BUILDING GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF COLOUR

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Abstract

Objective, purpose and the beneficiaries: The study purposed to demonstrate pedagogical knowledge and understand how complex racism can cause childhood and adulthood trauma in people of colour; spread awareness among teachers about children of colour in Finland. The primary goal is to improve and empower the sense of selfhood and the identity among children of colour; decrease social marginality and increase integration, sense of belonging and mattering in Finnish society. A literature-based method was employed in the development of 10-stepped guidelines for teachers working with children of colour in Finnish schools. The study was inspired by experiences drawn from We House Meltsi - a community house that provides tailored programs for 0-12-year-old children from various regions, including Mellunmäki and Vesala.

Development Task and Theoretical Framework: The literature review affirmed that the three-phased model of developing teachers and the Finnish education policy were inadequate. Other concerns relate to the marginal policy changes implemented to promote teachers' specialised training working with children of colour. The critical appraisal of literature addressed the following fundamental questions: Is there a need to develop unique pedagogical methods for children of colour in the Finnish educational sector? Are race-specific pedagogical programs effective relative to standardised curricula and teaching methods? Is the Finnish educational system race-neutral?

Methods: Exploratory research design. **Key Results and Findings:** Following a critical appraisal of the Finnish educational sector, it was deduced that the right to be in school is a fundamental human right for children regardless of their origins, financial status, social status, gender, age, cultural or religious beliefs; this is a common practice across Europe. However, the emphasis on equity and equality in education does not address -pedagogical competence among white teachers interacting with children of colour. In most cases, the gaps in teaching practice were reported, but there was no matched action to address the issue. **Results, Conclusions and Recommendations:** The proposed 10-stepped guidelines offered practical, context-specific and customised solutions to the challenges facing children

of colour in Finland. The proposed 10-stepped guidelines encompassed the recognition of the interface between racial experiences of people of colour and pedagogical research, and how the intersection of these factors could contribute to the appreciation of racial and ethnic heritage and augment the quality of education. The second guideline suggests there should be a deliberate attempt to address the gaps in knowledge about the cultural background of children of colour. Third, appreciate the impact of dimensions of identity (such as demographics and spirituality) on the intersection of racial and ethnic groups.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Summary of the Theoretical Framework

The principal purpose of the scholarly inquiry was to demonstrate knowledge and understand how complex racism can cause childhood and adulthood trauma in people of colour, later in life, and develop a 10-step guideline to spread awareness to the professionals in the education system about children of colour, so that they can better empower the selfhood and the identity of these children. The fundamental themes of interest are Culture and Cultural Diversity Training, multiculturalism, the intersection of professionalism and race, and educational policy.

Background

The study seeks to develop a new 10-step guideline based on Finnish & English literature for professionals working with children of colour in the Finnish education sector. The guidelines are informed by established best practices and current pedagogical evidence from schools in racially diverse environments. The purpose of this research is to instil tolerance, global perspective, intercultural communication, diversity competence and many well-needed attributes into our professionals working with children of colour across Finland, including We House Meltsi. The study is motivated by the fact that the Finnish education system is not responsive to the needs of children of colour (Hart, 2015). In addition, children of colour contend with the issue of race and belonging in Finnish society (Rastas, 2015, 2019). Based on current events, such challenges would surge in line with population growth of mixed-race groups in Finland, ageing of the population and immigration.

Purpose

1. Spread awareness to the professionals in the education system about children of colour, so that they can better empower the selfhood and the identity of these children.

Justification

The focus on cultural diversity training and the needs of children of colour is justified by the challenges faced by immigrants and children of colour (Rastas, 2015, 2016, 2019). The challenges abound despite the establishment of learning centres such as We House that focus on the unique cultural needs of children of colour. The appreciation of the needs of children of colour in Finnish schools is supported by demographic data. Out of the 5,503,297 persons

living in Finland, 243,639 were foreign-born nationals from Iraq, Somalia, China, India, Afghanistan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic (SAR), and Thailand (Statistics Finland, 2020). The population of the foreigners is expected to increase exponentially with the surge in immigration.

The nationality of the foreigners introduces new challenges in the development of pedagogical methods because each country has unique cultures, religious practices and traditional beliefs that have a domino influence on the educational system. Considering the diversity of the population, professionals working with children of colour have to reconcile Finnish educational practices with the traditions, beliefs and cultures of children of colour; this will help to limit the liability of being a foreigner in Finland, and the risk of hostility towards the out-groups (Koopmans, 2015). In brief, pedagogical practices have a lifelong impact on the life outcomes of children of colour. The research questions and objectives are reviewed in the next sections.

Research Objectives

1. To build guidelines for professionals working with children of colour in Finland.
2. To develop a ten stepped guide on how an educator should work with children of colour.

Brief Overview of the Methodology

The development of the ten stepped guidelines was based on published articles rather than empirical evidence. The secondary data methodology was appropriate because data collection was unfeasible during a pandemic. In addition, different theories and evidence-based practices relating to the improvement of multicultural education have been presented in scholarly research. The secondary research was primarily based on articles published between 2013 and 2020. The scope of the discussion was limited to Finland. However, comparative data was drawn from the US and other European countries. The thematic analysis was chosen as the preferred method of data analysis.

Definition of Terms

Children of Colour

The term children of colour denote non-white children (D'Amico *et al.*, 2017). The population mainly comprises migrant families who immigrated to Finland based on economic, social, educational or political grounds; this includes African, Asian, and Hispanics and other racial groups, which are not classified as white (Caucasian). In a more straight forward manner, the term is relevant to people who are racialized as non-white within the Finnish society. The term is considered positive and politically correct.

Justification for the Terms Used

The inclusion of the term children of colour was justified, in this case, because it was necessary to distinguish between natives (Finnish children) and migrant/non-native children who faced unique challenges at school.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation has seven key sections, namely the introduction, delimitation of the topic and formation of thesis questions, descriptive literature review, information retrieval and material selection criteria, description and tabulation of the quality of the material selected, answering the question of the thesis, and review and reflection of results.

Chapter Two: Delimitation of the Topic and Formulation of Research Questions

Problem Statement

The population of migrants and people of colour in Finland is less than 10% (Hart, 2015). The advancement of Finnish exceptionalism, white privilege and the normalisation of race has led to the exclusion of people of colour in the Finnish society (Rastas, 2015, 2016, 2019); this means that children of colour with transnational roots have to contend with two critical challenges as they navigate the educational system. The first is the question of identity - are they white, black, brown or Finnish? (Rastas, 2015) The second issue involves widespread cases of racism, which have a lifelong impact on personal wellbeing and professional development in adulthood.

The guidelines built for professionals working with children of colour are impacted by the paucity of data on effective policies and pedagogical methods used to address the needs of children of colour in the Finnish education sector. The paucity of data introduces new challenges in learning because third culture children require early support in early childhood care and education. Halme (2019) postulates that these challenges are amplified by the absence of a defined sense of belonging – the children "belong everywhere and nowhere." The effectiveness of antiracism education in Finland is questionable, given that race shaped social structures and engagements (Alemanji, 2016). For example, the Swedish-speaking minorities were faced challenges in securing employment due to poor local language proficiency and inability to fully integrate into society (Saarela and Finnas, 2012). Limited integration was a risk factor for adulthood trauma later in life because people of colour have limited opportunities for employment, a factor that, in turn, predicts personal disposable incomes, and quality of life. The complex racism phenomena underscore the need to develop guidelines that are responsive to the unique cultural and racial influences among children of colour in Finland. In brief, the researcher chose to focus on building guidelines for professionals working with children of colour in Finland because the subject has not been adequately explored in research. The study intended to address the gaps and build upon existing research. The outcomes would have practical benefits for children of colour who are partly disenfranchised from the educational system.

Main Research Question
1. Is there a need to develop unique pedagogical methods for children of colour in the Finnish educational sector?

Sub-Questions

a. Are race-specific pedagogical programs effective relative to standardised curricula and teaching methods?

b. Is the Finnish educational system stigma free?

