detrimental effects in that similarly to

direct racism, nuanced racism can result in exclusion and just like direct forms of exclusion can result in low educational outcomes so can epistemological exclusion (Matias, 2016).

CRT discusses what the oppressive power structure is, racism (De La Garza, 2016). CRT has been applied to narrow that focus down to a specific oppressive power structure which is race. Critical race theory is further used as a critique as it allows, the idea that racism is systemic are embedded in laws, policies and rules seen and does not fall on an individual but as a collective (Ansell, 2008) that oppressive power structures perpetuate equality or inequality. Within this institution because it is a Catholic school, the practice of Catholicism is priority over and above any other cultural and religious practices where especially the practice of ancestral callings is called demonic possession, mass hysteria or a psychological issue (Ndlovu, 2016) which creates disempowerment and lack of representation of other groups namely Black learners because as the research will show, the school hosts a majority Black population. This can be seen as problematic as even though this is a Catholic school, representation, and inclusion of a majority group of learners is not present, these can result in their epistemological exclusion.

The disempowerment and lack of acceptance of African indigenous cultural practices such as ancestral callings reveal true power dynamics within South Africa, and these then allow for the epistemological inclusion or exclusion (Gibbs & Powell, 2012) of Black learners who experience ancestral callings. These further express, what is deemed acceptable and what should be excluded when looking at religions, cultures, and practices. For example, at this institution which religious and cultural practices are preferred (Christianity/ Catholicism) versus which ones are frowned upon (indigenous African religious practices, spiritual and cultures). CRT reveals then nuanced ideas embedded in racism, stemming from apartheid and colonisation by educators, influencing attitudes of inclusion and exclusion towards diverse learners. This influences issues of social justice and will be applied to highlight possible exclusion of Black learners who experience ancestral callings, which then result in epistemological exclusion. And how due to this discrimination equal, equitable access to education is not reached (Kearney, 2011).

Chapter Four Research Design & Research Methodology

The research design of this research is qualitative. A qualitative research design is a research approach that focuses on exploring and understanding phenomena, experiences, and meanings through non-numerical data. It aims to gain a deeper understanding of the research context, participants' perspectives, and the meanings they attribute to their experiences (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). The key characteristics of qualitative research are exploratory which is that this type of research design seeks to explore new insights as opposed to testing hypotheses (Patton, 2005). Qualitative research tends to collect data in the form of texts, observations, and images rather than in forms of numerical data. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth analysis of data which identify patterns, themes and create meaning (Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2020). A perhaps very important quality of qualitative research is that it allows for a contextual understanding therefore there is an understanding the research context as well as the participants' experiences within a given context. Lastly, qualitative research allows for subjective interpretations that acknowledge the subjective interpretation of the data from the researcher's viewpoint as well as the active engagement with said subjectivity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). By using a qualitative research design, researchers can gain rich, nuanced insights into the research context and participants' experiences, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

Discussed by Merriam (2002) qualitative research moves away from one set reality as expressed in quantitative research or positivism and rather relays ideas seen within interpretivism and how meaning is constructed by individuals (Merriam, 2002). Further expressed by Merriam (2002), which also coincides with the aims of this research, is that qualitative research is to understand individual realities within a given context at a certain time. Within this context, it is the perceptions and beliefs of educators towards learners who experience ancestral callings in 2023 at a Catholic school. Qualitative research draws from interpretivism (Merriam, 2002), which were discussed above, and how these subsequently create a reality, how people view aspects in life, perceive these and ultimately how these

beliefs and ideas result in the possible epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings.

Qualitative research design focuses on meaning making and motives, as the research is trying to understand and grasp the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of the educators of learners who experience ancestral callings. This will be done by conducting a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews and autoethnography are useful in gaining insightful information from the viewpoint of the subject (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022) in this case the educators at said institution, me included. Semi-structured interviews allow for a guide in the questions that you ask and can lead to a point of certain information that you want to obtain as a researcher (Ruslin et al, 2022) whereas the autoethnographic account allows for a discussion of important themes that can lead to views, perceptions, and beliefs of educators at this school.

Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a framework that guides the research process, including the research question, methodology, data collection, and analysis. It encompasses the researcher's worldview, epistemology, and methodology, and influences how they approach the research study (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). A research paradigm typically includes ontology which is the assumptions about the nature of reality and existence. Epistemology, which is described as beliefs about knowledge, how it's created, and what constitutes valid knowledge.

Methodology which entails the research approach, design, and methods used to collect and analyses data and lastly axiology values and ethics guiding the research process (Kivunja, & Kuyini, 2017).

The research paradigm decided upon for this research report is interpretivism. Interpretivism simply explained is the emphasizes on subjective experience, qualitative methods, and interpretive analysis. Interpretivism speaks more precisely and informs well the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of educators who teach Black learners who experience ancestral callings. Interpretivism is described as a sociological method of research on which an action or event is analyzed based on the norms and values of a culture in society. Human behaviour in this regard is assigned meaning (Scauso, 2020). So, we may ask ourselves here, why do educators at this institution have certain beliefs and attitudes towards learners who experience ancestral callings? What drives these? Therefore, interpretivism is based upon the belief that

reality is subjective and influenced by experience, culture, and society (Pervin & Mokhtar 2022). As relayed by Pervin and Mokhtar (2022) “assumes that "truth and knowledge are subjective" because of differences in our culture and life experiences” (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022, p 420.) Therefore, educators who are influenced by ideas rooted in white supremacy, apartheid and coloniality may reveal negative stigma towards Black learners who experience ancestral callings, resulting in their epistemological exclusion. This research report is rooted in gaining an understanding of the reality of educators, interpretivism informs this.

Emphasized again by Pervin and Mokhtar (2022) “As a research paradigm, interpretive research is based on the premise that social reality is shaped by way of human experience and social backdrop, thereby making it well suited to do research on human behaviours which are related in the context of its socio-cultural issues” (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022, p 421.). What is also important to point out within the interpretivist paradigm is that researchers will often come across multiple realities when researching one aspect, for me, this is exactly the aim of the research report, to come across multiple views of educators at said institution because the research methodology involves comparisons of viewpoints, beliefs, and experiences that in turn inform the epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings.

Trustworthiness

This research is a qualitative study and as such trustworthiness needs to be adhered to. Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the measuring of quality of work within a research project (Gunawan, 2015). Qualitative research does not use numbers when collecting and the analysis of data. Rather, qualitative research is to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. This is further stated by Ahmed (2024) in “Qualitative research explores the intricate details of human behaviour, attitudes, and experiences, emphasizing the exploration of nuances and context.” (Ahmed ,2024, p1).

Therefore, it is important that when analyzing data trustworthiness in this regard is adhered to (Stahl, & King, 2020). As stated by Ahmed (2024) “While qualitative research has limitations, such as subjectivity and resource constraints, the methodical application of measures to ensure trustworthiness greatly enhances the precision and reliability of qualitative research.” (Ahmed, 2024, p1). Trustworthiness further refers to the degree to which qualitative findings reflect accurately the reality that the participants have experienced (Ahmed, 2024).

Furthermore, trustworthiness within a qualitative study refers to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings (Ahmed, 2024). Referring to credibility, it can be defined as in short as the confidence in the findings on the study which is based upon the researcher's expertise, data quality, and methodology. Moreover, referring to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout, (2021) credibility refers to more specifically how data is interpreted that reflects well the experiences of the participants. In this regard data should mirror what has been expressed by participants

Referring now to transferability, which can be loosely defined as “the degree to which the research findings can be extrapolated to alternative contexts or situations” (Ahmed, 2024, p 2), in this regard can one’s research be applied beyond the specific context of this study.

Dependability on the other hand refers to enduring and unwavering nature of the research findings across time (Ahmed, 2024) looking specifically at the consistency and stability of findings. Dependability further refers to whether results are reliable and reproducible. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2021) dependability is the quality of the integration process between data collection, analysis, and theory generation in grounded theory. Dependability is akin to the constancy and trustworthiness of the research results in a quantitative study (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2021).

The last aspect of trustworthiness is confirmability. Confirmability can be described as according to Ahmed (2024) “pertains to the impartiality and objectivity of the findings, guaranteeing that they remain unaffected by any biases or preferences of the researchers” (Ahmed, 2024, p1). With this in mind confirmability refers then to the ability of research to be created in such a way that when other individuals look at said research, they are able to draw similar results from the findings (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2021).

There are several ways one can reach trustworthiness within research. This will be described in general and by referring to some of the different aspects of trustworthiness.

Firstly, for a researcher to develop credibility, they should engage with participants over an extended period, observing them persistently while keeping an open-minded attitude, recognizing personal biases, and practicing self-reflection throughout the entire study process (Ahmed, 2024). Furthermore, the use of triangulation can further relay credibility within research. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources, methods, or analysts to verify findings. According to Bans-Akutey and Tiimub (2021) this is reaffirmed in

“triangulation is the fact that it provides more insights that help the researcher to better explain a phenomenon. In the case of theoretical triangulation, researchers can use two or more theories to explain research findings. These help the researcher analyse collected data against a number of theories for deeper understanding.” (Bans-Akutey and Tiimub, 2021 p3.). Due to the fact that triangulation uses multiple data sources it helps increase credibility by decreasing aspects such as bias, which can be a part of qualitative research (Bans-Akutey, et al 2021). This can be done as well when research is looked at by more than one researcher, this is known as researcher triangulation. This process is done where data or findings are coded by two different researchers and then are then compared (O’Connor & Joffe, 2020). Triangulation is an important practice to achieve trustworthiness.

Another way to achieve trustworthiness in a study is via reflexivity. Reflexivity described by Ahmed (2024), is the idea that research should acknowledge their own bias. Within qualitative research this is an issue. Being aware of one’s bias can allow for identification of it and perhaps result in more objective data collection and analysis of findings. This helps achieve credibility.

Thick descriptions aid in achieving transferability within research. Thick descriptions help provide details on contextual information that may enable readers to assess transferability of findings (Ahmed, 2024).

Dependability is ensured when research is thoroughly documented. This includes going through each step of the research process which may ensure transparency. This can allow others to replicate or assess how dependable the findings are. As well as understanding the rationale behind any decisions being made (Ahmed, 2024).

Thoroughly documenting each step of the research process helps ensure transparency and allows others to replicate the study or assess the dependability of the findings by following the same procedures and understanding the rationale behind decisions made.

Reflecting on my own research, there were multiple steps in which I took to ensure that a level of trustworthiness was achieved. I have expressed transparency throughout the research process, by documenting each process. Furthermore, through the guidance and help of my supervisors, possible triangulation has taken place. Although a challenging aspect of the research process, I have tried to acknowledge as well as leave out my own bias from the research process.

Ethical considerations.

