



**SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS AND
MANAGEMENT**

Subtle Racial Bias at University

*A case study of student experiences and management responses at Lund University School of
Economics and Management*

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Abstract

Racism is an ongoing issue in society that has seeped into the higher education environment and is a prevalent problem amongst students, faculty and staff from minority racial and ethnic backgrounds. This issue is often overlooked particularly in Sweden which has long promoted itself as a nation of egalitarian and progressive values. This paper examines whether subtle racial biases exist within Swedish Universities, using Lund University School of Economics and Management as the chosen case study to collect data. Following from this it will identify its manifestations to provide recommendations and strategies to minimise the occurrence of subtle racial bias. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data from a survey and 6 interviews with students and 2 faculty members with administrative management positions, the paper investigates the various ways in which racial biases appear including student dynamics in group work, University administrative structures and procedures, campus climate, research and administration. The paper will also delve into concepts such as resistance to implement change and unwillingness to report incidents, re-designing administrative structures and general advocacy for change. Finishing up, from the analysis of the data collected the paper will conclude by providing recommendations for change through procedural modification and practice to foster a more inclusive and equitable university environment.

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1. Introduction

Race has always been a sensitive subject around the world and is also a topic that is becoming increasingly discussed in higher education. In an educational environment, racial discrimination from school administrators and fellow students can lead to significant differences in a student's academic performance (Farkas, 2003). Not only academic performance is affected and despite the improvement in access to University generally, ethnicity has still proven to be a clear divider in opportunity across students and faculty (Taylor, Turk, Chessman & Espinosa, 2020). Meanwhile, racism is still underestimated in university studies conducted by The Guardian (Batty, 2019). Thus, racism is still a problem that affects students' learning experience, however, the nature of its occurrence has changed and become harder to detect through its growing obscurity.

Sense of belonging among students is directly linked to their ethnicity and can also affect their academic performance and campus life (Graham, Kogachi & Morales-Chicas, 2022). Students' perceptions of belonging are impacted by their race and ethnicity with those from minority groups frequently reporting lower levels of belonging (Graham, Kogachi & Morales-Chicas, 2022). These disparities in belonging have in turn become correlated to achievement performance (Graham, Kogachi & Morales-Chicas, 2022). In examining the persistent inequalities in access and outcomes faced by students of colour in higher education in a 2022 briefing it was seen that although some progress has been made in recent years, there are still significant disparities in graduation rates, employment prospects after graduation and other important measures of success (Ellsworth, Hading, Law & Pinder, 2022). The briefing also uncovered the necessity of addressing structural inequities and providing support to students of colour to achieve greater equity in higher education (Ellsworth et al, 2022).

Ethnic minorities who have suffered from subtle racial discrimination are more prone to cognitive barriers (Ozier, Taylor & Murphy, 2019). This in turn has a significant impact on their place in an educational environment, which includes not only their ability to implement chosen actions but also their ability to learn in a complex academic setting. In addition, this suffering can also cause negative emotions (Carter & Forsyth, 2010) and even damage their physical health, hence making their mental and physical health more vulnerable (Graham, Brown-Jeffy, Aronson & Stephens, 2011).

Given the importance of Universities in educating future generations, the issue of race in a higher education environment is substantial to the progression of globalisation in the modern world (Leonardo, 2009). The study takes place at Lund University School of Economics and Management, otherwise known as LUSEM. According to the school's official website, LUSEM is a public authority in Sweden and a part of the Ministry of Education and Research to which they report (LUSEM website a). LUSEM is accredited as a leading business school globally with more than 1000 international students studying at the university currently (LUSEM website b; LUSEM website c). To continue growing as an internationally diverse university, any form of racial bias needs to be identified and addressed.