Chapter Three: Descriptive Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review section critiques current research scholarship to provide a theoretical framework for building guidelines for professionals working with children of colour in Finland. Additionally, the appraisal of the benefits and failures of existing multicultural educational practices would provide evidence-based data on how an educator should work with children of colour, this would, in turn, establish the best mechanisms for empowering the mental and emotional health of children of colour.

Finnish Society

The key aspects of the Finnish society are defined by race relations, economy worldviews and role of personal identity in the educational system. Finland comprises of the following ethic groups Finn, Romani, Sami, Swede, Russian, and Estonians (CIA World Factbook, 2020). Considering that Finland is a predominantly white society, mixed-race, Hispanics, and Asians are categorised as people of colour. The classification system contributed to racism and alienation of children of colour and racism (Alemanji, 2016). To address racism, the European Policy for Teacher Professional Development, advocated for basic teacher education and recruitment of persons with significant pedagogical competence, induction, and in-service education (Niemi, 2015). The policy is complemented by individual responsibility.

People of Colour

People of colour: The term refers to all people of colour, including Africans or those that share African ancestry in the west such as mixed-race immigrants, and descents of slaves. Additionally, mixed-race, Hispanics, and Asians are categorised as people of colour; this means that children of colour are primarily those of colour. In brief, racial classification predicts who is mixed race, white, or black through socially assigned skin tone (Telles and Paschel, 2014; Cobb et al., 2016). On the downside, the segmentation of the population into races is a risk factor for racism in Finnish schools (Alemanji, 2016). The risk is further amplified by demographic distribution. People of colour in Finland are a minority given that the dominant ethnic groups comprise of Finn, Romani, Sami, Swede, Russian, and Estonians (CIA World Factbook, 2020). Current evidence relating to culture and cultural diversity training and the state of multicultural education in the Finnish education sector are reviewed in the next section.

Background Information on We House Meltsi

The We House is a community house that specifically targets families from Mellunmäki, Rajakylä, Länsimäki and Vesala regions. The facility offers expedition-based educational programs for children aged between 7 and 12 years, using unique learning tools such as rumble room, climbing walls and creativity cave (Me-talo Meltsi, 2020). The core areas of interest include art, science, technology, and sports. The facility provides family programs on Wednesdays and Saturdays. However, participants were required to book. Apart from intellectual learning and sports, children were offered snacks and other refreshments for participating in exploration learning. The facility also provides supportive programs for adults to enable them to discover their strengths. In contrast to the mainstream educational sector - the learning programs at the facility are designed as expeditions for children and their families - a factor that underscores the need to appreciate the unique culture—each of the practices adopted in the school enriched student experiences. However, there was no data collected on the extent to which the interventions satisfied the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless We-house has merely been a strong source of inspiration for this dissertation due to my time working there.

Overview of the Finnish Education System

Various policies seeking to realize the professional development of teachers to meet the demanding goals of diversity can be found in the literature. One such significant policy relating to Finland is the European Policy for Teacher Professional Development. The policy focuses on a three-phased model of developing teachers; basic teacher education, induction, and in-service education (Niemi, 2015). The goal of the three phases is to ensure that teacher trainees receive an inclusive education during their initial training, are afforded support during their early careers, and that professional development is supported and coordinated. Ultimately, such teachers provide not only quality instruction but also become reflective practitioners. Similar studies demonstrate the need to understand how teachers acquire and enhance their ability to teach (Conway et al., 2009; Schiwill and Dembele, 2007).

The Finnish education system affords teachers significant freedoms, despite expecting them to take responsibility for diverse student outcomes and general wellbeing. The system expects that teachers should have the ability to recognize the diverse learning difficulties of children and establish the required support timely (Niemi, 2015). Ultimately, to encourage learners to commit to lifelong learning and appreciating the diversity within the country requires high levels of pedagogical competence among teachers interacting with early childhood learners since learning is associated with the values, self-efficacy, and attitudes of students. Indeed, it is evident that such factors as cultural background have an impact on these factors associated with learning outcomes. The Finnish education system further

expects that teachers are committed to the profession. The commitment, according to Conway et al. (2009), is critical in realizing the objectives of the educational system.

A review of the Finnish education system reveals that the value basis of equity and lifelong learning are essential principles that guide the system. On the one hand, equity has been identified as an essential component of Finnish education, more so since the 1970s. Kumpulainen and Lankinen (2012) and Niemi (2015) argue that the Finnish education policy seeks to ensure that all members of society have an equal opportunity to access and receive education, age, gender, financial status and mother tongue notwithstanding. Indeed, in the Finnish community, as is for other European countries, education is regarded as a fundamental right for citizens. Ultimately, the indication is that all people, irrespective of their colour, country of origin and cultural persuasions, have a right to receive a quality education. On the other hand, Niemi (2015) argues that lifelong learning is critical to the realization of equity and a value-based society.

Another essential principle that defines the Finnish education system is decentralization with a national curriculum on one hand and localized freedoms and responsibilities on the other hand, the task of ensuring quality education services is left to the local education authorities while the values for the system are provided by a flexible national curriculum (Niemi, 2015). The observations are supported by Halinen and Holappa (2013) who argued that implementing the core curriculum is left to the individual schools and local authorities. For instance, teachers have the latitude to describe how they teach, the nature of assessing students as well as selecting the type of textbooks to use.

The education system is also based on the accepted special need for support. Various scholars have observed that the Finnish education system is founded on strong inclusive ideologies that support learners with diverse abilities including backgrounds (Niemi, 2015; Halinen and Holappa, 2013). The system anticipates that all learners receive timely support to overcome learning difficulties. It is the responsibility of teachers to recognize these difficulties and prescribe support systems that will help students meet the pedagogical expectations (Niemi, 2015; Vainikainen, 2014). In most instances, the authors claim that learners are rarely transferred to other classes or institutions based on requiring a special need except in extreme cases (Niemi, 2015; Vainikainen, 2014). Another significant principle that differentiates the Finnish education system with other jurisdictions is the lack of standardized national testing. Niemi (2014) contends that unlike other countries such as those in Asia, Finnish education allows teachers the freedom to understand and care for the learning needs of all students. Indeed, Niemi (2015) supports this position by arguing that the system supports the utilization of diverse learning and assessment methods to suit the individuality and specific needs of learners.

Despite the general provisions of the Finnish education system guaranteeing equality to access and receive education, remarkable challenges continue to face Finnish children of colour. The next section describes the status of Finnish children of colour within the education system and some challenges they face. After highlighting this section, the rest of the literature review will focus on how the education system has reacted to the challenges and what can be done to empower teachers to appreciate the unique challenges that children of colour in Finland face.

The Status of Children of colour

Finland has undergone significant changes within the past decade. According to Halme (2019), the country has gone through a wave of economic, social, and political transformations that define its current status. Such changes include social integration as a result of an increased inflow of immigrants and the development of new economic policies for the country. Political changes within the country have also included a shift to a more democratic electoral process. Further, Halme (2019) added that the changes have influenced the social and economic growth of the people, with a majority of the citizens improving their economic lives. However, Halme (2019) argued that despite the economic growth and development within the country, there has been little attention focusing on the professional development of Finnish children of colour. Halme (2019) further adds that despite the equal treatment of Finnish children of colour, there has been little focus on teacher training to enhance their equal integration into Finnish society.

Rastas (2015) contends that despite the many calls to increase the level of training for professionals who interact with such children, there are still very few policy guidelines that seek to improve the level of specialized training and professional development for people working with Finnish children of colour. Most children of colour in Finland are not fully empowered as professionals are not trained to meet their special needs through Finnish education and social structures. Due to their diversity in social issues, such children have always required specialized attention and professional focus. According to Rastas (2019), most of the children of colour trace their origin from other countries from where their parents originated. Malin (2015) also added that as a country, Finland significantly relies on immigrant labour to fill the gap within its labour market. However, the same author noted that the children of these immigrants, who are mainly children of colour, have always faced the unprofessional approach in their educational and social integration. (Malin, 2015). The above findings were supported by Alemanji and Mafi (2018) who acknowledged that in the past few years, there have been substantive efforts by the Finland government to change its immigration policies and social engagements with its foreigners to address the challenges faced by the children of colour. Most non-Finnish children, whether born in Finland or brought in by their parents, have been viewed as foreigners within the country.