Before starting with this research report, I first had to received ethical clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand. My ethics protocol number is 2022ECE015H. I was given ethical clearance from the ethics committee at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The topic of ancestral callings can be seen as a controversial issue. It pertains to cultural and spiritual practices that are not openly expressed, realised, and accepted and are a source of contestation for many people. This includes those being interviewed as it may conflict with their own religious beliefs. This topic was something that I had only viewed at the school where I taught, and I did not have much knowledge about it as it is not a part of my race, culture, or spirituality. Therefore, when approaching the topic that is African ancestry, ancestral callings and aspects pertaining to religious, spiritual, and cultural practices of ethnic groups in South Africa, these have been thoroughly researched and discussed with the utmost respect and care.

When I approached the school where I wanted to perform this research, I received consent from them after they were briefed on what this research topic encompasses. The school's name was not included in the research and has remained confidential. This school is a semi-private institution; I did not need to receive clearance from the Department of Basic education to conduct research at this institution. The school was aware of the research topic. The interview participants only included adults that were briefed on the research topic. All the participants volunteered in the interview process and could withdraw consent at any time. I had asked several educators to participate and proceeded with interviews of those who had given consent. Educators were not chosen specifically but rather many were asked for and interviews continued with those who had given consent. In this regard researcher bias should be eliminated. Participants' names were not revealed, and their identity has been kept confidential. Answers that were provided during the interview process have been kept the same as they were when provided by the educators. These answers were not manipulated or changed in any way to coerce this research. There were no factors of harm when conducting this research.

When I was asked to use the policy pertaining to learners who experience ancestral callings from the school, I had received consent from the school to do so. I blocked out any names, including the name of the school, to ensure the school and its staff would in no way be identified. Linders (2007) discusses that some documents can have both literal and hidden interpretations of the content, found within a document. However, when reviewing this school's policy, there were no hidden interpretations, and content came across as literal and easy to interpret. In this regard, the analysis on the policy and its subsequent findings are shown to mirror instances found in the document rather than my own interpretation. This increases the validity of the research findings (Bowen, 2009).

The last research method that was applied to this research report was autoethnography. Within my autoethnography I apply anonymity, in that the school's name as well as my past colleagues have not been identified. When writing the autoethnographic account, I strived to stay within the scope of the research and not just retell my experience as an educator at the school. I had rather identified themes that were relevant to the study. These themes were systematically analyzed. I have aligned this ethical decision based on Dewalt et al (1998) understanding of ethics in autoethnography,

“It is the ethnographer's responsibility not only to think a bit first, but to make conscious decisions on what to report and what to decline to report based on careful consideration of the ethical dimensions of the impact of the information on those who provide it, and the goals of the research.” (Dewalt, et al, 1998, p. 273)

Therefore, the autoethnographic account aligns with aspects regarding the goals of my research and the information provided has been thoroughly analyzed to provide information only pertaining to this goal.

Sampling methods

One school was used in this research. This school was chosen because the researcher had firsthand experience of the school and was aware

of the prevalence of ancestral callings. Another reason behind deciding upon this institution was that this school is a Catholic school, and it highlights hegemonic ideas seen in the prioritization of a western religion over indigenous Black South African religious, spiritual, and cultural practices even though 95% of the school population are Black learners.

Furthermore, a Catholic semi-private institution was decided upon to express how religious institutions can perpetuate colonial stigma in how it mirrors Christianity being prioritized during colonization and apartheid over African indigenous cultures.

Research Methodology

A total of six educators were interviewed for the purpose of this research report. The demographic of educators ranged in terms of age and race. Although there may be other factors that sway the opinions of these educators such as religion or spiritual orientation, the race and age diversity were specifically selected to gain an overview of perceptions of educators across race and age groups and if there is a likeness between the same race or similar age groups. This will be discussed in the finding portion of this research report. In this sense purposive sampling was used to choose specific age as well as racial groups at this institution. Only high school educators participated in this study as the high school educators experienced ancestral callings, whereas the primary school did not. The educators that participated within the semi-structured interview process ranged from ages 26-52.

Furthermore, two Black educators participated, 3 White educators and 1 coloured educator. The pseudonyms were presented as follows; educators A-F. Educator A was a White female aged 52, educator B was a White male aged 46. Educator C was a Coloured female aged 50, educator D was a White female aged 42, educator E was a Black female aged 50 and educator F was Black female aged 26. Through a coding process from the above educators, nine themes were found using thematic analysis. Codes were created by reviewing answers of educators that were most linked to establishing patterns of bias, negative beliefs, perceptions and issues or problems surrounding learners who experienced ancestral callings. Therefore, the themes found within the semi-structured interview process include ancestral callings=mass hysteria, representation of Black learners in the school, representation of Black learners in the South African schooling curriculum, racial demographics at the school, occurrences of ancestral callings, experience of ancestral callings, impact on other learners, exclusion of learners and classroom disturbances.

Document analysis will also be used in gaining perspectives into the policy created by this institution in managing ancestral callings. The method will allow an analysis of said document and compare it with testimonies of educators as well as the account given through

autoethnography. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research. Bowen (2009) affirms this in “Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Bowen, 2009, p27) in that document analysis is context specific and allows an insight into how this school manages and handles ancestral callings which can speak to the views, perceptions and beliefs the school has on ancestral callings, given how it is managed. Furthermore, document analysis allows for the reviewing and evaluation of documentation (Bowen, 2009). Documents serve as a form of data, historical insights and past events and are useful in helping us understand roots of specific issues (Bowen, 2009).

The way in which this document will be analyzed will highlight themes that result in faults in this document. These faults emphasis the school’s attitude regarding learners who experience ancestral callings. Three themes were identified. These are educators’ involvement when a learner is having an ancestral calling, peer involvement when a fellow learner is having an ancestral calling and lack of description of variations of ancestral callings. Therefore, analyzing the document used by this institution can reveal the approach taken towards ancestral callings which can further reveal the attitude of the schools towards learners who experience ancestral callings.

As a past educator at this institution, an autoethnographic research method has also been applied. I felt that observations as an insider, my experiences at this institution were important to inform this study. As a previous staff member, I have been present at staff meetings and have witnessed things said about certain learners, especially Black learners, and the general feelings that educators expressed towards learners who experience ancestral callings. I have knowledge that coincides with the aim of the research. That reveals the true feelings, beliefs and perceptions towards learners that experience ancestral callings.

Autoethnography further works together with interpretivism as a paradigm as it allows for my reality as an educator at this institution. Autoethnography is a useful research method within qualitative research as Wall (2006) relays that “If a researcher’s voice is omitted from a text, the writing is reduced to a mere summary and interpretation of the works of others, with nothing new added” (Wall, 2006, p3). There is importance in revealing the voice of research within an experiment or observation, as an individual can describe their situation better than anyone else can (Wall,2006). The way in which I use my voice in my autoethnography is by identifying instances at the school that resulted in racism both blatant and nuanced,

discrimination of Black learners at the school and further how these instances are used as a basis to introduce how educators felt about learners who experience ancestral callings. This was achieved by revealing attitudes that were displayed and instances in staff meetings where learners were spoken about in a discriminatory manner. These are all dealt with in a manner that does not identify any individuals. This autoethnography reveals other viewpoints and instances not found during the interview process. This autoethnographic account coupled with the interviews allow for a deepened understanding of racial issues, discrimination towards Black learners which is used as a basis for the discrimination and ultimately the possible epistemological exclusion of learners who have ancestral callings.

Chapter five

Findings

The subsequent chapter is a discussion of the findings of this research report, using the three methods mentioned above, autoethnography, document analysis and thematic analysis of the semi- structured interviews. Firstly, I present a table of the themes found during the coding process of the semi-structured interviews, school's policy as well as themes present within my autoethnographic account. This is followed by an analysis and discussion of these themes. To conclude I allow an explanation of how these further relate to each other and can be used to strengthen the argument regarding possible epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings. Although each research method stands on their own, there are links that can be created between them as well as over lapses. These will be further discussed. The findings correlate with the 4 research questions presented above.

Analysis of findings.

As mentioned prior, the coding processes through thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews allowed for 9 themes. These are discussed below.

Themes	Quotations	Educator A	Educator B	Educator C	Educator D	Educator E	Educator F
Ancestral callings=Mass hysteria		“I am suspicious of the mass-hysteria element, of attention-seeking behaviour cloaked in ancestral calling so you are not allowed to question it.”	“From what I saw at our school, I believe that most of it was fake / made-up to get attention”	“No, I do not believe in ancestral callings, so these have had no effect on me. In fact, I struggle to understand what these callings are all about, the legitimacy of them and if learners are faking these “attacks”.”	“Modern day culture has been sensationalized. It is like mass hysteria. A lot of people have just jumped on the bandwagon. Majority of people who believe that they have ancestral callings have the onset of psychosis and there is medical proof to back that up.”	“They are dreams and messages of those who once lived before. One should not be afraid as they allow for guidance. People make it scary. If done correctly it should be smooth sailing that it is often not perceived to be.”	“A trans an individual goes through to connect with the spiritual world.”
Representation of Black Learners in the school?		“. How else is African culture reflected in our school? I can't put a finger on it, and that is actually problematic. I think there is certainly room for more, but how and what, I do not know ...Masses conducted in indigenous languages .Superficial nods to cultural heritage, like Heritage Day. I draw on	Songs are sung in black languages. Examples used in class tend to be based on their experiences. Most textbooks have pictures of black people in it and incorporate / reflect their lived experiences.	Schools accept and do not discriminate against any race/culture. The curriculum and content is suited for all students.	“Music and dance in assembly, for example caters predominantly for the African culture, thus marginalising students from other racial groups.”	“At this school I think it's the learners that influence the integration. Such as songs they sing. Resonate that they would use at home or at their church. The pupils push for it. But the school itself does not push for it.”	“I feel like it does not, as it is not properly recognised and there is ignorance towards it.”

		cultural knowledge in lessons where it is appropriate, to broaden everyone's knowledge base. For example, when discussing the importance of names in a setwork, we'll also draw on learner's cultural teachings in that area. There are many opportunities to do this."					
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Representation of Black learners in the South African curriculum		“Is it representative of the interests of black students? As an English teacher, I believe that not enough has been done in terms of developing the curriculum in terms of Afrocentricity, or if you prefer, ‘decolonising’ the curriculum”. “Can students see themselves, their lived experiences, in the setworks we deal with? Largely not. And that is hugely problematic. We all want to see ourselves, our lives, reflected in our stories. We need to	“Yes, it is the intensions as laid out in the CAPS document.” “I feel that the only subject that represents Black learners is history.”	“yes”	“Not enough. It is more in favour of white leaners however, I am not in favour of representation of black students but also coloured, Indian and mixed-race learners.”	“I feel that the only subject that represents Black learners is history.”	“Yes, but to a certain extent. We do cover African and South African history, but the curriculum does not go into the issues that Black South African learners face in the classroom. That is an issue. The content within the syllabi and curriculum to relate to Black learners but their present lifestyle and realities are not addressed.”
		resonate with them for meaning to develop”					