In studying the element of race in a Swedish University, it is important to examine the social relations and historical and political context in which the University's racial dynamics are influenced. In 1994, there was the implementation of a mandate to counter the racism that was officially introduced in all Swedish education systems. Along with active policies to counteract any forms of racial-based intolerance, acceptance and promotion of diversity became a topic of discussion in the 1990s (Jämte, 2012). Since then, Sweden has been generally characterised as anti-racist with educational institutions responding directly to student behaviours that go against this norm whilst overlooking institutional structural mechanisms to handle racial-based issues (Arneback, 2012; Arneback & Quennerstedt, 2016).

This study looks at how racial diversity positively affects a learning environment and other aspects of one's life, including work. Many previous studies have been done on the benefits of racial diversity and how it can lead to improved growth and innovation (Moreu, Isenberg, & Brauer, 2021). This can be attributed to how individuals from different backgrounds bring a diverse range of knowledge, skills and experience that others cannot see. Bringing together these people can be a great learning experience for everyone but they come with the challenges of working with individuals with different cultures, practices and methods of working. This makes working together for teams more difficult as there are different expectations from people in a team and classroom environment. These values and expectations that have been instilled in children from a young age in school and family are very solidified and when they don't match with others, clashes and misunderstandings can arise and take away from the benefits of diversity. An aspect of such challenges includes

ensuring fairness in working together. This is prevalent when working in a team and those who talk and are more dominant in a team conversation are often perceived as more intelligent and contributive than those who are quieter and less inclined to speak frequently. Whilst this can be a personal preference, cultural norms and values act as contributing factors. Over the long run, these behaviours become racial profiles that cause differences in how other students perceive and treat one another (Holoien, 2013).

1.1 Problem Statement

The University prides itself in being internationally diverse. On the school website, the University is stating core values as “equality, equal opportunities and diversity” (LUSEM website d). On the main webpage introducing the Masters in Management programme at LUSEM, it states “Your fellow students are high achievers from around the world, enriching your learning experience” (LUSEM website e). It also promotes an “international masterclass” as part of the programme that insinuates the culturally diverse nature of the programme is a core aspect that makes it more appealing (LUSEM website e). However, racial bias present at LUSEM would deter future students from coming and hinder the school from growing in the diversity in which it is promoted.

In comparison to the rest of the developed Western world, the study of race and its impacts on society are understudied in Sweden and its educational system (Fazlhashemi, 2002). In an educational setting, any racially driven behaviour can have a major impact on a student’s experience both academically and educationally (Farkas, 2003). Because of the subtle based nature of racial behaviour, it is hard for university management to implement top-down change. By examining how subtle racial-based bias behaviour manifests at LUSEM and the role of LUSEM management, this study seeks to improve the experience of international students at LUSEM and further promote their involvement to grow LUSEM as an internationally diverse educational environment.

This study seeks to examine subtle racial-based differences in the way students are treated at LUSEM. Whilst subtle, this variation in treatment acts to have a big effect on a student’s experience and ability to learn at the University (Farkas, 2003; Graham, Kogachi & Morales-Chicas, 2022). This can, in turn, affect the reputation of the University and its ability to continue growing into an international educational institution in which the University prides itself on. The challenge around creating change from management is due to the hidden

nature of the racial-based treatment. This makes it hard to identify and as a result hard to implement effective top-down managerial change.

Racial discrimination in Swedish Universities is usually subtle and covert (Lusanda, 2021). It can be present in various ways such as “microaggressions, racist jokes, tone policing, and the denial, indifference, or minimising of racial discrimination” (Lusanda, 2021). Although hardly anyone in Sweden would claim to be a racist, most people's attitude to the topic is one of rejection and indifference (Lusanda, 2021). It is a passive form of political correctness rather than active anti-racism, and subtle aggressions also seem to be less understood by them (Lusanda, 2021).

1.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore students' perceptions of subtle racial discrimination in the higher education environment. This study seeks to provide the reader and the wider Swedish higher education community with an overall perception of the current state of racial discrimination in higher education and also to provide a direction for possible future action in the management of racial diversity and inclusion. We will examine/investigate the proposed questions to understand how racial-based bias is manifested at the Swedish University, LUSEM and the role of management of the University in these issues.