According to Rastas (2016), many children of colour currently identify themselves as Finns, despite not fitting into the social systems in the country due to their cultural diversity and social differences. Rastas (2016) added that the above social issues arise from the fact that such children do not have a clear sense of professional direction and assistance due to the lack of adequate training of people who handle them. Alemanji (2016) further mentioned that identity issues have also caused most of the Finnish children of colour to have different social knowledge that has mainly made them not fit into Finnish society. However, Alemanji (2016) added that despite the desire to help such children to have a holistic development within Finland, most learning institutions and persons dealing with such children still have limited understanding of their specific needs, cultural differences, and social status. Malin (2015) argued that several measures are being implemented that seek to provide a better social environment to such children by improving the professional approach in interacting with them. Malin (2015) added that the professional development of these children has been one of the most important options as it seeks to reduce trauma through the management of psychiatric and psychophysiological symptoms.

Culture and Cultural Diversity Training

The cultural diversity training of professional educators working in the Finnish educational system is critical to addressing the educational and social needs of bicultural and tri-cultural learners. A fundamental concern is the absence of cultural diversity training among educators to address demographic changes and the perceived lack of willingness to review the system. From an educational point of view, the adoption of cultural essentialism and colour-blindness to address race in the educational sector (Kimanen, 2018) was detrimental to the needs of immigrants and Finnish children of colour. The perspective is further reinforced by the restraining of discourses on cultural diversity were restrained.

The stakeholders in the Finnish education sector and the government de-emphasize racial diversity. For example, the *National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland* disregards the issue of race (STAKES, 2004). The exclusionist approach is paradoxical, considering there is overwhelming evidence on the racializing categorisation of children and adults in Finnish society (Rastas, 2005). The absence of cultural diversity training helps to explain why the needs of third culture kids are not addressed in early childhood education and care (Halme, 2019). In addition, little attention has been directed towards the training of teachers to help improve the cultural integration of children of colour in Finnish society.

Despite increased awareness on the issue, there have been minimal policy changes to foster professional development and specialised training of teachers working with children of colour (Rastas, 2015). The findings reported by Rastas (2015) are in line with Alemanji (2016),

who noted that educational institutions and people teachers have limited understanding of the needs of children of colour. Such needs can only be addressed through an in-depth understanding of the social status, cultural difference and the specific needs for people of colour in Finland. Until such changes are implemented, the children of colour in the Finnish educational sector will continue to experience an identity crisis. Halme (2019) argues that children of colour belong everywhere and nowhere; there is a lack of true belonging, which is an innate human desire (ReShel, 2018). A key concern among Finnish children of colour is whether they are black, white or somewhere in between.

The need for culture and cultural diversity training is reinforced by changing demographics. The internationalisation of labour, coupled with interracial diversity and immigration, have made Finland a more racially diverse society. However, the population of immigrants remains low - about 2% of the general population (Ruşitoru, 2018). Another study noted that at least 10% of the foreign-language speaking students in Finland were Somali (Hart, 2015). Recent statistics confirm that the share of people with foreign origin has increased across the country, especially in Aland, Uusimaa, Southwest Finland (Statistics Finland, 2019). The population challenges illustrate the need for cultural diversity training in Finnish schools.

Despite changes in demographics, non-natives are subjected to segmented integration and racism. There is growing evidence of the normalisation of racism incidents in the education system. In most cases, the incidents are perceived as an act of patriotism by the Finnish, further advancing the construct of Finnish exceptionalism (Rastas, 2016). Such challenges justify the need to maintain cultural diversity and educational equity in Finland. There is clear evidence of lack of commitment towards the appreciation of cultural diversity in Finland; instead, children are obliged to ignore racial diversity and "pretend that everyone is the same" (Hart, 2015). Such an approach is unsustainable, considering that race has always mattered; this is evident from the educational experiences of Black people (Yull, 2014). From an empirical point of view, it is impractical to foster non-discrimination, tolerance and pluralism without appreciating race. The institutionalisation of race in the society and the education system poses life-long challenges to the children, who are considered out-groups in Finnish society despite their cultural assimilation.

A core concern is whether it was practical to address the racial stereotypes and white privilege in the Finnish educational sector. Based on recent developments in the Finnish educational system, including remarkable transformation through the implementation of five policies; quality of teacher training, performance and research-based education, culture of trust, equality and equity, historical and cultural framework (Ruşitoru, 2018), the racial and cultural diversity issues in the Finnish education sector can be resolved. Additionally, concerns about racial identity helped to inform the development of antiracism education in

the country (Alemanji, 2016). Other proposed measures entail the adjustment of the teaching styles to match the special needs of the minor children of colour.

The enforcement of the proposed solution remains a challenge given the mixed outcomes associated with the mainstreaming policy that was enforced in the 1970s (Lakkala et al., 2019). Presently, the mainstreaming approach had failed to address the differences in learning outcomes based on family and cultural background. Despite the shortcomings, the policy had resulted in tangible improvements in educational participation across all levels. Moreover, there was better performance in technical subjects compared to international peers. However, the interventions had not contributed to equitable learning opportunities for children from different racial backgrounds. The state of multicultural education in the Finnish school system is reviewed in the next section.

Multicultural Education in the Finnish School System

Empirical evidence suggests that there is a lack of cultural diversity in the Finnish education system - a phenomenon that has been amplified by the lack of racial data. A key concern is the feasibility and practicality of existing interventions. Various interventions have been implemented, including the recruitment of migrant teachers to improve multiculturalism in Finnish schools (Skhiri, 2016). However, there is no conclusive evidence on the effectiveness of migrant teachers in the Finnish educational system considering that foreign-born children of colour in Finnish schools reported poor academic performance compared to the natives (Hart, 2015). The findings reported by Hart (2015) are in line with (Räsänen, 2009) who observed that Finnish children of colour are treated as a separate group; this means that the special provisions made for ethnic minority children are ineffective. The inability of the education stakeholders to address the problem had contributed to inequalities in the classroom. The inequalities are expected to persist because there are no structures in place to enable teachers to promote the learning of minority cultures and consequently strengthen the identity of these groups. However, not all stakeholders support this narrative. For example, Ruşitoru (2018) argues that the Finnish educational system fostered equality and equity, given that education was free for all. Additionally, teachers had the autonomy to integrate the needs of immigrants through customised pedagogical methods that suit specific contexts. The contrasting narratives presented by Hart (2015) and Ruşitoru (2018) show that inclusivity for children of colour in the educational sector might not be attained due to the lack of consensus among key stakeholders.

Promoting Professionalism in the Education System in Finland

The Finnish education system has undergone a significant transformation while seeking to accommodate students who come from different social, economic, and political backgrounds. According to Krivonos and Näre (2019), the current policy framework of Finland

is based on the belief that educational institutions are social places where children can interact freely. Further, Krivonos and Näre (2019) contend that the immigration policy promoted by Finland has substantially changed and considers the educational framework as an important tool for integration. However, Alemanji (2016) mentioned that the efforts of the government to enhance inclusivity within the education system have only considered formal activities such as learning. Alemanji (2016) added that fundamental issues regarding the social interactions of the individual learners, their current social groups, and encounters have not been addressed.