Racial demographics at the school.		“The majority of the learners are black – 90% Coloured learners – 10%”	“Single race and gender – black girls”	“+95% black”	“Predominantly black African, 70% Black South African and 10% Black from other upper African countries, other percentages are made up either of Coloured, White or Asian learners.”	“95% Black learners.”	“Majority of the learners are black with a few Indian and coloured learners.”
Occurrences of ancestral callings		Yes, we have. Less this year.(2023)	Yes, full on possessions, accompanied by screaming, falling down, talking, crying, fainting.	Yes, and too often in my opinion. We have had a few cases of “group” ancestral callings as well.	Ancestral callings in abundance! Bloody abundance! It was a very common occurrence under the previous principal”	We have experienced a lot. Especially in the year 2022.	Apparently yes, but as a new educator here starting in term 2 of 2023, I have not yet experienced them personally.
Negative impact on you by experiencing ancestral callings		“I feel held hostage by the callings. You just have to accept them, with no recourse, because if you raise concerns, you are labelled racist.”	Yes, frustration.	No, I do not believe in ancestral callings, so these have had no effect on me.	“Yes, I have”	“Yes, there was a sense of confusion as I experienced having them personally but once you are introduced to a guide, they become better.”	“I have not witnessed these events so I would not know.”
Impact on other learners		“Without question”	“yes”	“yes”	“Of Course, that shouldn’t even be a question. You are deprived of your	“They may be confused and scared as they may think they are demonic possessions.”	“I am conflicted. If you have not experienced something for the first time, regardless of what it may be, the normal response would be fear

					education. you are completely rattled by it. Learners are afraid and do not want to come to school. On one day where there was a mass calling but personally, I feel it was mass hysertia. It can be proven in terms of psychiatry, where one had a 'calling' which set the other one off. It was so horrible. I went to the library that day and I heard whimpering from behind a bookshelf. I went to go, and it was a small child from maybe grade R or grade one. His teacher did not even know he was missing because she was trying to manage all the other learners, he was sitting there for over two hours because of all the chaos. He had said to me that he wanted to go home and that he does not want to come to		or anxiety. So, to a certain extent perhaps”
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					this school anymore because it is so scary. He was severely traumatised. He was shaking unconsolably. So, if you want to put ancestral callings above the emotional needs of other learners, there is something wrong with you and you should not be working with children.”		
Exclusion of learners		No. Why should they be excluded from learning? However, if they are so unstable that they cannot control it and take appropriate action, then they can't be in class. There are 30 other learners in the class whose education is completely disrupted because of one learner ... that's not fair, either.	Yes, as it intrudes on the other students learning opportunities.	Yes, I believe that these types of callings should be handled in a spiritual place and not in a classroom. Teachers and students do not have the capacity to deal with this. It can be disruptive to the class as other students do not understand it.	“In the constitution and according to the SACE, it is to the benefit to the majority or common good of all. So, if a child has a calling and it impacts the majority, then yes, those children should be excluded, and they should undergo evaluation within a psychiatric field and then perhaps they can consult a traditional healer”	“No. they must be included and integrated into the classroom however, they have to learn how to control themselves when they are in a trans.”	Definitely not, I am a firm believer in inclusion. In that schools as well as the DBE should create policy and training so that educators understand and that there is a standard procedure, similar to how we would have policy for illness or anything.

Classroom disturbances		Like you will not believe! I cannot even describe the	“Yes”	“Yes”	“Extremely disruptive.”	“Yes – for teachers and learners who do not	“Definitely, however I would not separate it
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		disturbance it causes. Not only for learning but on the mental health of the staff and the majority of learners.				understand what it is all about.”	from any other disturbance within a classroom that is not linked to teaching.”
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Document analysis themes.

Faults with school's policy	Fault 1	Fault 2	Fault 3
	Other learners, from other grades or classes are expected to leave class to assist another learner having a calling.	Educators have the option to be presented when a learner has a calling.	No variations of ancestral callings have been discussed.

Auto-ethnographic themes

Discrimination towards Black learners	Discrimination towards learners with ancestral callings
"Do not act so Black"	Demonism or witchcraft
	Training regarding health issue prioritised. No training regarding ancestral callings
"At Afrikaans schools, learners do not behave like this."	Discomfort or refusal to teach learners who experience ancestral callings.
Wild or unruly behaviour at prize giving or assemblies.	
The term Ni*** used in class. Outside of an educational context.	
Apartheid claimed to not have been 'that' bad.	

Discussion of findings.

Analysis of interviews.

The semi-structured interview questions are present in the annexure section as Annexure A.

The method employed to analyse the semi-structured interviews, was thematic analysis. This together with the application of critical theory coupled with ideas from IKS will underline perceptions, feelings, and beliefs of not only Black learners but also learners who experience ancestral callings and how these beliefs and perceptions have the possibility to result in the epistemological exclusion of these learners. This is apparent as it coincides with previous literature that discusses how learners can be excluded epistemologically due to the beliefs and perceptions of educators (Poudel, 2007). Shown in the above table, is an illustration of the themes that were taken from the interview process through coding.

The semi-structured interview process revealed an array of answers. These answers can result in the deduction of the intended investigation. Which is the way in which educators view Black learners specifically learners who experience ancestral callings have the possibility to result in epistemological exclusion due to negative feelings and perceptions of educators towards these learners.

When analyzing the findings there were a variety of age and racial groups. Racial groups were found to have similar answers rather than those of age variations. The two Black educators that were interviewed revealed similar answers pertaining to lack of acceptance of diversity in the school and learners who experience ancestral callings as well as a better understanding and acceptance of difference which is important as majority of the learners at this institution are Black. Whereas the rest of the educators interviewed 3 White educators and 1 Coloured educator, revealed similar answers regarding, what was to be found superficial representation of learners at the school and in the South African syllabus, negative feelings and responses towards ancestral callings and their impact on teaching and learning.

The answers revealed by majority of educators showed specifically negative views and feelings around what ancestral callings are, as well as the negative impacts they have on

learning, wellbeing of educators and other pupils in the school. This presented in evidence found within theme 1 where educators A, B, C and D believed ancestral callings were in fact mass hysteria or a psychological issue. In short, they expressed that, ancestral callings are not something that exists, in short dismissing a very real and a commonly practiced spiritual practice among Black South Africans. It was only the two Black educators that discussed ancestral callings are something real. Looking at this sample taken from this institution, it highlights that most educators believe these callings are fake and made up.

This emphasizes that there is a general misunderstanding or lack of understanding when it comes to what an ancestral calling entails, which has resulted in the dismissal of religious, cultural, and spiritual practices of many Black South Africans. This also perpetuates stigma, and ideas presented earlier in the apartheid and colonization chapters that although these educators do not specify demonic or other possession, do express lack of acceptance and understanding of difference of the learners that they teach. All the educators interviewed revealed, in theme 4, that the school's racial demographics are majority Black learners. Yet, there is still ignorance and general misunderstanding towards said learners rather turning to Western forms of diagnosis to give meaning to what ancestral callings instead of accepting the reality of these occurrences. Furthermore, the inability to accept one's learners is a vital factor in contributing towards epistemological exclusion and allows learners personal fulfilment and social harmony within the classroom (Avllazagaj, 2018).

Drawing from the literature, epistemological exclusion can take place when educators do not have understanding and knowledge about their learners (Kearney, 2011). A lack of knowledge and understanding for one's learners can result in ignorance, lack of understanding, and incorrect treatment of one's learners. Some of this is misunderstood about Black cultural, spiritual, and religious practices can come from the stigma that was created and cemented towards these practices during apartheid and colonization (Lephakga, 2015). The introduction of the witchcraft suppression act of 1957 reveals this in law. Due to ignorance and misunderstanding of learners who experience ancestral callings by educators at this institution, they are in essence not catered for, represented, and discriminated against and have the possibility of epistemological exclusion. Acceptance of learners is vital to result in inclusion (Kearney, 2011). However, it does become the responsibility of the educator, especially in an ever-growing diverse country like South Africa, to familiarize oneself with

cultural differences of learners (Avllazagaj, 2018). This largely, however, is not the case at this institution.

Referring to theme 2 and the representation of Black learners within the school 3/6 educators believed that learners were accurately represented because learners sang songs in their languages, namely educators B, C and D. Is this enough to allow for meaningful representation of Black learners within the institution? Reverting to the above learners cannot be correctly represented if their beliefs, religious and cultural practices are either dismissed or misunderstood (Kearney, 2011). Another important point is that out of the six participants the two Black participants, both ranging in age, one being 26 and the other 50, felt strongly about lack of representation of Black learners at the school and I find that this is an important aspect to focus on especially since one of these individuals had a daughter in matric at the school in 2023. Educator E discussed that at this school, there is a lack of representation of Black learners in, “I feel like it does not, as it is not properly recognized and there is ignorance towards it.”. She further discusses because there is ignorance towards what it is, it is not properly recognized.

Meaningful representation of indigenous groups is important as emphasized by Morales, Kumar Sunuwar and Veran, (2021), as it can limit participation of indigenous groups if there is a lack of representation. Meaningful representation is thus important as it allows for the needs and interests of an individual or group being met which can result in inclusion (Farnel, Koufogiannakis, Laroque, Bigelow, Carr-Wiggin, Feisst & Lar-Son, 2018). From an educational perspective, for learners to receive epistemological access to education, participation is a key aspect to this (Farnel, et al, 2018). If learners are not adequately represented, it can limit participation further resulting in lack of epistemological access to education and thus resulting in the possibility of epistemological exclusion. Largely, this becomes the responsibility of the educator, to create an environment that fosters epistemological access (Amaefule, Breitwieser, Biedermann, Nobbe, Drachsler, & Brod, 2023)

From further analysis of the present themes, all the educators discussed that the school is made up of a majority of Black learners, however the above highlights lack of representation of a majority group within this institution. Citing again ideas around lack of representation resulting in the possibility of epistemological exclusion. However, this may be because theme

3 reveals that 4/6 educators felt that the South African syllabi is not represented of Black learners or at least their lived experiences. Perhaps this is why it became difficult for educators to relay a sense of representation in the school, when the curriculum itself does not adequately represent Black learners. However, as argued previously, it is of great importance that educators adjust pedagogical practices to relay epistemological inclusion of learners.