We are choosing to look at management in our study as we see it as an integral part of creating change in student experiences. We believe from our study we will be able to better understand what is contributing to the differences in perception arising from race and this will provide strong indicators of how management can contribute to resolving the issue.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions we seek to have answered will provide us with a purpose. Below are the proposed questions to reach the purpose/aim of this study.

1. Do students feel race is a problem at LUSEM?
2. If so, in what form do subtle racial manifestations/forms take at LUSEM?
3. If so, what has management at LUSEM done previously and currently about racial biases?

1.4 Limitations

The limitation gathered is split between the limitation of the range of respondents and the limitation of the university setting. Given the short timeframe, there are limitations on ourselves and our ability to gather information and analyse collected data. This is reflected in the potential risks associated with the number of responses from the survey and the number of interviews conducted. On the other hand, the study was conducted at LUSEM alone. As such it is not reflective of the general situation in all Swedish higher education as only one University was examined

Another limitation is due to the nature of the study of race and that it is a social construct that is not fixed (CNN, 2023). As such, answers provided in the survey and interview are open to interpretation and can differ greatly depending on the individual analysing.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study would start with the theories related to race and ethnicity and thereafter narrow the focus to subtle racial discrimination. After that, theories and studies regarding racial diversity and inclusion management will be discussed to bring the readers a picture of the basic analytical framework based on the theories that have been discussed.

2.1 Race and Ethnicity Theories

There has been a lot of research done on racism and education in modern society. Given the importance of education as a driving influence behind decreasing racial inequalities, improving the situation of students facing racial bias is crucial in progressing society (Henry, 2020). This study will first review the basic definition of race and ethnicity to add clarity.

2.1.1 Background

To study the concept of race at a Swedish University, it is important to examine social relations and the historical and political context. According to Hübinette and Lundström (2014), there is a strong sense of “Swedish exceptionalism” which portrays Sweden as a fundamentally equal society in gender and race. This belief has stemmed from the seventeenth-century concept of “Hyperborea” (Hübinette & Lundström, 2014). This was a Nordic version of Eurocentrism that presented Sweden positively in relation to colonisation (Hübinette & Lundström, 2014). However, this did not stop Swedes from claiming superiority over natives and others under the pretence of “service of science and culture” that allowed them to claim the moral high ground to other colonisers (Schough, 2008, pp.36-38). Throughout Swedish history and into modern times, this moral high ground has been maintained through the social and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Pred, 2000, p.6). At this time, Sweden came forward very publicly in the international community as the “very model of solidarity and equality” (Pred, 2000, p.6). Much pride was taken in Sweden as being at the forefront of a strong welfare state that was anti-colonisation and anti-apartheid (Pred, 2000, p.6). However, Hübinette and Lundström (2011) present the term of whiteness as central to the identity of Swedishness and the idea that race and ethnicity go hand in hand with Swedishness and whiteness. Those that do not conform to the national narrative are excluded from Swedish society (Hübinette & Lundström, 2011).

Another concept examined by Quillian (2006) refers to “colourblind racism” which is the use of particular frames, styles and scripts to appear equalising and justify current perceptions and actions. Thus, to carry out this study effectively, there has been much thought into creating a method to best identify these discrepancies surrounding racial differences (Quillian, 2006). Understanding this is very important as it paints a picture of how individuals view their experiences and their perceptions on topics such as race (Hall, 1996). This topic is not at the forefront of people’s thought processes and thus their actual beliefs are merged with socially acceptable ideas (Hall, 1996). Thus, whilst Swedes believe they are anti-racist in line with the national narrative, the underlying whiteness of the Swedish culture overshadows what they perceive as their beliefs on being racially open (Hall, 1996). This is encapsulated in racial norms of compulsive Eurocentrism and “the logic within which the racialized and ethnicized body is constituted discursively” (Hall, 1996, p.16). As such, there is power in the invisible nature of white privilege that is simultaneously “marked” yet invisible (Koobak & Thapar-Björkert, 2012).