Alemanji (2016) further mentioned that outside the class system, a majority of the children of colour learners still face various forms of discrimination. Kimberley et al. (2018) agreed with the findings and added that a professional approach towards the management of school affairs could be the solution for promoting inclusivity in the learning institutions. Adequate training of teachers to address the issues of discrimination against the minority children of colour is one of the measures that the government is taking towards addressing the issue. According to Krivonos (2018) having critical knowledge on how to handle learners and setting a platform for professional treatment is one of the initial steps that teachers can take. Krivonos (2018) added that professional engagement within the learning environment is an essential factor that can help minority students to achieve similar standing with most white Finnish children. However, Krivonos and Näre (2019) mentioned that teachers require specialized training that goes beyond the normal teaching skills. Alemanji (2016) also added that issues of discrimination against children of colour require a more open approach, and teachers must be ready to deal with the issue through divergent approaches. Norwich (2014) also shared similar findings and mentioned that the current training patterns within Finland seek to encourage all teachers to acquire a master's degree. With such a high level of educational exposure, teachers are likely to become open in their career and appreciate the diversity within the learning institutions. Overall, adequate teacher training has helped in reducing the level of stigmatization and discrimination against Finnish children of colour learners.

Different educational institutions have also instituted measures aimed at promoting professionalism and reducing discrimination within Finland. According to Alemanji (2017), a significant number of institutions have been accused of discriminating against young children of colour in school. Benton (2018) also shared the above findings and added that efforts to reduce such levels of discrimination have led to institutions establishing internal measures to deal with this reality. Benton (2018) added that such measures include the provision of professional interventions for all learners irrespective of their social, political, or ethnic background. Smith (2019) also agreed with the findings and mentioned that learning institutions in Finland have also promoted professional inclusion in the learning system

through the creation of a system of social integration. Activities such as sports or other social events are non-discriminatory and inclusive.

Rees (2020) also held similar views and added that administrators for different institutions are currently held responsible for any acts of discrimination against any children of colour students within their institutions. Based on the above information, it is evident that children of colour are not given adequate professional attention by their teachers. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland has also helped to develop a comprehensive policy guideline that promotes inclusive learning. According to Johnson (2017), the government has been at the forefront in promoting inclusive education that focuses on enhancing a professional approach for children. Callander, Schofield, and Shrestha (2016) shared similar findings and added that the ministry has implemented guidelines that seek to protect children of colour learners against discriminatory practices within the education sector. Holosko (2017) agreed with the above findings and mentioned that such policies include the development of a framework for enhancing a better understanding of the learners by developing a more professional approach to the teaching process. Holosko (2017) added that currently, learners from all ethnic backgrounds have opportunities for access to all learning institutions of their choice. Knox (2017) also noted that the ministry of education has enacted guidelines that promote professionalism in teachers by designing a training program that assists in integrating both children of colour and the local white learners from Finland. Overall, the Finish Ministry of Education and Culture has advanced professional development for teachers who work with children in learning institutions. Such teachers now have the skills for integrating a learning process and helping all the children to achieve better educational standards.

Professional development within the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) has also been developed to promote the inclusive and professional learning process. According to Smith (2019), teachers have been tasked with the responsibility of imparting knowledge, while also promoting oneness among the learners. However, Knox (2017) contends that the professional development of teachers helps to increase their understanding of different cultures and provide them with a better perspective of dealing with children from diverse backgrounds. Rees (2020) also agreed with the above findings and added that professional development enables teachers to help in eliminating the problem of ethnic discrimination at an early age. By focusing on inclusivity at an early age, teachers can effectively overcome the issues of discrimination against children of colour. Based on the need to promote learning inclusivity at an early age, professional development for teachers has been a major area of focus for the government of Finland.

A continuous training process for teachers within Finish schools is also aimed at increasing the level of inclusivity in learning and promoting a better cultural understanding

for Finnish children of colour. According to Norwich (2014), the needs for school-going children of colour are dynamic and keep changing. Therefore, Norwich (2014) noted that their issues must be addressed progressively and inclusivity must be put forward. The above findings were supported by Alemanji (2017) who mentioned that skills development for the teachers in Finland is undertaken periodically to deal with the students easily. Callander, Schofield, and Shrestha (2016) shared similar findings and added that the continuous training process within the institutions is aimed at equipping teachers with the latest knowledge regarding the changing issues of societal discrimination. Thus, Callander, Schofield, and Shrestha (2016) postulated that teacher training always seeks to promote the highest standards of inclusivity, while still dealing with some emerging problems within the learning environment. Overall, the government and learning institutions have implemented a continuous training program that would help to promote professionalism among the teachers, especially regarding the approaches for handling children of colour students.

Building a comprehensive collaborative process would also act as a critical approach in meeting professionalism among teachers. According to Holosko (2017), teacher collaborations are important for the development of professionalism within a group setting. Benton (2018) also added that teachers work within a system that easily supports collaborations. Benton (2018) further argued that teachers must approach discrimination issues for the children of colour through an open approach acceptable to all different players. Johnson (2017) also shared similar findings and added that a teacher should provide collective support for the local Finnish learners and encourage them to adapt to the changing environment and the social classes within Finland.

Improving Education and Empowerment among Professionals and Creating More Awareness in their Working with Finnish Children of Colour

Lack of knowledge and professionalism in handling Finnish Children of colour is a major issue that has reduced the level of awareness regarding the essential issues about such children. According to Malin (2019), Finland currently lies behind other countries such as the US and Germany concerning the standards of professional development on child handling. However, Lappalainen (2019) noted that the major challenge is related to a lack of significant focus in developing an infrastructure for professional development in the past. Alemanji and Mafi (2018) also shared similar findings and added that the current government has instituted specific measures for educating and empowering professionals to enable them to effectively work with Finnish children of colour.

One of the major approaches of empowerment for the professionals working with Finnish children of colour has been achieved through international exposure, especially within countries such as the US where adequate measures on handling such children are upheld.

According to Rastas (2016), Finnish authorities have developed professional development guidelines that are similar to those of other countries to empower the professionals. Karila (2018) also mentioned that the above empowerment program has been achieved through exposures during benchmarking initiatives. Karila (2018) added that such activities have increased the level of knowledge among Finnish professionals and improved their interaction with the Finnish children of colour. Karila and Kinos (2018) argue that the international exposures have helped the professionals to have a better understanding of the needs, requirements, and treatment of children with diverse backgrounds and special needs such as those who are from non-Finnish backgrounds. The adoption of international exposure as a strategy of increasing professionalism in handling Finnish children of colour has received substantive success.

The Finnish government has also instituted a re-evaluation criterion among the professionals working with Finnish children of colour that seeks to re-train those professional standards thought to be below the required levels. According to Sahlberg (2017), professionals who frequently work with Finnish children of colour have to undergo a mandatory re-evaluation that measures their level of professional relevance and ability to handle such children effectively. Similar findings were also shared by Dalli and Urban (2017) who noted that such measures are aimed at aligning the modern professional development with the needs of Finnish children of colour. Jokinen and Valijarvi (2016) also noted that the social, economic, and political changes within Finland have informed the need to develop a more comprehensive professional outlook within the country. Jokinen and Valijarvi (2016) further argued that such a re-evaluation also provides the means of enhancing further professional development for those who do not meet the required standards.

Professional retraining for people who work with Finnish children of colour also acts as a measure of ensuring the improvement in standards for professional delivery. According to Lavonen, Korhonen, and Juuti (2015), the Finnish government has instituted measures aimed at increasing the level of professional efficiency through re-training for those who handle children of colour. Kuusisto, Tirri, and Rissanen (2016) also shared similar findings and added that such retraining initiatives comprise short-term programs that do not interfere with the service delivery of such professionals. Kopisto et al. (2018) further contended that professional training is targeted on specific areas, especially on the needs to improve on the new developments within child handling and training. Heikka, Halttunen, and Waniganayake (2018) reached similar conclusions and added that for teachers who interact with children of colour, such training programs are targeted on creating more awareness regarding the issues and challenges that may face such children.

The creation of professional awareness is another measure that has been instituted to help in the professional development of those handling children of colour. According to Malin

(2019), the need for professional development for those handling children of colour has been underrated. Lappalainen (2019) also added that such professionals' needs have been neglected in the past due to a lack of awareness creation on the value of their work. Lappalainen (2019) contends that different policy makers within the education sector and other government agencies have ignored the need for improving guidelines for creating a more sustainable environment and the need for training for such people. However, Alemanji and Mafi (2018) mentioned that there has been an increase in the level of awareness regarding the needs of children of colour and how their plight can be addressed. Rastas (2016) also mentioned that with increased awareness, the Finnish government has been prioritizing the need for investing in professional development to improve interaction strategies for the children of colour.