Though Liu et al (2021) discusses that educators beliefs reveal their pedagogical actions. Therefore, if educators believe strongly that Black learners do not need representation in the school as they feel that they are represented enough their pedagogical practice will reveal this which results in the possibility of epistemological exclusion as learners cannot relate to content being taught. Further expressed by Liu et al, (2021) is that inability to accept cultural differences and diverse learner groups leads to academic downfall. This is reiterated by Guerra and Wubena (2017) in that “Deficit beliefs serve as one mechanism for restricting the academic success of diverse student populations” (Guerra & Wubena, 2017, p.38). The above emphasises that beliefs of educators towards their learners may either foster inclusion, when positive and exclusion, when negative.

Themes 5, 6, 7 and 9 are interlinked. As theme 5 discusses the commonality occurrences of ancestral callings within the institution. Themes 6, 7 and 9 reveal the trauma and disturbances ancestral callings have on educators and peers, and the disturbance it causes to the teaching and learning process. What I found to be interesting, however, is that educator F did cite that although ancestral callings can be traumatic and an impediment to education. She had said that “I am conflicted. If you have not experienced something for the first time, regardless of what it may be, the normal response would be fear or anxiety. So, to a certain extent perhaps” Her stance here was not to separate an ancestral calling from health-related attacks for example, that an anxiety attack can too, negatively impact other learners. This answer, as compared to other educators, revealed that their feelings regarding ancestral callings were specifically negative and almost targeted them as being traumatic or a disturbance to the learning and teaching process comparative to other disturbances such as a health-related attack. Educator E also cited that the negative feelings regarding ancestral callings of both educators and other learners alike stemmed from ignorance and the inability to learn and educate oneself on the topic. Educator D had a lot more to say on the matter regarding ancestral callings being a traumatic experience of other learners. She had said that,

“Of Course, that shouldn’t even be a question. You are deprived of your education. You are completely rattled by it. Learners are afraid and do not want to come to school. On one day there was a mass calling but personally, I feel it was mass hysertia. It can be proven in terms of psychiatry, where one had a ‘calling’ which set the other one off. It was so horrible. I went to the library that day and I heard whimpering from behind a bookshelf. I went to go, and it was a small child from maybe grade R or grade one. His teacher did not even know he was missing because she was trying to manage all the other learners, he was sitting there for over two hours because of all the chaos. He had said to me that he wanted to go home and that he does not want to come to this school anymore because it is so scary. He was severely traumatized. He was shaking unconsolably. So, if you want to put ancestral callings above the emotional needs of other learners, there is something wrong with you and you should not be working with children.

Educator D reveals her beliefs towards the impact ancestral callings on the school and the impact it has on other learners, apart from that she reveals her negative beliefs towards the presence of ancestral callings in the school and that if you prioritize learners who have ancestral callings over other learners there is something wrong with you. However, the idea is not the prioritization of one learner over the other is rather the acceptance of difference and the ability to include learners regardless of the issues they may face. Attitudes like these create the possibility for epistemological exclusion of learners. It may also reveal issues between staff members as if one staff member agrees to the allowances of ancestral callings in the school, other staff members may target that individual. Notably there was a lot of internal strife between staff members, administrators and management regarding ancestral callings.

Lastly, theme 8 showed that 3/6 educators discussed that learners should be excluded from the classroom if they experience ancestral callings whereas 3/6 educators discussed that learners should not be excluded. 2/6 educators point blank revealed they should not be in class due to the disturbances it results in and that it is not their responsibility or the responsibility of the school to manage such occurrences and that it should be managed within a place of spirituality. These were educators B and C. 1/6 educators revealed that learners should be excluded because of the impact it has in majority of learners and adequate help is necessary before they return to the classroom. This was educator D. However, would these

educators feel this way if these learners were sickly or had another form of mental health or physical issues that resulted in similar disturbances? From my experience at the institution, no. Physical health and mental health were often prioritized by educators in a way that they made allowances for these learners and were very understanding to their plight. There were even accommodations for ‘sickly’ learners. This result shows discrimination against the beliefs displayed by Black learners who experience ancestral callings by stressing acceptance of western diagnosis rooted in themes discussed in ideas of coloniality.

The finding presented within thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews that took place do reveal negative attitudes, beliefs, and stigma towards not only Black learners but more so learners who experience ancestral callings these then influence the possibility of epistemological exclusion of learners. Some of these views and perceptions may be a result of the stigma created during colonization and apartheid in that some educators ignored the existence of ancestral callings, which many Black South Africans believe in. The aspects of lack of representation both within the school and the South African curricula, reveals inability of educators to adjust pedagogical practice to suit the needs of the diverse groups of learners which they teach, which as mentioned prior results in the possibility epistemological exclusion.

Statements from document that will be analyzed.

5. A maximum of two current class students may stay with the student experiencing a calling.
4. Whether a teacher chooses to stay with the student who is experiencing a calling or not is optional. The teacher may choose to stand outside.

When a child experiences a severe attack, the parents are expected to do the following:

- Take three days off school to recuperate.
- Take the child for a psychological and drug evaluation to rule out any possible conditions.

3/4

- The child will not be allowed back to school without a letter from the practitioner, i.e. Psychologist or Traditional Healer.

Document analysis.

The full policy is provided in the annexures as annexure B.

In late 2022, the school where this research was conducted had created a formal policy to manage the frequency of ancestral callings that the school was experiencing. The document was drawn up by the high school principal at the time, who has since left the school. It is unclear who he had consulted with when drawing up this policy. The policy states that there were three prior drafts before this one was decided upon, finalized, and handed out to staff members, parents, and learners. The way in which this policy is broken down essentially discusses protocol on how educators and the school is to manage or deal with a learner that experiences ancestral calling. I will demonstrate this by highlighting the roles of educators, learners, the office and if this happened on an excursion how it should be dealt with.

When analyzing this policy, I would like to mention and discuss the faults with it. How faults leave the school susceptible to legal action, and the policy is in breach of other educational policies which can cause harm to learners and leaves not only learners who have ancestral callings but their peers vulnerable. Ultimately these faults result in the exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings. This will be done by discussing how the policy allows educators to choose if they want to be present when a learner has an ancestral calling or not,

the involvement of peers when a learner is having an ancestral calling and the lack of conscientious planning into the consideration of the variations of ancestral callings which shows both discrimination and ignorance towards learners that experience ancestral callings, again leaving these learners vulnerable to epistemological exclusion.

According to Bae (2007), when a person experiences an ancestral calling, they go into a trans-like state. This state can appear in many forms (Kubeka, 2016). I have witnessed these occurrences. Some learners at this school would become stiff and unmoving, whereas other learners started shaking and screaming violently, others would peacefully chant and on a few occasions a learner would start running all over the school. The above policy did not consider these variations, nor did it account for harm that may incur to said learner, other learners, or the educator themselves. There has been very little thought and consideration given to the variations and differences of learners who did experience ancestral callings and as mentioned prior, ancestral callings are experienced differently among different Black ethnic groupings in South Africa (Bae,2007). As rather the policy states that “office should be called, desks should be moved, teacher can stay with or leave the individual having the calling and other learners to be removed from the classroom”. This is throughout, there is not one mention within the policy that considers or mentions the different expressions and experiences of ancestral callings. If a learner started running around the school, who should go and find that learner? It is stipulated in the policy that if a learner is having a calling, then two current class learners may stay with said learner. Are these two learners also supposed to chase after the learner who expresses their calling by running around? On another occasion a learner would just fall to the ground after the trans as if they collapsed, this could have been dangerous as the learner could hurt themselves, again the policy makes no suggestions about this. Another learner experienced a calling in the swimming pool during a PE lesson, that learner could have drowned. This policy does not account for that. This shows the school’s inability to properly consider the differences shown in different forms of ancestral callings, leaving these learners vulnerable as they could hurt themselves. It further emphasizes ignorance the school has towards ancestral callings, assuming that they are all the same. It further suggests the lack of research, consideration and consulting with the correct channels to understand properly what this policy needed to entail to not only be inclusive but also correct, safe and prioritizing the needs of learners who experience ancestral callings in the same way a sickly learner would be prioritized.

A further fault is the involvement of the educator or lack thereof. When a learner had an ancestral calling in a classroom the policy states if an educator is uncomfortable, they could leave the classroom. This is cited in “whether a teacher chooses to stay with the student experiencing the ancestral or not is optional. The teacher may choose to stand outside”. This differs from the policy this institution has pertaining to policies regarding a learner having a health-related attack for example, where an educator must be present and account for these events and further conflicts with other policies at this institution where learners may not be left unattended. This shows firstly the general discomfort some educators had in being around learners who have ancestral callings, and it also shows the schools acts of discrimination towards learners having them. Although they are different from other health related occurrences, for example, leaving these learners alone can result in these learners hurting themselves. Therefore, when educators are given the choice to leave these learners alone it can be harmful to the learners being left alone. Furthermore, as pointed out in an article by Eberlein and Moen (2016), it is the responsibility of the educator and the school when a child is left in their care. It is then even more their responsibility to be present and keep a child out of harm’s way to the best of their ability, this is highlighted within the South African Schools Act, cited by Eberlein (2009) in “ reveal that this “duty of care” indicates that the educator must accept responsibility for the safety and well-being of the learners for as long as the learners are in his or her care” (Eberlein, 2009, p.28). Educators in this regard are described as *loco parentis*, as to assume the responsibility of these learners when they are in their care (Eberlein, 2009). At this institution educators were reprimanded when they left a class of learners alone to go to the restroom and were often told, “if a learner gets hurt or hurts another learner, it will be your fault as well as the fault of the school and you can face legal action”. An instance of this was noted in the article by Eberlein and Moen (2016), that states “ a thirteen year-old learner at a prestigious public high school for boys in Pretoria suffers serious head injuries when he falls onto his head from a considerable height after a group of older boys flick him into the air with the aid of a cricket net, this learner was subsequently awarded more than ZAR 23.5 million (approximately \$1.56 million) in damages by the Supreme Court as a result of the injuries he sustained.” (Eberlein& Moen, 2016, p.108). The above reinforced the notion of the school’s and subsequently the responsibility of its educators to protect learners and they can be at fault and held responsible for this if they are not present when they are supposed to be. This policy is in direct conflict of this. It also

reveals the attitude of the school as well as educators and general discomfort being around learners who do experience ancestral callings because they are given the choice to leave this learner alone.