Research on race in academia and in an educational setting is not as prevalent in Sweden in comparison to the rest of the Western world, particularly the USA (Fenton, Carter & Modood, 2000). These previous studies have ranged widely from quantitative and qualitative studies to scholarly, narrative-based accounts and personal experiences (Lamont, Beljean & Clair, 2014). In Sweden, racial-based discussions are still relatively new and a challenging topic (Thapar-Björkert & Farahani, 2019). In general, there is a sense of hesitation and distress when asked about racial-based topics and as such, refusal to recognise possible manifestations of discrimination due to race (Thapar-Björkert & Farahani, 2019). This has been one of the key reasons for the lack of study and attention to the lack of prior empirical data and theoretical development in this area (Thapar-Björkert & Farahani, 2019). Stemming from this is Sweden’s heavy influence from both liberal and conservative forces that have the stance that advanced Western societies such as Sweden have progressed past the problems associated with race and gender (Bilge, 2013; Ahmed, 2012). This stance has led to the unintentional view that Sweden has moved past such issues that Sweden “should not pay attention to race” (Habel, 2012, p.111) and instead focus its attention elsewhere.

This ignorance in not seeing the problems associated with race in society is a part of white supremacy and plays a role in how matters of race are framed and what is or is not race-related (Bonilla-Silva, 2012, p.174). An example would be, what is considered as

racially driven behaviour by one can be completely overlooked by the other carrying out the behaviour and argued in a particular way so that the behaviour is overlooked (Bonilla-Silva, 2012).

In the few previous studies in an educational environment, one of the more notable studies that examined discrimination among students due to ethical reasons found that the prevalence of fitting into society is a big part of Swedish culture (Fazlhashemi, 2002). This has created a monocultural and institutionally homogeneous environment and created an environment of low mobility and expansion that was reflected in the cultural backgrounds of academics (Fazlhashemi, 2002). Thus, they found in the study, academics who were not culturally Swedish had to work extra hard to gain the knowledge and skills to integrate into pre-established norms to gain acceptance and recognition (Fazlhashemi, 2002).

In one of the pioneer studies on “ethnic” discrimination among students in the Swedish academy, Fazlhashemi (2002) underlines the existence of a normative notion of Swedishness as an invisible but significant factor that not only creates a monocultural and institutionally homogeneous environment but one sustained through low mobility within the state-funded Swedish academy (between as well as within universities). Academics with a foreign background, more than others, must have knowledge, patience, skill and time in order to be able to cope with intersecting discriminatory practices (Fazlhashemi, 2002). This pressure to fit in to succeed in Sweden by foreign academics was captured in previous studies conducted in Sweden (Fazlhashemi, 2002). In their interviews when asked about any discriminatory behaviours experienced, they were seen to fall into a “mode of social survival” and act to fit in with their academic peers by hiding, denying or showing reluctance in using race as a reason behind discriminatory actions (Fazlhashemi, 2002). In response to this, strategies were implemented to compensate for the behaviour instead of addressing and trying to resolve the racial-based issues (Mack, 2019).

2.1.2 Race

In social sciences, race is a social construct (Fiske, 2010). It has played no role in how humans are biologically with physical differences including skin and hair colour having no correlation to differences in group behaviour, belief and abilities. Despite this, race has been the driving force in the structuring of social reality for our society (Cornell & Hartmann, 2006). Given the long-standing historical discussions around race, there have been variations