The introduction of specialized education programs that meet the specific needs of children of colour has also been introduced in the past as a strategy of handling the lack of professional development in the above area. According to Karila (2018), the Finnish government has adjusted its approach in the handling of the challenges of children of colour by designing specific learning programs that focus on such children and the strategies for their wholesome development. Karila and Kinos (2018) also mentioned that such programs mainly focus on developing a professional understanding of the views of such children, their cultural backgrounds, requirements, and special needs. Sahlberg (2017) also mentioned that specialized teaching programs have also been developed for teachers to increase their level of professional awareness and understanding of children of colour. Sahlberg (2017) also added that such specialized professional development programs have helped to improve the former gap regarding the way children of colour's issues were dealt with.

The professional development regarding the handling of children of colour has also focused on the need to develop social skills that would improve in integrating such children within the larger Finland society. According to Dalli and Urban (2017), currently, the government has put up structures that were specifically built to house non-finish white children aimed at creating more professional awareness on their handling. Kopisto et al. (2018) agreed with the above findings and added that within such facilities, there has been a need for increasing the level of social interaction and helping such children to integrate within the society. Jokinen and Valijarvi (2016) also added that achieving such objectives has been easy since the government of Finland has also enabled training based on the social development of the professionals. Lavonen, Korhonen, and Juuti (2015) also mentioned that such professional skills have helped to increase the level of integration and acceptance of children of colour into society. However, Kuusisto, Tirri, and Rissanen (2016) added that the focus on training aimed at increasing the social abilities of such professionals remains low. Heikka, Halttunen, and Waniganayake (2018) also shared the above study findings and

mentioned that the Finnish government is still developing guidelines that would help in designing a training program that targets to improve the social skills of such professionals.

Guidelines for Professionals in Early Childhood Education and Care for Children of colour

Professionals who work with children of colour also require specialized training on how to impact young children during their early childhood. According to Norwich (2014), professionalism directed towards early childhood development aims at motivating the growth of the children and enhancing a balance between their physical growth, mental development, and emotional stability. Alemanji (2017) argues that since children of colour are uniquely important to the continuity of the Finish society, the professionals must be able to help them develop holistically.

One of the main empowerment tools for teaching professionals in handling children of colour during their early stages of education is to effectively assess their learning and general development. According to Holosko (2017), the current state of the cultural diversity observed in Finnish classrooms requires that teachers possess specialized skills on how to assess the level of understanding of children in their classwork. Holosko (2017) supports the above findings and provides that such professionals have to effectively acknowledge the learning challenges that such children face and they should, thus, come up with a comprehensive way of evaluating their learning outcomes and providing alternative measures of enhancing their level of inclusivity in the learning process. Benton (2018) also contended that an evaluation of the growth of such children is also an important professional area that needs to be enforced. Sahlberg (2017) also acknowledged that teachers dealing with such children need to understand the different developmental needs and stages and have the professional background to assist them whenever there is a need. Further, Karila (2018) added that since the children of colour pose diverse backgrounds, understanding their mental development will be important for the professionals to design a unique approach to helping each young learner to achieve a unified growth process.

Early childhood education and care for children of colour should also be guided by a data-driven policy approach for the professional groups that work with such children. According to Callander, Schofield, and Shrestha (2016), there is a need to develop comprehensive guidelines and policy framework for understanding the needs of children of colour. The same authors contend that teachers and other professionals should know how to interpret such data and information and use it to help in the development of such children (Callander et al. 2016). Malin (2019) also noted that the professional data approach should be used to collect such information as the cultural background of the learners, their specific early childhood needs and learning evaluation results. Rastas (2016) shared similar findings and added that the results of such data should be able to inform the professionals on the

approach that they should use to help such learners develop their intellectual and mental capacity. Holosko (2017) also mentioned that the data should be generated based on an individual assessment of each of the children of colour and care and attention provided based on the information drawn from such data.

The professional development for early children of colour should also include empowerment in making strategic decisions when faced with challenging situations in their career (Benton 2018). The above findings were supported by Malin (2019) who noted that such decisions must be based on ethical and moral concepts and must seek to improve the welfare of such children. Rastas (2016) provided an example of such decisions by mentioning that ethical guidelines require that the professionals must handle the unique issues faced by each child with great confidentiality, but must also share the same issues with the specific parents or guardians to such children. Karila (2018) also added that the decisions must be supported by the policy framework instituted by the Finnish government and the specific institutional guidelines. All the decisions must be geared towards improving the personal development of each child.

The professional development of teachers must also include an appropriate approach on how to carry out the learning and teaching process during the early childhood development for children of colour. According to Sahlberg (2017), young children of colour require a specialized teaching and learning approach, which differs from other children within the same age group. Specialized teacher training for the children of colour must be undertaken above the normal training offered to all the other teachers. Dalli and Urban (2017) shared similar findings and added that such training must acknowledge cultural awareness, specialized understanding, and the appropriate evaluation programs offered to such children. Lavonen, Korhonen, and Juuti (2015) also noted that the teachers must be trained on the curriculum program offered to all the children during their early childhood development, but they must also acknowledge that the children of colour require more attention and care. Such extra attention is meant to ensure that the children attain better social integration into the Finnish educational and social system later in their lives.

Applicable Forms of Professional Development for Professionals Working with Children of colour

Developing the required standards of knowledge for professionals working with children of colour requires the development of standardized skills and abilities which are achieved through the professional development process. According to Alemanji and Mafi (2018), however, such development is acquired through widely acceptable standards through the direct and indirect training process for such professionals. Rastas (2016) also added that

the above training process exposes the professionals to a wide range of experiences which makes them ready to handle children from diverse backgrounds, including children of colour.

Despite the achievements and various policy guidelines that have been presented in the previous sections, evidence reveals that teachers in Finland, unlike other countries, had limited opportunities for professional development. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) was carried out by the Organization for Economic Development (OECD) in 2013. The results of this survey demonstrated that teachers in Finland less frequently participated in continuing education compared to teachers from other countries (OECD, 2013). Continuing education is one of the critical components of professional development and in-service training. Unfortunately, as Niemi (2015) describes, teacher induction, as an essential component of professional development, is uncommon in Finland with over 60% of elementary schools failing to provide mentoring to new teachers.

The OECD (2013) study, however, reveals that mentoring is not a practice upheld in most of the participating countries. Ultimately, this is a worrying trend given the significance associated with the induction and mentoring of teachers towards offering quality and holistic teaching. However, some studies have shown that the Finnish education system is making deliberate efforts to offer solutions that will support new teachers (Dalli and Urban 2017; Jokinen et al., 2008; Niemi and Silajnder 2013). The Jokinen et al., 2008 project focused on how new teachers can be supported through group mentoring programs. Niemi and Silajnder (2013) established that pre-service programs for students and new teachers are essential in providing fundamental skills that are critical in such areas as class management, learner assessment, utilization of teaching methods, and teaching. Through the programs, it was also established that student teachers get critical information on how to become committed professionals as well as creating their own educational philosophies. Evidence also shows that new teachers require essential skills that will allow them to collaborate with the community and others outside the classroom scenarios. As discussed earlier, children of colour in Finnish schools face difficult situations relating to the outside classroom that adversely impacts their learning. For this reason, teachers must be provided with the necessary support to understand these children and collaborate with the community and parents for holistic learning.

Professional coaching is one of the most applicable forms of professional development that can be applied to enhance the ability of people working with children of colour to deliver in their work. According to Dalli and Urban (2017), the major aim of undertaking professional coaching is to provide a deliberate understanding of child-specific interventions and approaches. Heikka, Halttunen, and Waniganayake (2018) agreed with the above assertions and added that there are specific coaching components that should always be adopted by such professionals. Heikka et al. (2018) added that such components include the creation of evidence-based skills and the evolution of cultural-based teaching approaches. Karila (2018)

also added that the coaching process aims to provide the professionals with the knowledge to understand the specific personality types and behaviour patterns and values borne by the children of colour. Sahlberg (2017) also shared similar views and added that the coaching process that leads to higher professional awareness should include personal reflections and independent observations based on exposure to diverse working environments. Dalli and Urban (2017) also added that coaching for professionals working with children of colour should take a short period but involve intensive learning, feedback, and evaluation processes and seek to build the attitude and behaviour of the professionals.