The next conflict was that the policy also stipulates that two learners could be allowed to assist the learner by having an ancestral calling. Cited in the policy “A maximum of two current class students may stay with the student experiencing the ancestral calling”. With reference to the variations of ancestral callings some learners would get violent, they would kick and move their arms around. In that case what if the other learners got injured? As mentioned prior the South African school’s act places safety of learners as the responsibility of the school and its educators (Eberlein, 2009). Surely, it is not other learners’ responsibility to assist a learner experiencing an ancestral calling. What became quite clear as well is that the same learners were being asked to assist their peers having ancestral callings which caused an impediment to their learning in 2022 and early 2023. As a past educator as well as the testimonies given by educators, it is discussed that the institution was having around two to three ancestral callings a week. It was often matric, and grade 11 learners asked to assist. These learners were often asked to assist as the prevalence of ancestral callings were often in these grades and it was a general assumption by administration that if one learner experienced an ancestral calling, they could aid another learner who had one. Although the policy stated two learners from that class could aid in helping said learner, it was often, especially if these instances happened in younger grades, older learners from other classes were asked to assist and again it was the same learners. This is in direct violation of their education as they were asked to leave a lesson and come to the aid of a peer having a calling. The single most important right in the Bill of Rights with a direct bearing on education is the right to education. Section 29 of the Constitution (1996) states: “29(1) Everyone has the right a. to a basic education...” This also became a frustration of educators, having the same learners leave their classrooms a few times a week. This presented another issue with the policy for both learners and educators as it disrupted the learning and teaching process because instead of finding better ways to manage ancestral callings in the school, it became the responsibility of other learners.

A further breach regarding learners having a basic right to education is that a learner who experiences an ancestral calling is to ‘take’ three days off school to recuperate and will only be allowed to return to school if they have received a letter from either a psychologist, psychiatrist, or traditional healer. The policy also noted if a learner was having a serious

attack, they should take three days off, however there was no evidence pertaining to what a serious attack was. The school did not take into consideration the cost these may incur especially regarding learners who were experiencing these often nor did they consider access to either a psychologist, psychiatrist, or traditional healer. Furthermore, some learners who had experienced ancestral callings often, were to be expected to take off school for three days each time would severely impact their education. This would then mean certain learners not attending school for 3 days almost every week.

The policy seems to display ignorance as well as discrimination, in that it is treated differently from other policies regarding possible harm to learners as well as it does not account for differences in the various forms of ancestral callings. There was very little consideration for the act of what having an ancestral calling entailed. The policy left those who had ancestral callings vulnerable to harm, it did not consult with the correct channels and further showcased the school's unwillingness to learner and educate themselves, staff members and other learners about practices found within Black indigenous cultural, spiritual, and religious practices. The ignorance and lack of willingness to learn about the learners who they taught on a daily basis resulted in stigma and frustration toward them which in turn resulted in possible epistemological exclusion of learners who experienced ancestral callings and their peers and definite physical exclusion as they were out of class often or were asked to spend three days off from school.

Autoethnography.

To begin this autoethnography, I am a 31-year-old coloured female who practices Islam as my religion. I reside in the city of Johannesburg, and I have my entire life. This autoethnographic account will draw on my time as a learner at this institution, however, it will be very brief. Most of this account will be given from my time as an educator at this institution, which lasted for almost five years. I started teaching at this school in 2019 and resigned from teaching there in 2023. This autoethnographic account discusses instances of discrimination towards Black learners and how these can result in possible epistemological exclusion. Later this autoethnography allows for a more narrowed focus discussing how negative discourse, perceptions, belief, and lack of education result in the possible epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings. I argue that the school's efforts to be inclusive by showcasing aspects of liberty and democracy as one of the goals of educational institutions

according to the South African constitution (Harley, Barasa, Bertram, Mattson, & Pillay, 2000), has not been met. I argue this by showing that it is important to focus primarily on instances of discrimination and lack of acceptance of Black learners at this institution before considering their attitudes towards learners who experience ancestral callings as it paves the way for general lack of acceptance of Black learners which highlights even greater disdain with those learners who experience ancestral callings. I do this by discussing racist discourse used by educators towards Black learners, both nuanced and blatant. I discuss how management had to intervene on some of these occasions, I showcase how educators often dismissed the lived experiences of Black learners, and I further conclude this by highlighting their ultimate views, perceptions and beliefs towards learners who experience ancestral callings. This is done by reiterating discourses used as well as the seeming inability of educators to educate themselves on African religious, spiritual, and cultural practices.

Before working at this institution, I was a learner there for twelve years, from 1999- 2011. In retrospect, being a learner allowed me to be shielded from much of feelings, perceptions, and beliefs of my educators. Or rather, I was never a target of their beliefs, perceptions or feeling. Perhaps it was because I was not Black. During my time as a learner at this institution the inclusion of anything pertaining to Black African cultural, spiritual, or religious practices were not necessarily forbidden but they were not encouraged either. Throughout my time as a learner the school still maintained a majority Black learner population. During Mass, which can be described as a Catholic religious ceremony which involves the Eucharist, learners only sang English or Latin hymns and hymns in other South African vernacular languages were only introduced much later and was more prevalent as my time as an educator there which started in 2019. However, many educators did not participate in the singing of vernacular hymns as they noted they did not understand them, but learners were still expected to partake in singing Latin hymns which showed that learners were forced to abide by western norms of religious practices. A further argument by educators is that, if you do not want to take part in Mass or Catholic activities as such then you should go to another school. There was the need for Black learners to then assimilate into this school to gain a form of acceptance (Meier & Hartell, 2009). There becomes a conflict on seeking out good education or losing stripping away culture and religion. However, when I started teaching, before taking courses on inclusive education in honours and master's classes respectively, I was a firm believer that

education comes above all at a school, and I did not see the importance in cultural representation.

I did not understand the importance of inclusion of learners with different backgrounds, the importance of diversity, representation and relating to the place and people where you received an education. However, I came to realize that schools do function as an array of other aspects apart from education alone. As a novice educator my belief regarding schooling was that it was simply institutions to teach children. However, I soon learnt that schools function as more than that. Although their primary function is to educate children, they also align with politics of a country. In the case of South Africa, to establish liberty and democracy (Harley et al 2000), they play a role in socialization of learners as well as a space that encourages safety.

As described by Cranston, Kimber, Mulford, Reid, and Keating (2010) “Formal education institutions like schools have always served multiple purposes...” (Cranston et al. 2010, p4). As a learner I always felt safe at this institution, and I suppose in retrospect it was less to do with education and rather more to do with the ideals of the school as they aligned well with my own religious beliefs. Although I did not practice Islam in the school and although there are many differences seen between Catholicism and Islam, I did feel a likeness between the two and as such this gave me a feeling of safety. However, as an educator I did not feel this institution to be a safe environment, in that, in instances of acceptance, the acceptance of difference and the embracing of it, was neglected. Comments surrounding Black learners especially, their cultural beliefs and practices through my perception were often portrayed in a negative way. Although there is no measurement, I can refer to, that realizes how ‘often’ of an occurrence this was it was often enough to be noticed by me. These kinds of attitudes do not align with the bigger picture of schooling in South Africa as that as previously discussed schools do not only function as spaces just to educate but should also function as places that instil acceptance, encourage diversity rather than discriminating against it especially in a post-apartheid, now democratic country. In this case of this school then, it does not align well with South Africa’s democratic constitution (Berger, 2003) as cited by Harley et al (2000), stated that a key role of an educator within South African schooling institutions is to be a community developer which uphold and enforce human rights, dignity and democracy as highlighted in South Africa’s constitution. It becomes difficult to enforce these ideals when

an educator expresses discrimination towards their learners which was something that happened often at this institution through my perception.

It is then important to note that learners who may feel discriminated against may be reluctant to excel within a classroom environment and may feel excluded and as a result does not receive meaningful access to education which then results in the possibility of epistemological exclusion (Riley, 2010). Riley (2010) further highlights the importance of secure relationships between educator and learner and that if a secure base within these relationships is not formed that can lead to aggression within learners, academic problems, and the inability to excel in the classroom. These issues can result with epistemological exclusion of learners. Negative attitudes from these educators can severely impact the performance and emotional wellbeing of said learner and in turn these can affect access to education in that learners may not excel (Riley, 2010). I often encountered conversations from learners who felt targeted or discriminated against often in discourse displayed by educators in the classroom.

Conversations pertaining to the behaviour of Black learners during events such as prize giving or assembly, where one educator made the comment “at Afrikaans schools, learners do not behave like this.” The way in which Black learners and parents celebrated the achievements of their peers and children were often frowned upon and made to be seen as wild and belligerent behaviour. Perhaps highlighting again, lack of acceptance of diversity, of the way in which different racial groups chose to celebrate achievement. It is important to note that some of my learners were the first to matriculate, or receive an academic award in their family, that is why their families celebrated so passionately. It was a sense of massive pride and achievement for them. I had so many learners whose parents were not professionals, did not go to university and were still facing inequalities of Bantu education. In this regard many White educators especially did not understand the importance these awards meant for many families of the learners I taught, its importance to my learners and their peers and what it signified to them. Rather it was reduced to these families being wild and unable to behave.

Learners were often labelled as dramatic if they called out an educator for racist discourse and were rather expected to accept what was said to them as being a joke. In another instance an educator leaving a classroom while leaving her belongings in the classroom made the

comment “don’t steal my belongings”. Another instant where the learners did not want to participate in a swimming lesson, these learners were then told “do not act so Black”. Both nuanced and outright acts of racism and discrimination stemmed from lack of acceptance of difference became more evident at this institution. The above offers a reiteration of a quote used when describing CRT in that “Critical race theorists argue that speech acts cause racism and that solutions to problems resulting from racism require the use of language to reshape reality” (De La Garza, 2016 p2). Discourse at this institution was a point of contestation for me, making me question how somebody could educate somebody else when they are spoken about in such negative ways. The use of nuanced racist discourses towards Black learners highlighted not only discrimination towards them but an inability by educators to progress past both nuanced and blatant racist discourses present within coloniality. These forms of discrimination lead to lack of representation of difference within a classroom and as such results in the possibility of epistemological exclusion of Black learners. Matias (2013), reveals how microaggressions towards her in the form of racism impacted and influenced her education greatly and it further has resulted in pain and trauma.

Another theme I would like to discuss was that there were so many instances of blatant dismissal of Black experiences of learners at this institution that although the South African curriculum in some instances is representative of Black learners, their lived experiences are not represented and were often dismissed in discourse by educators. As a history educator, I once found an article that likened Nazi Germany to apartheid South Africa. Before presenting this to my classes, I decided to speak to the principal about this. On presenting this to him, another educator present made the comment “well apartheid, was nothing like Nazi Germany nor was it as bad”. Regardless of the links both myself and my learners often made between the two, white supremacist, racist, autocratic states that were Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa, it was evident the dismissal of the seriousness and atrocities that were evident during apartheid.