to the definition and the connotation that follows (Lamont, Beljean & Clair, 2014). One of the initial usages was to define groups of people in different settings which is now described as national identity and ethnicity (Lamont, Beljean & Clair, 2014). In progressing to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when Europeans first met non-Europeans, a biological meaning was coined by Enlightenment scientists and philosophers (Lamont, Beljean & Clair, 2014). This meaning arose from their association with plants and animals with humans also falling into a subclassification within these species (Massey & Denton, 1993). This had the effect of them portraying race as a natural biological categorisation of the human species (Lamont, Beljean & Clair, 2014). With this concept came the justification of colonialism and the practice of domination, violence and exploitation towards non-white people (Lamont, Beljean & Clair, 2014). The progression of society has seen this behaviour diminished with the notion of race holding a more 'natural connotation in most discussions (Massey & Denton, 1993). The scientific decision now is that race does not hold a biological category among humans with the variation of genes between racial groups far greater than external racial groups (Fiske, 2010). With this concept, it can be seen how the acceptance of different races has become more normalised in modern society, however, variations of how individuals of different races are treated in educational settings are still observed (Bonilla-Silva, 2012).

Races are distinguished by physical characteristics and as such there is a biological foundation (Clair & Denis, 2015). These physical characteristics are assumed to be fixed and carried by an individual throughout their life and can only be changed through deliberate and drastic appearance-changing measures such as plastic surgery (Clair & Denis, 2015).

This construction of race labels and the bias that is formed over the course of history is the primary reason behind the study of issues arising from racial differences (Clair & Denis, 2015). The natural existence of race does not present this issue without the creation of societal norms (Clair & Denis, 2015). Dating back to the eighteenth century, the use of racial groups was used to make statements about superiority with intellectual, moral, and spiritual roles and judgments made to justify the domination of non-Europeans (Clair & Denis, 2015). As seen in North America, using race as reasoning saw the occurrence of great violence with enslavement, land appropriation and overall dehumanisation of indigenous and Africans (Waters, Kasinitz & Asad, 2014). In later times, whilst the physical violence began to subside, the prevalence of racial-based unfairness in social, economic and symbolic violence towards racial groups arose (Waters, Kasinitz & Asad, 2014). Once again, non-Europeans

were the main targets of this discrimination with the increased movement of non-Europeans to the Western world (Clair & Denis, 2015). Since then, through radical societal and policy reform in Western society, racial-based differences have become increasingly more subtle but still identifiable (Clair & Denis, 2015). The subtlety of racial-based treatment makes it hard to grasp and therefore enforces more improvement through top-down management and policy implementation (Clair & Denis, 2015).

2.1.3 Ethnicity

Under the umbrella of social sciences, there is a major distinction between race and ethnicity. This divergence needs to be defined as the two terms will be used for different purposes throughout this study (Allport, 1954). On the other hand, ethnicities are aligned with one's self-assertion of cultural practices, history and ancestry (Allport, 1954). This makes ethnicity a more fluid label than racial labels that are allocated by others (Cornell & Hartmann, 2006). Given this definition, ethnicity and nationality have a tendency to overlap (Clair & Denis, 2015). For example, the nationality of "American" contains several ethnic groups (Clair & Denis, 2015). These ethnic groups tend to have their own stigmas and reputations attached. An example would be the reputation of being Italian-Americans different from Arab-Americans (Allport, 1954).

These three categories - race, ethnicity and nationality that are socially constructed play a major role in how an individual is perceived by their peers, particularly in an educational setting (Pap, 2021). Shaped by time and the constant tug and pull of social forces, state and political power, the notion of race and ethnicity and its role in societal settings has long been discussed as a core factor in societal changes (Cornell & Hartmann, 2006).

A prevalent part of one's ethnicity is the role of language in one's identity. Language acts as a form of social categorisation that is formed from language attitudes and sociolinguistic stereotypes that have long been embedded in society (Gudykunst & Schmidt, 1987). In studies done by Stanford linguists and psychologists on the study of language and its interpretation by people, even the small variances in the use of language are the cause of biases of speakers (Shashkevich, 2019). Language is used as a lens for how people perceive themselves and those around them in the world (Shashkevich, 2019). As such, linguists have continuously sought to uncover how the use of accents, words and phrases build up one's perception of others unknowingly (Shashkevich, 2019). These perceptions that are formed

based on language come from speech patterns and behaviours and unintentionally play a large role in individual behaviours (Shashkevich, 2019).