Gaps in Literature

Despite the analysis of this literature demonstrating significant efforts to ensure that all children have equal access to quality education, significant gaps were identified. First, the review showed that teachers have not been fully trained to meet the diverse special needs of children of colour in Finland. The analysis highlighted why specialized attention is required for these children, but the social and structural issues in the education system have not sufficiently addressed these challenges. Second, the review showed that despite the government undertaking teacher training to address discrimination; the effort has not yielded the expected results. Lack of sufficient knowledge and professionalism in working for the children of colour continues to be a major issue facing the education system.

The reviewed studies suggested that more needs to be done to realize the goals of equity in access to education. Such recommendations as further training of teachers and ensuring continuous professional development for educators who handle Finnish children of colour were presented in the literature. Unfortunately, the review demonstrated that teachers in Finland had fewer opportunities for professional development compared to teachers in other countries. The position further highlights the gaps that can be addressed through the completion of this study. By the end of the proposed study, guidelines on how to enhance the capacity of professionals working with children of colour will be provided. It is anticipated that the guidelines will help bridge the existing gap.

Conclusion

The question of race and cultural identity has been disregarded or ignored by teachers and other stakeholders in the Finnish education sector; this has, in turn, led to the disenfranchisement of children of colour, who are considered out-groups in white Finnish society. The children of colour are often faced with an identity crisis - they belong everywhere and nowhere. On the one hand, children of colour cannot lay claim to the Finnish identity because Finland is a white-dominated country. On the other hand, children of colour are not too familiar to their parental heritage and cultures. The inability to address the unique needs of children of colour remains a challenge despite equal access to educational

opportunities. In brief, there is an urgent need to enhance awareness on the unique educational needs of children of colour; this would lead to a defined personal identity, selfhood and satisfactory academic performance.

Chapter Four: Description of Information Retrieval and Material Selection Criteria

Introduction

A theoretical literature review-based methodology was chosen because it was impractical to survey teachers during a pandemic. Finnish schools were operating under exceptional circumstances including higher than the normal spacing of the teaching premises, limited physical contact and social distancing (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2020; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). The Finnish National Agency for Education reopened K12 schools in mid-August for contact teaching. However, the learning mode could be reverted to distance learning if the epidemiological situation worsens (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2020). The pandemic justifies the focus on published literature.

Research Design

The demonstration of the need for knowledge and understanding of the negative consequences of complex racism and awareness among professionals in the educational sector was attained using an exploratory research design. The exploratory design focused on the derivation of new insights and perspectives concerning an issue of interest, of which there are significant levels of ignorance or misunderstandings. In this case, the gaps in the body of knowledge were resolved using published studies concerning the learning among children of colour. The selection of an exploratory approach is consistent with Creswell (2014) research, which noted that exploratory designs were suitable in qualitative research inquiries. The design helped to connect the conceptual research problems with published findings. The exploratory research design is appropriate because there is significant uncertainty and ignorance about the subject in question (Wyk, 2012). The inability to address the culture-specific educational needs of children of colour and the normalisation of racism and stereotypes about people of colour in Finland demonstrates the extent to which the educational system was ignorant of the needs of children in this demographic group. Beyond ignorance and uncertainty, the exploratory research design was preferred because it afforded the researcher with adequate flexibility to explore and identify salient factors relating to multiculturalism in Finnish education, the need for cultural diversity training and practical approaches for addressing the issue. In brief, published literature was used as a basis for framing the problem and recommendations for practice in the Finnish educational sector.

Research Methods

Qualitative methods of data collection were employed because the variables of interest were qualitative. The guidelines for professionals working with children of colour in Finland and the best mechanisms for empowering the mental and emotional health of children of colour are unquantifiable. A key constraint of qualitative research methods was causality - causal relationships could not be drawn from the demonstration of pedagogical knowledge, appreciation of the adverse effects of complex racism and the increasing integration, empowerment, a sense of belonging and mattering in the Finnish society.

Population

The population of interest consisted of educators in the Finnish education system; there was no particular preference to any demographic - both male and female white and migrant teachers were targeted by the ten stepped guidelines for addressing the educational needs of children of colour in Finland.

Data Analysis

Patterns in the qualitative data drawn from scholarly articles, reports and other reliable sources were analysed using thematic analysis, which is a reliable method for data analysis that encompasses the organisation and preparation of the data, scanning the data, coding and the generation of themes from the initial codes in the dataset (Creswell, 2014).

Summary

In brief, the methodology comprised of the following key steps:

I.   Identification of gaps in pedagogical research on children of colour in the Finnish educational system.
II. Selection of an appropriate study topic that aligns with personal experiences at We House Meltsi and other educational contexts
III. Identification of suitable sources of literature
IV. Appraisal of literature using thematic analysis techniques and
V.   Development of the 10-stepped guidelines for teachers and educators in the Finnish educational system.

Chapter Five: Description and tabulation of the quality of the material selected for the thesis

Introduction

The outcomes of the qualitative inquiry are grouped into the pedagogical knowledge and lack of understanding on issues relating to race, awareness among professionals in the educational system, possibilities for and increase integration, sense of belonging and mattering in the Finnish society. Each theme is discussed to help delineate the experiences and challenges faced by children of colour in Finnish schools.

Minorities in Finland

Statistics Finland (2019) dataset provides a general classification of Finnish residents in terms of the country of origin (locals and foreign-born) as shown in Figure 2. However, the country of origin is not an accurate predictor for the race, given the ubiquity of mixed-race persons across Europe.
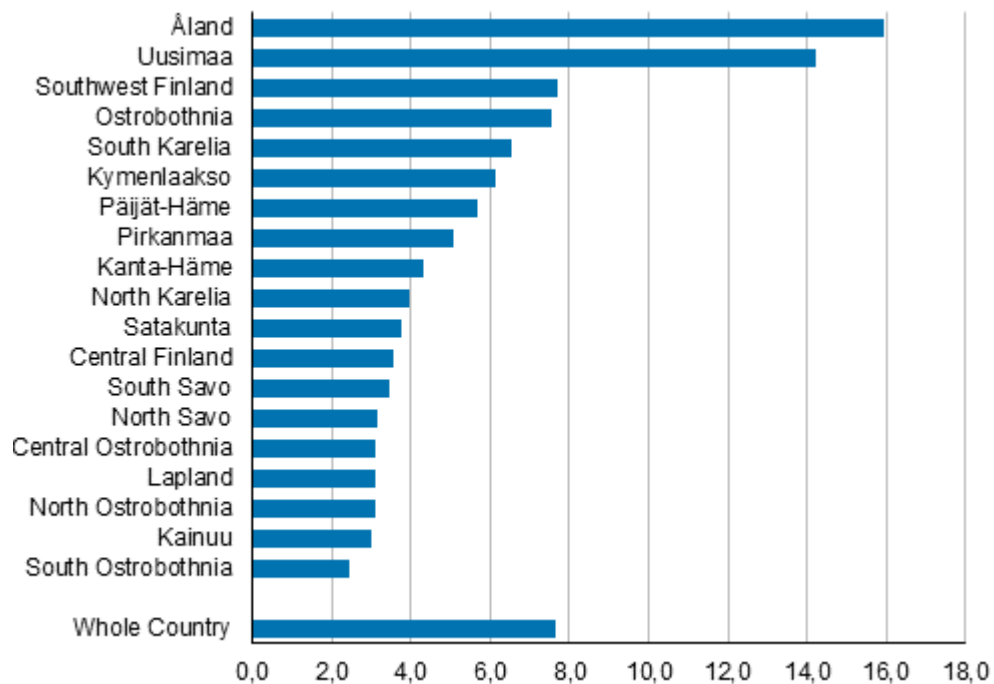
Figure; Distribution of persons with foreign origins in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2019)

Pedagogical Knowledge and Lack of Understanding on Issues Relating to Race

As noted in the literature appraisal, there was a limited appreciation of cultural knowledge and cultural needs of children of colour (Rastas, 2015; 2016; 2019). The information asymmetries in pedagogy could persist owing to the normalisation of racializing

categorisation (Rastas, 2005) and ongoing support for the status quo policies in the educational sector (Ruşitoru, 2018). The latter is a concern given the overwhelming evidence on race-based inequalities in schools, and the proven lifelong negative outcomes and impact on the health (Juutilainen, Miller and Heikkilä, 2014). Apart from the negative impact on personal health, racism was a potential cause for intergenerational, historical and cultural trauma (Williams-Washington, 2011); this is clearly demonstrated by the plight of African Americans in the US and college students from multiracial ethnic origins (Johnson et al., 2007).