Another educator likened the Covid19 lockdown curfew to the curfew Black South Africans faced during apartheid. Although, apartheid ended 30 years ago, many of these learners, their parents and grandparents still faced its legacy, and its crippling effects. These instances reflect the dismissal of being Black within this institution. These ideas as mentioned prior can stem from a colourblind approach, which Meier and Hartell (2009) expresses as damaging. “Educators claim to “see children and not colour” and studiously ignore race or colour in

their dealings with learner diversity” (Meier & Hartell, 2009, p.181). This creates a lack of consciousness and hinders transformation and change. Further resulting in the inability to foster acceptance of one’s learners which is vital in epistemological inclusion (Kearney, 2009).

These instances resulted in learners becoming hateful, resistant and unaccommodating towards educators who made comments such as these. It became quite clear when educators who often made comments regarding learners, were the same educators who would complain about learners’ behaviour. I recall an instance where all the grade 9 learners refused to participate in a lesson due to racial comments that were made in the previous lesson. The learners just did not engage in the lesson, nor did they ask or answer any questions. This resulted in an impediment to their learning because of discrimination toward them. Which is epistemological exclusion.

These disruptions while learning, as well as educators being called in and needing to be addressed by management, had on many occasions. We were even given a seminar on which topics were allowed to be addressed in the classroom, and which were not. I did not understand why we needed to be reprimanded on such topics in the first place. I suppose it baffled me that my colleagues were discussing such aspects with their learners. Topics such as the discussion of single mothers were specifically ruled out because an educator kept making unwarranted opinions of his disgust about single mothers, which many of my Black learners had. Learners were left distraught, feeling inadequate that they did not have a paternal figure. It really caused many issues between said learners and this educator. Which again creates a barrier to these learners’ education and receiving epistemological access.

Another incident that resulted in an outcry from the learners was an instance when the term ‘N*****’ was brought up in classroom by an educator, outside of any educational context.

This led to the need for this policy to specifically state that educators were not to use this term. I found that not using the term ‘N*****’ outside an educational context should be common sense because of South Africa’s history, because of the history of the world and because it can offend people. But again, the lack of a conscientious effort to understand the some of the issues many Black learners experienced was something that many educators lacked at this institution.

These instances brought a lot of resentment of learners towards their educators. During staff meetings, when marks were being discussed at the end of each term, educators who had run ins with learners and who often displayed negative attitudes towards certain learners, found that those learners often performed badly within their subject. Classroom environments that were more accepting and inclusive of learner diversity, lessons were more interactive, learners were more comfortable and even performed better academically. As expressed above, there is a link between the attitudes and perceptions of learners by their educators and it may result in inclusion or exclusion (Kearney, 2011), this became apparent at this institution, especially when looking at gaining epistemological access to education.

Although the focus of this research report focuses on epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings. The above was written to express general poor treatment, discrimination and beliefs and perceptions of some educators towards Black learners in general. This was done as to create basis to inform the issues learners faced if they experienced ancestral callings by their educators. I want to say that if the general attitude towards the actions and behaviours of Black learners were portrayed at this institution as negative, educators would more than likely feel a similar way, if not worse, to learners who experience ancestral callings. This is because lack of acceptance of difference, from my perception, was something that occurred often.

Therefore, regarding ancestral callings, the general discourse from staff members of all racial groups, were again often portrayed as negative and dismissive as something that was either attention seeking or was not recognized as something to exist, citing aspects such as mass hysteria or a psychological issue. Some Black educators spoke about these learners, citing that they were involved in demonic type activities or witchcraft. These were Black educators that were both South African as well as from other upper African countries as well. Some educators, across racial groups, were fearful of these learners and did not want to be around them when they had an ancestral calling. Whereas other educators, across racial groups, found whole situation to be a joke and would sometimes mimic how learners went into a trans-like state. Some educators, across racial groups, discussed that they did not want to teach such learners and that they should be kicked out of the school as when they had an ancestral calling it became very disruptive to other learners and the lesson taking place. What was also very evident from some educators at this institution was that solutions to learners who have had ancestral callings were often seen as Western forms of help, such as having

them go to a psychologist or psychiatrist and to be put on medication rather than respecting, acknowledging, and educating oneself on what an ancestral calling is.

During my time as an educator here, we would have team building or seminars. These were to help build our first-aid training skills, help learners with mental health issues and how to assist a learner who may have been abused. These seminars were given to us by trained professionals such as nurses, psychologists, and psychiatrists. We, as educators, however, really did not receive much training, from any professional on Black South African indigenous culture, spiritual or religious practices regardless the frequency of ancestral callings in the school. In 2022 a learner who experienced ancestral callings left the institution as educators were fed up with the frequency and type of her trans-like state when experiencing ancestral callings. We were not taught how to manage the frequency of ancestral callings adequately and respectfully because the belief of Black African spirituality, religion as well as culture was seen to be either demonic, something that many educators across races did not believe in and as such did not find need to participate in any educational platform on the matter. As such an almost standstill was created on the matter and adequate solutions were not formed which perpetuated exclusion of learners experiencing ancestral callings due to lack of concise policies as well as lack of education which resulted in discrimination.

Much of the above accounts emphasis themes and ideas found in critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023) specifically nuanced thoughts and ideas highlighting racism and racist discourses towards learners. I cannot say whether these were intended by educators or not or if educators were often just ignorant to their own forms of racist discourses. This also reveals ideas of power dynamics structured within race and racism and perpetuate much of the ideals present within apartheid and colonization as these discourses highlight to Black learners that they are wild, unruly or thieves which do show remnants of views of Black people concurrent with that of eugenics as well. This also impacts and influences a sense of belonging as well as meaning representation of these learners within this institution, again influencing the possibility of epistemological access to education hence resulting in possible exclusion of many Black learners at this school but also learners who experienced ancestral callings as they were signaled out, discriminated against, and misunderstood. Reverting to Liu et al (2021), it affirms that educators that foster more culturally and diversified educational spaces receive better educational outcomes, whereas educators that do not foster these create classroom environments that lead to the exclusion of learners.

A discussion- document analysis, autoethnography and interview thematic analysis.

During the writing and research process, the themes found within the three data sets, the documents analysis, the autoethnography and interview analysis from the interviews intersected. These intersections will be explored below. The results strengthen the argument of possible epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings.

Reverting to the document analysis findings, the chapter highlighted the failure of the policy citing issues such as possible legal action, discrimination, ignorance and breach of other educational policies. When referring to the thematic analysis of the interviews, 4/6 educators found that the policy did not result in problem solving. This is important to note that these were the people who often had to manage and deal with ancestral callings daily. Using this sample, it suggests that a majority of educators at this institution found fault in the policy and perhaps were not able to use it effectively. This is argued in the quote below offered by educator F.

“Yes, but the protocol is still a bit shaky. I am still unclear in terms of what should be done. We must take the learner outside of the classroom and make a call to reception. But I do feel for a better protocol to be in place it requires management as well as teachers to have a proper understanding of what they are dealing with. Because this protocol could be applied to somebody who may be having a panic attack or asthma attack.”

This quote also reveals again the school’s inability to distinguish between ancestral callings and something else. Which is problematic. As highlighted prior, there needed to be specific protocol for the variations of ancestral callings to allow for adequate problem solving with no harm inflicted, no harm to the learner, educators, and peers.

A further complaint by educator D was that even when the policy was followed, the principal had still found faults with this in “Even when the protocol that this principal developed was followed, he still found error in what was being done by teachers.” This may show that the policy was created for the sake of creating policy. To allow for an autoethnographic view on the matter, prior to the introduction of the policy there was an outcry from staff members on how to manage, cope, and adequately deal with ancestral callings of their learners in their

classrooms. Majority of staff have attested that the policy does not result in problem solving and that rather from my perspective it seemed as it was created to satisfy the grievances educators experienced rather than result in problem solving.

The answers some educators offered from the interview process, strengthens the argument against discrimination of Black learners as well as the exclusion of those who experience ancestral callings when coupled with the autoethnographic account offered. I had briefly discussed the idea surrounding the good education that this institution provides versus the strong adherence to the religious culture of the school. However, educator A discusses that

“I think this is very tricky, given the educational setting of my school – a Catholic school. It is important to realize that as a religious school, that religion is the dominant influence, it is where the ethos sits. It is not a government school. You do not HAVE to attend this school, it is a choice you make – and an informed one, at that. If you choose to enroll at a religious school, there are certain expectations you need to comply with. Saying that a Catholic school is not accommodating of African religion is disingenuous.”

The above allows for criticism as expressed by Meier and Hartell (2009), in that “Furthermore, Black learners in a predominantly white school feel it is expected of them to assimilate and adopt the existing ethos of the dominant culture” (Meier & Hartell, 2009, p.187). According to the above quote when Black learners attend formally white institutions within South Africa, they are in short expected to adhere to ethos, adhere to expectations as well as comply with certain stipulations, all these expressed by educator A. There then becomes a conflict between maintaining one’s culture versus receiving a good education. The idea expressed by educator A is backed up in a way by educator E’s where she expresses that there is no place for Black culture and religious practices within South African schools as it is often not accepted and appreciated, and prejudice is often displayed. She expressed this in “No, I do feel like especially among white teachers, there is no acceptance for indigenous, Black culture and religion. Just general ignorance and prejudice. I feel because it is misunderstood it should be left out.” These ideas emphasis those shown within decentralization of schools where semi-private of religious institutions show that there is no place for ‘outside’ cultural and religious practices that do not align with that of the schools. It further highlights that this institution failed to adequately represent and accept the majority

group, Black learners, and their beliefs, cultural, spiritual, and religious practices, particularly learners who experience ancestral callings.

Using the aforementioned research methods coupled with the literature, there is some evidence of negative beliefs, attitudes and perceptions towards learners who experience ancestral callings which can possibly result in epistemological exclusion of these learners. The interview process was helpful in showcasing the views, beliefs, and perceptions of what educators at this institution felt towards learners who experience ancestral callings as well as their influence on educators, peers and the teaching and learning process expressing that it was traumatic and disruptive to teaching and learning. The autoethnographic account further cemented negative discourses and feelings towards Black learners as well as those who experience ancestral callings citing its effects on possible epistemological access. The policy created by the school, as revealed by educators as well as in the analysis of the document itself, proved to lack concise framework, was difficult to adhere to, did not account for safety and the difference between how individual learners experience ancestral callings. It also resulted in the exclusion of learners who were often asked to leave class to help their peers experience ancestral callings. Furthermore, the interview process, autoethnography and policy analysis reveal and reinforce themes and ideas highlighted within that of CRT and critical theory. In this instance, educator's views, perceptions, and beliefs regarding learners who experience ancestral callings that may stem from the oppressive power structure seen to come from aspects such as colonization and apartheid.