Sociolinguistic research conducted revealed the strong correlation between linguistic practices in the ability to shape and transform one's ethnicity (Fought, 2012). As Bucholtz (1995, p.335) puts it, "the ideological link between language and ethnicity is so potent that the use of linguistic practices associated with a given ethnic group may be sufficient for an individual to pass as a group member".

The correlation between language and the construction of one's ethnic identity is very dominant, more so than other racial and ethnic factors like gender, social class and age (Fought, 2012). An element of language that is taken into consideration in one's identity, is how well the language and the social norms in which languages carry (Fought, 2012). For example, how language is used to compliment or ridicule differs with the environment (Fought, 2012). These language mannerisms that are specific to one's particular environment can result in hurtful contempt, partiality and stereotypes as well as be the foundation of one's ethnic pride, humour and a symbol of community (Fought, 2012).

A study conducted by Tong (2021) examines that for English-as-Foreign-Language (EFL) and English-as-Second-Language (ESL) students, language proficiency is one of the most crucial factors affecting their participation in group work. In addition, the cultural differences that these students embody are also a factor that affects their expression and contribution to group work (Melles, 2004). For example, for an EFL/ESL Asian student, silence is a common state in the classroom in an Asian setting, whereas for Native-English-Speaker (NS) students, silence is often discouraged (Tong, 2021). This results in different levels of participation in group discussions based on both language and cultural differences.

This terminology is important when reading this paper and categorising the interviewees as it will be examining individuals of various races and ethnicities to gain depth for this study. This can be applied when interviewing an individual of Asian race but Middle Eastern ethnicity. This study seeks to understand the factors of racial bias, including both race and ethnicity and to what extent these factors play. In understanding this it intends to examine the role of university management in creating positive change for students moving forward.

2.1.4 Critical Race Theory

“Critical Race Theory” (CRT) is an academic concept with a history of over 40 years (Sawchuk, 2021) and was first developed in the field of legal research in the United States and was later introduced into the field of education (Ladson-Billings, 2019). It exposes the hidden structures of racial oppression by analysing the education system in a society of white supremacy (Leonardo, 2009). It essentially asserts that racial discrimination is not only related to individual prejudice but also to legal systems and policies (Sawchuk, 2021). It is also discussed as the foundation of diversity and inclusion and is used broadly in examining the systemic inequalities in higher education (Sawchuk, 2021). Meanwhile, CRT is a research framework that has been used in various studies including those related to university experiences (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). According to Chaisson (2004), understanding CRT helps to understand “racism as a system of power that privileges whiteness and oppresses racial minorities”, especially for white students.

To better understand the relevant theories, this study would briefly introduce the term “whiteness” so there could be a common understanding regarding it. Whiteness is a significant concept and topic to CRT. Whiteness is a term built on white race and white culture (Portland Community College, n.d.). It represents not only the racial externalities of whites but also an ideology of white privilege (Arai & Kivel, 2009).

In Chadderton’s (2013) research, CRT has the function of being a research tool in investigating the educational experience of young people and how those experiences would impact their sense of self and the persistence of racial disparities. Chadderton (2013) also introduces several tenets of how CRT be used in race research in education which includes that CRT believes that racism is deeply rooted in the mindset of society and can be ignored by the majority group or by a minority group, either intentionally or unintentionally because some forms of racism are accumulated by small things and involve subtle differences in treatment. This could cause long-standing stereotypes and be seen as an unfair treatment of minority groups (Chadderton, 2013).