Awareness among Professionals in the Educational System

Localised solutions had been adopted to address cultural diversity, including co-teaching, group work and differentiation (Saloviita, 2018). The extent to which group work was accepted as a teaching and learning method in the Finnish educational sector is illustrated in Table 2. The statistical measures confirm that there were statistically significant (p < 0.000) improvements in inclusive learning after the adoption of co-teaching, group work and differentiation practices at the workplace.

Teacher category	N	No	Yes	Total	x2	df	p
		%	%	%			
Co-teaching (weekly)							
Classroom teacher	1018	49.8	50.2	100			
Subject teacher	718	80.9	19.1	100			
Special ed. teacher	400	37.8	62.3	100			
Total	2136	58.0	42.0	100	250.25	2	.000***
Group work (weekly)							
Classroom teacher	1018	46.4	53.6	100			

Subject teacher	718	68.4	31.6	100			
Special ed. teacher	400	65.3	34.8	100			
Total	2136	57.3	42.7	100	96.14	2	.000***
Differentiation (regular)							
Classroom teacher	1018	13.7	86.3	100			
Subject teacher	718	31.2	68.8	100			
Special ed. teacher	400	1.8	98.3	100			
Total	2136	17.3	82.7	100	173.82	2	.000***

Table 2 Adoption of selected inclusive learning programs in the Finnish educational sector
Source: (Saloviita, 2018)

Chapter Six: Answering the Question of the Thesis in the Quality Produced By the Materials Description

The critical appraisal of literature helped to address the fundamental questions on whether there was a need to develop unique pedagogical methods for children of colour in the Finnish educational sector and whether there were race-specific pedagogical programs effective relative to standardised curricula and teaching methods and the race-neutrality of the Finnish educational system. The responses to the research questions are discussed in the following subsections.

Integration, Sense of Belonging and Mattering in the Finnish Society

Presently, there are multiple possibilities for increasing integration, a sense of belonging and mattering in Finnish schools. First, there is a need to reshape the construct of immigration through favourable policies; this is because there is "strength in numbers". The researcher argues that the needs of the racial minorities would continue to be disregarded until at a time where there is a critical mass of migrants that would warrant the adoption of better policies.

The proposal is feasible considering that countries that are highly dependent on migrants have normalised immigration. For example, migrants constitute more than half of the workforce in the UAE (Kraus and Pietikäinen, 2009). However, the normalisation of immigration could pose new challenges considering that Finland has remained relatively a closed society that is less responsive to global patterns in the flow of migrants; this is demonstrated by the country's inability to develop favourable policies for migrants. From another point of view, it could also be argued that Finland had no colonial history relative to other European states that had colonies in third-world countries. The colonial link between the north and the south was an antecedent for the flow of cheap migrant labour from developing economies to the developed North (Kraus and Pietikäinen, 2009). Second, personal stereotypes associated with race and migrants should be addressed using factual information; this is critical because migrants are still being treated as out-groups despite their contribution to the national economy; this has been largely the case for migrant workers in the Finnish healthcare sector. The researcher argues that biases deprive racial minorities a sense of belonging and mattering. Rastas (2014) observed that racial issues could be addressed if the locals begin to recognise the histories and cultures of people of colour, including their religious diversity.

Guidelines for Addressing the Educational Needs for People of Colour

The need to develop guidelines that precisely address the educational needs for people of colour is validated by the fact that Finland maintains one of the largest segregated

and special systems of education across the world (Saloviita, 2018). The criticism of the Finnish educational system by Saloviita (2018) is consistent with Hart (2015). The latter study claimed that there were profound inequalities in the education sector. However, it is necessary to take into consideration the significant improvements made, including the incorporation of co-teaching, group work and differentiation. Additionally, Alemanji (2016) and Lakkala *et al*. (2019).noted that stakeholders in the educational sector had adopted various strategies to eliminate racial bias in learning including the collaborative school culture and National development projects of 2007–2012.

A fundamental concern was the educational stakeholder's unwillingness to transition to inclusive educational practices despite the enforcement of the UNESCO's "Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education", which called on national governments and other stakeholders to address the special educational needs of different groups (UNESCO, 1994). According to Saloviita (2018), the "Salamanca Statement has not yet found acceptance at a political level, and any referral to the primacy of mainstream placement is missing from school legislation"; this is a demonstration of the lack of political goodwill.

The 10-stepped guideline for enhancing multicultural education in the Finnish educational system is justified because it builds upon the progress made in enhancing multiculturalism in the Finnish educational sector. Previous attempts at enhancing equity in the educational sector included a review of the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, the National development projects of 2007–2012 and the collaborative school culture (Lakkala *et al.,* 2019). On the downside, the practices were not adopted and enforced uniformly across the population - young teachers working in large municipalities were highly motivated to enforce the multicultural educational practices (Saloviita, 2018). The contrary was true for older teachers in less culturally diverse environments. The ten stepped guidelines would help to address the challenges enumerated above by focusing on the five dimensions of multicultural education namely knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering the school culture as demonstrated by the model in Figure 3 (Hart, 2015). Based on the history of structured racism, and the advancement of negative stereotypes against people and children of colour, it would be challenging to transition from negative racial ideologies and entrenchment of white privilege and implement certain facets of multicultural education such as prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and content integration because racial classifications in education are disregarded. The observation is further supported by challenges experienced by Somali immigrants and their children.
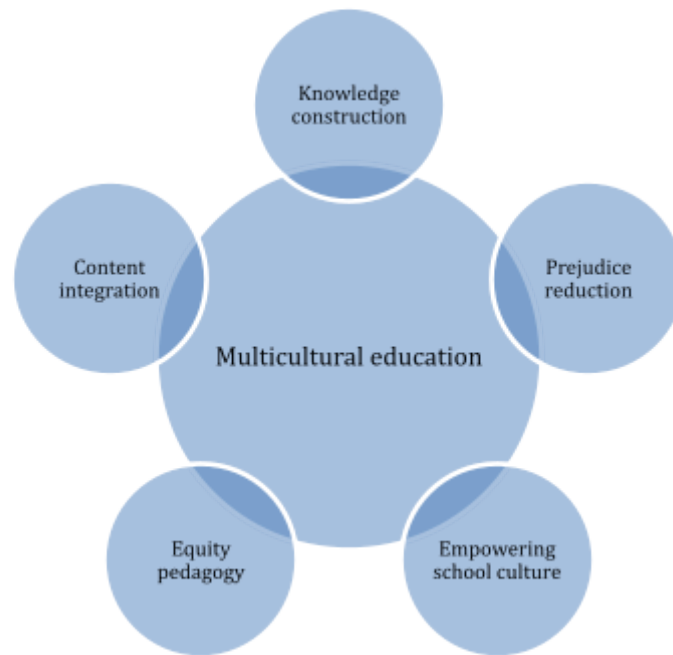
Figure; A model demonstrating the five elements of multicultural education (Hart, 2015)

Belongingness and Appreciation of Cultural Diversity for People of Colour in Finland

There was a general lack of belongingness among people of colour in Finland (Rastas, 2005; Juutilainen, Miller and Heikkilä, 2014). Finland represents one of the isolated cases in which migration had remained a contentious issue - the proportion of migrants in the country was disproportionately lower compared to other countries in the EU (Kraus and Pietikäinen, 2009). Even though the segregation of people of colour was not direct, it had a domino effect on cultural relation and inclusivity in the Finnish educational sector. The phenomenon was ubiquitous in the educational system and the society in general despite the advancement of antiracism policies (Alemanji, 2016), promotion of equity and equality and inclusivity (Hart, 2015; Lakkala *et al.*, 2019). A key question is whether the proposals for advancing multiculturalism and appreciation of cultures for people of colour would be effective in the educational sector. The researcher argues that the two scenarios were possible. On the one hand, the adoption of policies that advance multiculturalism including empowering school cultures, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and knowledge construction and content integration would help teachers to appreciate the needs of children of colour. On the other hand, the proposed elements of multicultural education would not yield tangible benefits owing to the institutionalisation of racism. The occurrence of each scenario would be influenced by environmental and policy factors. For example, Finnish schools in areas with a low population of children of colour are disincentive to integrate multicultural education. The contrary is true for schools in areas with a high concentration of children of colour.