The way in which these instances align well with ideas seen within critical theory and critical race theory. This is emphasized within nuanced ideas and discourses pertaining to race and racism within the school expressed in both the autoethnography and interview process. When referring to CRT, racism is often difficult to cure because it is not always acknowledged (Delgado 2023), perhaps these educators who have made the comments pertaining to race or the way in which the policy for ancestral callings was approached, were trying a colour-blind approach (Meier & Hartell, 2009), were trying to come across as funny and not intentionally trying to express racist attitudes. However, this is what CRT informs against (Delgado, 2023), ideas surrounding the blatant dismissal what Black people in South Africa, have experienced, is in fact exactly how racism becomes expressed and perpetuated. In this, Black learners who experience ancestral callings at this institution did not feel safe to be themselves, to express

themselves well and to properly engage with their lessons. This results in their possible epistemological exclusion.

Findings.

The above looks at the findings in this research by using the three research methods that were discussed: semi-structured interviews, auto-ethnography and document analysis as well as an integration of these findings. The way in which these findings will be emphasized will be shown in three ways. Clear findings assumed findings and findings that were not clear. To reiterate the idea of this research was to find a link between learners who experience ancestral callings and how having these callings, the expression of them within a school may result in epistemological exclusion due to lack of acceptance of these learners and further how this lack of acceptance influences negative behaviours towards these learners.

The findings do suggest strongly and clearly that there are negative feelings and nuanced racism towards Black learners and their lived experience which has been clearly expressed within the auto-ethnographic account. I have used this as a base to express that if there are general negative feelings and experiences towards Black learners and their lived experiences that there will be a similar expression of negative feelings towards learners who experience ancestral callings. To build on this, there is clear evidence from all three research methods of negative feelings towards learners who experience ancestral callings. That this practice throughout the school is not readily accepted. The research is also suggestive and problematizes the lack of intervention of learners who experience ancestral callings within educational settings. The document analysis sheds light on how schools are left to create their own policies, rather than be given specific policies from the Department of Basic education to deal with this, that is standardized, equal and fair. Although the school made an attempt to create a policy to assist learners with ancestral callings, unfortunately this policy does not adequately address the issue of ancestral callings within the school or how educators should behave or treat these learners and further assumes an attitude of exclusion.

What can be assumed from the research findings by comparing findings and aspects of the literature review is that, although it is not clear and perhaps this would become clearer if learners were interviewed is the aspects of epistemological exclusion. There are negative feelings and attitudes towards learners who experience ancestral callings, this is confirmed. However, what is perhaps not clear is that if these feelings have directly resulted in the

epistemological exclusion of learners, but this can be assumed. The literature does suggest that when educators display lack of acceptance towards their learners and who they are, their cultural and religious practices do impact the level of access to education they may receive.

What perhaps is not clear in this research is if in fact learners experienced epistemological exclusion. Although there was a possibility of this, the research did not include participants who experienced ancestral callings and how their education was impacted. There is no evidence to suggest that learners who received negative attitudes from their educators did not gain access to education. In order to ascertain this information, learners would have had to be interviewed.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

To conclude this research has explored *Black learners who experience ancestral callings and epistemological exclusion, in a selected school in Gauteng South Africa: an investigation on the perceptions and beliefs of educators*, the research is formulated around epistemological exclusion and ancestral callings. Although the findings remain inconclusive, the research findings do highlight a possibility of epistemological exclusion of Black learners who experience ancestral callings. Again, while there is no conclusive evidence to highlight specific epistemological exclusion, the research does shed light on how educators perceive learners who experience ancestral callings, which is mostly portrayed as negative. The research does highlight the accommodation made for learners who experience ancestral callings, and these accommodations remain problematic as they are not specific enough, in breach of legal practices and that these accommodations had not been properly discussed with a spiritual healer or Sangoma. Lastly, and again although epistemological exclusion has not been proven, the overall attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of these learners are portrayed as negative, which can possibly result in epistemological exclusion.

The above speaks to the central purpose of this research however, an important discussion to be looked at and consider was the ideas surrounding ancestral callings and ancestral veneration. Ancestral callings and veneration play an integral role in the lives of many indigenous South Africans. However, the lack of acceptance of this type of spirituality within schools in South Africa, regardless of how common of an occurrence it has become, may result in the epistemological exclusion of these learners. Ancestral callings are a significant aspect of many Black learners' lives, influencing their identity, well-being, and academic experiences, in that if they are not accepted within a schooling environment they can be targeted and ultimately become excluded both physically and epistemologically.

I have argued throughout this research report that educators play a vital role in the epistemological inclusion or exclusion of learners specifically focusing on the beliefs, perceptions and understandings educators have about and towards their learners.

Epistemological exclusion was of great importance within this research report because it further relayed how the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of educators' influence gaining

meaningful access to knowledge and education at a school. These aspects were specifically underlined by various literature such as Liu et al (2021), Kearney (2011), Meier and Hartell (2009), and Poudel (2007). The various literature underpinned the importance of acceptance of one's learners to bring about inclusion. The autoethnographic account, document analysis as well as thematic analysis of educators that were interviewed at this institution revealed then how negative feelings, perceptions and behaviours can be of serious detriment to the epistemological inclusion of learners and can result in possible epistemological exclusion. This research report focused primarily on the discrimination towards Black learners and used that as a basis to introduce the discrimination and ultimately the possible epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings in a selected Catholic school in Gauteng.

This was achieved through the exploration of the importance of historical perspectives such as apartheid and colonization and how these have influenced greatly the perceptions and beliefs of modern day South African educators, regardless of race as shown in the research that many educators regardless of race, stigmatized learners with ancestral callings. As colonial rule as well as apartheid created and cemented negative stigma towards Black South Africans and their religious, spiritual, and cultural practices, often citing terms such as demonism, witchcraft, mass hysteria and psychological issues over the acceptance of the reality that ancestral callings exist. This was emphasized in how the remnants of these atrocities still revealed to be true even today by critical race theory to such instances shown in the findings of this research report. That often-nuanced ways of revealing power structures and White supremacy within South African schooling further showed the beliefs, perceptions and feelings educators had towards not only Black learners but learners who experience ancestral callings. These create a reality that aligns with that of coloniality (Schmidt, 2015).

I further explored the detriment of exclusion and more importantly that of epistemological exclusion on learners and how these effect their access to education. The focus of this research report was further narrowed in the discussion of the occurrences of ancestral callings within different provinces in South Africa. Citing that over the last few years this has become a more prevalent issue where the need for intervention from the Department of Basic education is necessary. The literature offered an array of insights. Some relay that these callings were mass hysteria, others stating hopelessness as they were so common, that schools were left vulnerable (Kasa & Ruiters, 2022). The literature further presented the

importance of what ancestral callings are within the context of many Black indigenous culture and religions within South Africa (Kubeka, 2016), refer to the commonality of its occurrences but also the need for acceptance and respect on the matter to bring about inclusion. This creates further emphasis on how lack of acceptance and education on this matter results in an education that is not epistemologically accessible as well as leaving learners who experience ancestral callings at risk to be signaled out and discriminated against.

The research design utilized in the research report was qualitative, it allowed for an interpretivist paradigm to be explored when analyzing the findings within the semi-structured interview process as well as the autoethnography. The interview process revealed an array of answers pertaining to the discrimination of learners who experience ancestral callings, the lack of representation of Black learners at the institution. The autoethnographic account reveals, perhaps coupled with the interviews process, evidence for the possible epistemological exclusion of both Black learners and those who experience ancestral callings. This is shown by the lack of understanding and perceptions of ancestral callings by educators.

The school's policy regarding ancestral callings, allowed more insight regarding lack of acceptance of diversity of not only Black learners but learners who experience ancestral callings, in that it showcased ignorance as it did not consider the variations found when a person does experience an ancestral calling. This reveals that the intended hypothesis or research question coupled with relevant literature does in fact reveal possible epistemological exclusion of learners who experience ancestral callings, at this institution, given an analysis of the data. As educators who adopt a more inclusive and culturally responsive approach can help create a supportive environment where learners feel valued and empowered to express their beliefs and spirituality.

Furthermore, this research report proves to be relevant as it not only sheds light on a very contemporary issues within South African schools, ancestral callings, it also sheds light on the idea that there is still stigma, ignorance, and discrimination towards Black learners within South African schools. It further highlights lack of representation of a majority racial group and emphasizes aspects of coloniality, and the need for decolonization in schooling systems in South Africa.

Although South African schooling systems, institutions and schools have been a mixing pot of diversity for the 20 years at least, the lack of acceptance of diversity as well as the integration of Black learners and representation of Black learners is still lacking with their cultural and religious practices often being ignored or discriminated against because it does not match the status quo of schools. It is unfortunate that given the brutal history of South Africa, there are still perceptions, beliefs, and stigma of Black learners within its schooling system as this results in further marginalization of an already marginalized group revealing that there is still the presence of coloniality within South African schools. The frequency of ancestral callings within this institution as well as within other schools in other provinces in South Africa, speaks to much needed intervention as these learners are left vulnerable, open to discrimination as well as the possibility of being either physically or epistemologically excluded from the classroom.

Limitations and recommendations.

Limitations.

The biggest limitation I have found in this study is that there was very sparse data on the topic of ancestral callings within schools in South Africa. This topic is a relatively new one. Although my intention was to shed light on an issue that recently has occurred within the South African schooling system, which is the occurrence of ancestral callings in schools. I found that apart from news articles reporting on these cases, prior research as well as other data on the matter was not present which made it difficult to compare data, understand what schools needed on the matter and how other schools dealt with and moved forward. The South African Department of Education also offered no information on the matter therefore there was no policy I could use to compare the school's policy to. I rather used other educational policies which pertained to general issues rather than the exact issue of ancestral callings in schools. Another limitation of this study is that the research was only performed at one institution, which means that it is a case study and is not an overview of the country or other schools in South Africa. A further limitation of this study is that there was no consultation from a Sangoma as well as no engagement with other forms of spirituality.

Recommendations.

Due to the above limitations, it is as such that I recommend more research and data to be collected on the matter of learners having ancestral callings in schools. Future research should perhaps also be held at a public school rather than a semi-private Catholic school to gain a different understanding and perspective of how educators and the school manages ancestral callings. I also recommend, given the literature and effect educator's attitudes, belief and perceptions have on learners that the personal opinions of educators to be left out of the classroom. Ultimately, this research highlights the need for educators and schools to recognize and respect the diverse epistemic backgrounds of their learners, promoting a more inclusive and equitable education system that values indigenous knowledge and spiritual practices. It must be stated that this research does not focus on aspects of curriculum and knowledge production, rather the way in which educators deliver epistemologies and if these epistemologies are being received by learners. In this regard, a further recommendation is the importance of training educators in South Africa on Black South African religious, spiritual and cultural practices as much of what seems to be understood on what it truly is stems from coloniality and apartheid. This may include aspects of educator identities, how educators view themselves as well as their learners and how they can improve on delivering content to a diverse learner group. A further recommendation is perhaps the allowances of learners who experience ancestral callings to observe their initiation in the same way any other religious holiday would be observed. Future research should perhaps also focus and gain a perspective on how learners feel and perceive the attitudes of their educators. Future research should interview and allow research to focus specially on learners rather than educators.