CRT has contributed a lot to how racial inequalities are produced in the school system (Chadderton, 2013). It can reveal the phenomenons that are seemingly not racism but cause perpetuated racial inequalities in an educational environment (Chadderton, 2013) and

challenges the mainstream view that the school system is “a fair and racially equal system” (Chadderton, 2013, p.44)

CRT is also meaningful in refining racial awareness and consciousness for white students. Chaisson (2004, p.346) mentioned that in schools, especially in predominantly white educational settings, teachers should consciously “bring critical race discourses into the classroom” to help white students become aware of their racial privilege in order to break the cycle of entitlement. Because in Western society, whites do not seem to be considered “special” in race studies, they are not representatives of themselves (Chaisson, 2004). Compared to other racial minorities, whites tend to be representatives of certain social concepts such as class, ability, etc and they “are not of a certain race, they’re just the human race” (Chaisson, 2004, p.347).

From teachers’ perspective, research has shown that white teachers often avoid topics related to race and racism (Picower, 2009) and that the adoption of CRT can help frame educational theory and improve teachers’, especially white teachers’, understanding of race and whiteness than simply incorporating cultural and social justice into teacher education (Aronson & Meyers, 2020).

2.1.5 Subtle Racial Discrimination

Understanding subtle racial discrimination plays a key role in understanding what are the main phenomena this study is aiming to explore. “Subtle racial discrimination” is recognized as ambiguous behaviour (Dovidio, 2002) and exhibited as negative nonverbal behaviours from white individuals, even if they would express positive attitudes toward minorities (Fazio, Jackson, Dunton & Williams, 1995). In order to remove the ambiguity, it needs to be clarified here that non-verbal behaviour in this context should be taken to mean racial discrimination that is not directly expressed in words, not all subtle racial discrimination is limited to body language, meaning that verbal subtle racial prejudice can also be counted. This can be supported by a study conducted by Solorzano, Ceja and Yosso (2000) in which the black students showed what they believe are unconscious racially aggressive words spoken to them by white people. For example, “I don’t think of you [a Black person] as Black” (Solorzana, Ceja & Yosso, 2000, p.61). When minority communities are subjected to such ambiguous behaviour, they need to expend their own cognitive resources to distinguish whether they are receiving racial discrimination or not (van den Bos & Lind, 2002). This

would increase “anxiety and arousal” for minorities and thus impair their ability to concentrate and implement decisions (Ozier, Taylor & Murphy, 2019).

To further understand subtle racial discrimination, it is essential to introduce the concept of “racial microaggression”, which is a form of subtle racial discrimination (Limbong, 2020). The term “microaggression” was coined by Harvard Psychiatrist Dr Chester M. Pierce in the 1970s to illustrate the phenomenon of verbal and non-verbal behaviours which diminish Black Americans (Marshall, Pack, Owusu, Hultman, Drake, N Rutaganira, Namwanje, Evans, Garza-Lopez, Lewis, Termini, AshShareef, Hicsasmaz, Taylor, McReynolds, Shuler & Hinton, 2021). According to Offermann, Basford, Graebner, Jaffer, De Graaf and Kaminsky (2014), racial microaggression is a negative racial slur and insult directed, intentionally or unintentionally, at people of colour through short everyday phrases. It ranges from the most subtle forms of discrimination, such as the denial of the physical and mental feelings of people of colour, to the more explicit devaluation of people of colour’s identity (Offermann et al, 2014). The harm to the person being attacked is often the opposite, as the less explicit the attack tends to cause greater psychological stress to the person being attacked, which can affect their performance at work or school (Offermann et al, 2014). Worse still, self-doubt based on this vague subtlety of discrimination also restricts the discriminated against from reflecting their experiences to the organisations they work for, thus missing out on opportunities for self-advocacy (Offermann et al, 2014). And in order to explore racial microaggressions, it is necessary to pay attention to long-established racial stereotypes and their impacts (Solorzana, Ceja & Yooso, 2000). Sue made a classification of microaggression in 2007 and gave them separate names: microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations (DeAngelis, 2009). Among them, microassaults refer to conscious attacks such as insulting racial code names; microinsults refer to verbal or non-verbal interactions that disparage other races and microinvalidations refer to communication that denies the experiences and feelings of people of colour (DeAngelis, 2009)

Subtle racial discrimination could be hard and challenging to identify. According to Greenland, West and Laar (2022), people can define it in narrow or broad terms depending on the context. Defining the boundaries of discrimination (DBD) is essential for a person to claim his or her experience of discrimination (Greenland, West & Laar, 2022). They argue that the narrower the identification of DBD the less likely people are to feel racist, and their

research suggests that racial majority groups tend to have narrower DBDs than racial minorities (Greenland, West & Laar, 2022).