Chapter Seven: Review and reflection of results

The 10-stepped guidelines for spreading awareness among educational professionals about the needs of children of colour and education system about children of colour and improving social integration are listed in this chapter. Ten guidelines were proposed to improve the learning experiences of children of colour. A key benefit is the elimination of institutionalised racism; thus helping students to achieve their potential regardless of their racial identity. The five out of the ten guidelines were adapted from Manese et al. (2003) but were customised to address the unique needs of the Finnish educational system. Other guidelines were grounded on the following studies: Hart (2015), Rastas (2015, 2016, 2019), Williams-Washington (2011), and Yull (2014). The proposed guidelines have been proven effective in educational practice in different sociocultural settings; this is a strong indication that they were relevant in the Finnish education system.

1. Educators and stakeholders in the educational sector should recognise and understand the interface between racial experiences of people of colour and pedagogical research, and how the intersection of these factors could help the appreciation of racial and ethnic heritage and augment the quality of education (Manese et al., 2003).

2. Teachers working with children of colour should strive to address the gaps in knowledge about the cultural background of children of colour (Manese et al., 2003).

3. Appreciate the impact of dimensions of identity (such as demographics and spirituality) on the intersection of the racial and ethnic group (Manese et al., 2003; Hart, 2015; Rastas, 2015, 2016, 2019).

4. Consider the racialisation and normalisation of racism from a historical point of view to help address historical injustices and curtail the intergenerational transmission of racialized narratives (Williams-Washington, 2011; Yull, 2014).

5. Adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to the promotion of social equity, racial justice, and belongingness among all races in Finland (Manese et al., 2003).

6. Implement the five principles of multicultural education (multiculturalism including empowering school cultures, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and knowledge construction and content integration) proposed by Hart (2015).

7. Delineate the roles of different stakeholders including teachers, school heads, policy experts and parents to facilitate structured behavioural practices, which encourage open racial encourage "discourse, education and training, institutional change, and research and policy development, that reflect rather than neglect, cultural differences" (Manese *et al.*, 2003).

8. Sensitise learners in primary and secondary schools about race, white privilege and benefits of racial equity (Rastas, 2015, 2016, 2019).

9. Channel resources towards the empowerment of children of colour (Hart, 2015).

10. Periodically review existing guidelines to factor in emerging changes and best practices and assess the level of effectiveness in addressing racializing categorization among children of colour (Rastas, 2005).

Summary

The study explored the construct of race in the Finnish education system and what it means to be a child of colour in a white-dominated school system. The discourse transcended the mere exploration of racism but also purposed to spread awareness among teachers and other stakeholders about the unique cultural needs of children of colour to provide a sense of belongingness and selfhood. The bias towards children of colour in Finland in place of other demographic groups was validated by the institutionalisation of white privilege, failure by the educational system to appreciate cultural diversity and the lack of cultural knowledge among teachers.

The literature-based methods of data collection and thematic analysis were appropriate in this context because empirical research was inappropriate given the impact of the pandemic on learning. The following were the main findings. First, the state of Finnish children of colour has evolved over time in line with the social and political transformations in Finland. However, there is limited integration of the out-groups. Second, the need to improve education and empowerment among teachers and the creation of more awareness in their working with Finnish children of colour is a priority. However, there are no adequate structures in place to facilitate the realisation of these goals.

The researcher proposed the following measures as part of the 10-stepped guidelines. Teachers should exploit pedagogical research to address racial experience, address gaps in cultural knowledge and promote ethnic heritage and the quality of education. The interventions adopted by teachers in isolation cannot be successful without the input of parents, policymakers and school heads; this is because each of the stakeholders is the power to curtail the intergenerational transmission of racialized narratives. Other proposed solutions include empowering school cultures, intentional and systematic prejudice reduction.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Summary Table

Author, year, country	Purpose of the study	Participants (n)	Data collection method	Data analysis method	Main results
Alemanji, A. A., 2016. Finland	To investigate the difficulties in addressing systematic racism in the Finnish culture.	Mothers of children with an immigrant background N - not defined	Focus group interviews	Critical discourse analysis (CDA)	There is an underlying sense of powerlessness among immigrant mothers in Finland.
Hart, A., 2015. Finland	To provide guidelines on maintaining educational equity in Finland.	N - not defined	Literature-based qualitative research	Thematic analysis	Maintaining cultural diversity in Finland remains a challenge, leading to a significant racial divide between white and children of colour in schools.
Heikka, J., Halttunen, L., & Waniganayake, M. 2018.	To investigate perceptions among early education professionals.	Teachers, childcare nurses, ECE centre directors	Focus group interviews	Qualitative content analysis	Finnish teachers have an undefined power in the educational sector and

Finland		N=13 interviews			might. Nonetheless, the teachers are comfortable with providing leadership in the educational sector.
Juutilainen, S. A., Miller, R. and Heikkilä, L. 2014.

Finland | To investigate the link between indigenous health and structural racism. | N = 25 Canada

N = 20 Finland | Structured interviews | Narrative analysis using NVIVO | Racism in Finnish and Canadian boarding schools had a negative impact on the health of indigenous students. |
| Karila, K., & Kinos, J., 2018.

Finland | To review professionalis m among stakeholders in the Finnish educational sector. | Teachers in the Finnish educationa l sector

N - not defined | Literature review data | Qualitative and quantitativ e analysis | The Finnish government has adopted policies to enhance equity in access to education. |
| Kopisto, K., Salo, L., Lipponen, L., & Krokfors, L. 2018.

Finland | To investigate the tensions in the Finnish educational sector. | Early childhood educators | Literature review data | Qualitative analysis | Transformatio n of the early education system in Finland has been impeded by tensions between stakeholders |

					and the unequal advancement of the rights of children.
Kuusisto, E., Tirri, K., & Rissanen, I. 2016.

Finland | To investigate ethnic sensitivity among Finnish teachers. | N = 864 | Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ). | Explorative factor analysis | Ethical sensitivity among teachers in Finland was high. However, there was a disconnect between knowledge and practice. |
| Rastas, A., 2005.

Finland | To explore the differences in the articulation of race in Finland. | Migrant children and adolescents | Ethnographic research between 1999 and 2001 | Qualitative analysis | Ethnic labelling was common in Finland, a phenomenon that led to the normalisation of racism. Such practices had a direct impact on education. |
| Rastas, A., 2014.

Finland | To investigate how Africans in Finland are addressing issues relating to race. | African migrants in Finland | Review of published literature | Qualitative research | The presence of African migrants in Finland offered locals an opportunity to appreciate |

					foreign cultures and address racial stereotypes. However, progress was limited.
Rastas, A., 2015. Finland	To investigate the racial dilemma among school-going children in Finland.	Children in Finland	Review of published literature	Qualitative analysis	Children of colour have to contend with colour trouble. The primary concerns about their white or black racial identity remain unresolved.