Annexures

A-C

Annexure A

Semi-structured interview questions.

Please state your race. Tick the correct box.

☐☐☐☐

Black

White

Coloured

Indian

Please state your age. _____

Which subject do you teach _____

Do you teach primary, high school or a member of admin _____

1. What are the racial demographics like at the school where you teach?
2. Do you feel that South African curriculum or syllabi represent black students?
3. Do you think there is a place for African culture within schools? Explain why.
4. Do you feel ignorance towards animism (African culture/ religion)? Explain why.
5. How does African culture integrate into your schools?
6. What does integration in South Africa (and more specifically w/in a school setting) mean for African culture?
7. What parallels can be drawn between contemporary religions such as Christianity, Islam or Judaism and African animism?
8. What are your personal beliefs regarding ancestral callings?
9. Has your school experienced ancestral callings? If yes, in what capacity.
10. In your own words what would you describe ancestral callings to be?
11. Does your school have protocol to deal with these kinds of events?
12. If you've answered yes to the above question, do you feel as if the protocol is appropriate and results in problem solving?
13. Do these ancestral callings cause a disturbance within the classroom?

14. Have you experienced negative effects from having witnessed these events? i.e., anxiety, fear, confusion, anger etc If yes, describe these.
15. For students who may not experience ancestral callings, do these events cause negative effects for them?
16. Should children who have ancestral callings be excluded from the classroom? Explain why. 17. What do you think would be a solution for this phenomenon? Tick the correct box.

- ☐ Inclusion/integration
- ☐ Intervention
- ☐ Expulsion/ exclusion

Annexure B

School's policy on how to manage ancestral callings.

"Protocol on how to handle ancestral calling at
[REDACTED]

DRAFT 4

Context

In July 2022, the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) Education Department issued out an invitation for recommendations and submissions from the public, as well as cultural and religious experts on methods to explore and deal with the impact of ancestral callings on teaching and learning.

The invitation comes after numerous schools in the province reported challenges from incidents where learners displayed ancestral callings at school, which resulted in school operations being disrupted. Some schools were forced to close for several days last term as a result of said challenges.

(Click on link for more information: www.careersportal.co.za)

Introduction

Over the last decade, —has had a few learners who have experienced ancestral callings, however; in the past three years it has become more frequent. As a result, the school has had to find ways of how-to best care for these learners, whilst educating the wider community. We acknowledge that the understanding of African spirituality is not easy for all involved at [REDACTED], but the conversation is one that is malleable. In August, [REDACTED], a facilitator from [REDACTED] hosted a staff development session on understanding ancestral callings. He highlighted that there is the need to draft guidelines that best assist all parties involved when an ancestral/spiritual calling takes place in the school. This document will serve as a guideline on how to best handle students who are experiencing ancestral callings. These guidelines take into account (to the best ability of the school), the best interests of the student when they are in a trance, whilst ensuring that all other students and members of staff are safe.

Protocol for Teachers

If a student experiences a spiritual calling in class, the following steps are to be taken:

1. The teacher is to immediately place a call/buzz Miss [REDACTED] or Mrs [REDACTED] in the office via intercom or cellphone
2. Desks are to be removed to make space for the student to be as comfortable as possible.
3. The rest of the students are to leave the classroom in order to give privacy to the student experiencing a calling.
4. Whether a teacher chooses to stay with the student who is experiencing a calling or not is optional. The teacher may choose to stand outside.
5. A maximum of two current class students may stay with the student experiencing a calling.
6. Once a member of office or Mr [REDACTED] arrives, the student experiencing the calling may be moved from the classroom to the office.
7. The rest of the students may then go back into the classroom and the teacher is to resume his/her lesson.
8. Debriefing sessions will be made available for both students and staff, upon request.

Protocol for Students

If a student experiences an ancestral calling in class, the following steps are to be taken:

1. The students are to immediately alert the teacher should one of their fellow classmates have a spiritual calling.
2. In the event that a teacher is not in class, the class captain is to buzz the office via Intercom to alert Ms — or Ms—
3. Desks are to be removed to make space for the pupil experiencing the calling to be as comfortable as possible.
4. The class captain is to remove the rest of the students from the classroom in order to give privacy to the student experiencing a calling.
5. A maximum of two current class pupils may stay with the student having a calling.
6. Once a member of office or Mr— arrives, the student experiencing the calling may be moved from the classroom to the office.
7. The rest of the students may then go back into the classroom and wait for the teacher to resume his/her lesson (with debriefing sessions made available for those who need it).

Protocol for the Office

2. Once Ms— and Ms— are alerted of the ongoing ancestral calling, Mr [REDACTED] should be called to meet where the calling is taking place.
3. Miss is to immediately go to the classroom where the student is experiencing a calling.
4. Ms —/MÄ is to calm the student down and ensure that they are comfortable enough to carry/ walk to the office.
5. The parent/s are to be called immediately to alert them of the ancestral calling and will have to come and collect their child immediately.
6. An urgent meeting on the day after the calling will be set up with parents to discuss the way forward.

When a child experiences a severe attack, the parents are expected to do the following:

- a Take three days off school to recuperate.
- b Take the child for a psychological and drug evaluation to rule out any possible conditions.
- c The child will not be allowed back to school without a letter from the practitioner, i.e. Psychologist or Traditional Healer.

The school is in the process of finding an alternative venue to keep the pupils experiencing a calling. For now, Ms— office is the designated venue.

Protocol for Excursions

If a student experiences an ancestral calling during an excursion, the following steps are to be taken:

The students are to alert the teacher immediately should one of their fellow classmates experience a calling.

The teacher is to make allowance for the student experiencing the calling to be as comfortable as possible.

The class captain is to remove the rest of the students from the vicinity in order to give privacy to the student experiencing a calling.

A maximum of two current class pupils may stay with the student experiencing a calling.

The teacher (should they feel comfortable) may stay with the student experiencing a calling until the student is back to normality. Should the teacher not be comfortable to stay with the student, a maximum of two fellow classmates may stay with the student.

The rest of the students may resume activities and wait for the teacher.

Declaration for pupils who are spiritually gifted

We appreciate and accept your gifts.

We may not understand them but are willing to learn and make sure that you are comfortable.

To keep the school running, we ask that should one of your peers experience an ancestral calling in another part of the school, that you stay in your classroom. Should we require your assistance, Miss /Mrs will call you.

If you happen to be in the classroom when one of your peers experiences a calling, please assist the teacher in making him/her (your peer) comfortable.

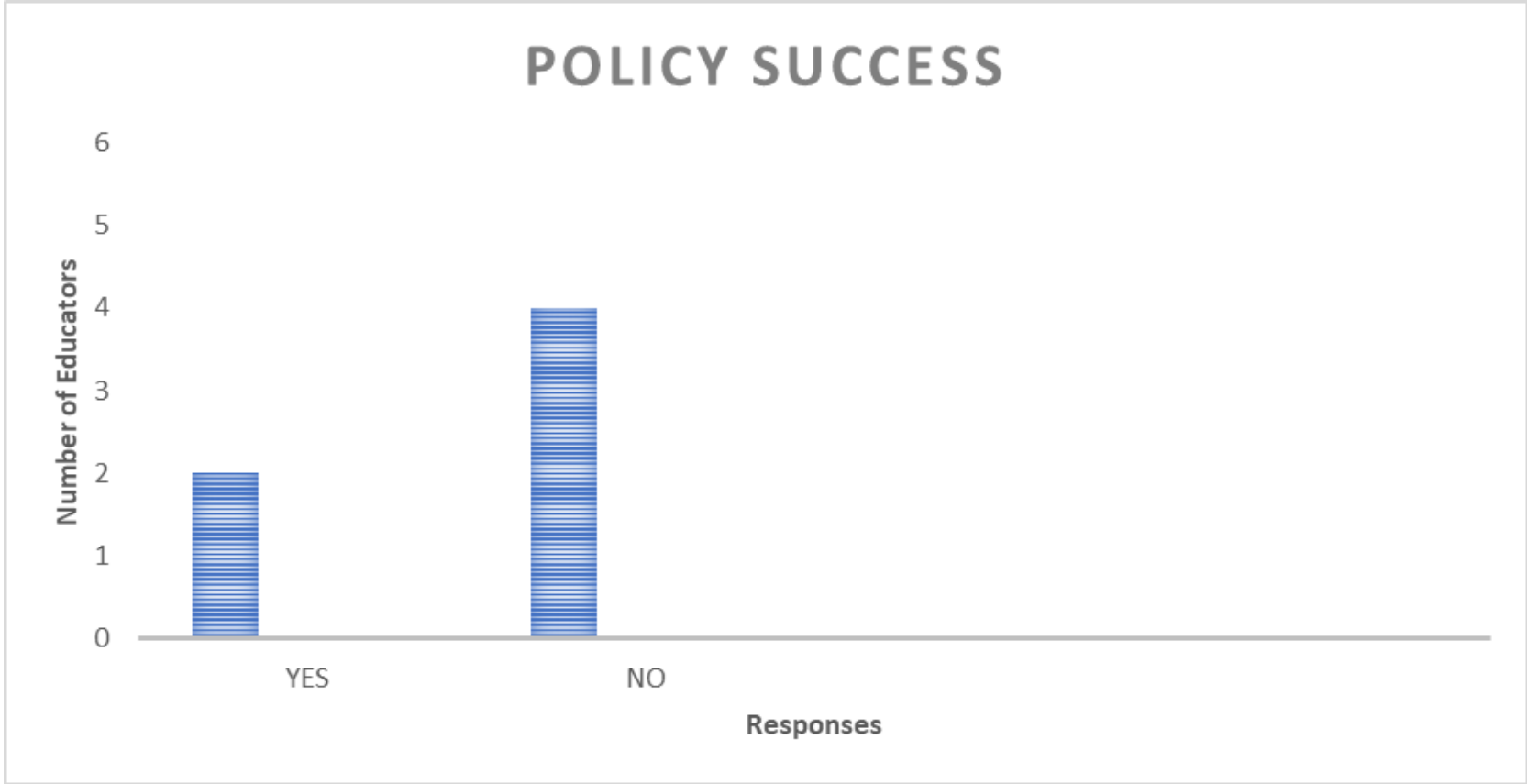
When your peer is taken to the office, you may proceed with your lesson.

Please ensure that you listen to the teacher's instruction at all times.

Debriefing sessions will be made available to all members.

The school commits to continuous development and education of all its members as we navigate what it means to belong to a diverse community.

Annexure C



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