Another valuable concept of understanding subtle racial discrimination is implicit bias. Implicit bias could contribute to subtle racial discrimination since it is usually an unconscious process that might arise from discriminating behaviours due to “underlying attitudes and stereotypes” (Jaramillo & Nohelty, 2021, p.1170). Reasoning for this bias of treatment within different races and its persistence in modern-day social settings can be looked at through the lens of implicit bias (Clair & Denis, 2015). This concept provides an understanding of the racial inequalities that are not outwardly shown but hidden in behaviours that are unconsciously generated from deep-embedded beliefs of inferiority or negative attitudes (Lane, Banaji, Nosek & Greenwald, 2007). In previous studies conducted in cognitive psychology and its growing overlap with cultural sociology, implicit bias acts on the foundation for one’s actions founded on expectations (Livingston, 2002). Therefore, embedded racial bias may not appear in survey-based research and requires more life-based, interpersonal scenarios such as a school to be revealed (Clair & Denis, 2015). Previous psychological experiments that took into consideration the correlation between race and the judgments associated saw those individuals readily associate positive attributes with whites more than other races (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013).

2.2 Diversity and Inclusion Management

2.2.1 Diversity Management

Diversity Definition

Diversity is a term that can be defined differently depending on the context of the discussion (Syed & Tariq, 2017). In a university setting, diversity generally means “race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, geographical representation, political beliefs and more” (Rue, n.d.). It demonstrates the complexity of unequal encounters in the student experience in higher education (Resch, 2023). This requires diversity management to cover as many factors mentioned above as possible. However, due to the purpose of this study, the emphasis would basically be diversity management regarding race and ethnicity but still keep an eye on other factors in students’ backgrounds. Whilst there are still different interpretations regarding racial diversity all around the world. For example, in the USA, diversity usually refers to African American and Latin-American students (Harries & Lee, 2019). And in Western

Europe, diversity refers to students from immigrant families (Aranka, Kitti, István, Bálint & Gergely, 2021). Following this logic, we can assume diversity in Swedish universities, or only in LUSEM, referring to students other than Swedes.

Before discussing diversity management, it is essential to identify the positive and negative sides of diversity in an educational setting for students. If there were only one race in the environment, the problem would cease to exist. Understanding both sides of the coin could devote a clearer direction regarding what diversity management can address. Diversity is related to the recognition of and respect for individual differences (Roskoša & Stukalina, 2022). According to an article published by Brown (2020), being in a diverse learning environment provides students with an opportunity to understand and embrace different beliefs and customs, enhancing their own ethnic and cultural inclusion and challenging stereotypes. In addition, students studying in racially and ethnically diverse environments can enrich their communication skills as they are exposed to different communication scenarios that vary according to the ethnocultural background of the person they are communicating with, and the ability to critical thinking would be greatly enhanced as well (Brown, 2020). Exposure to different cultures also exposes students to a wider range of ideas and experiences from different perspectives, which will help them to develop and promote their creativity (Phillips, 2014). In the long term, students who grow up in an ethnically diverse environment will also be better able to integrate into a progressively more diverse workplace after graduation (Drexel University School of Education, n.d.).

The flip side of the coin is usually the challenges and potential negative impact of diversity on both the university management and students. According to a study conducted by Roska, Kilgo, Trolan, Pascarella, Blaich and Wise (2017), negative diversity experiences including expressions of opinion that are ignored because of racial discrimination, negative treatment based on racial identity, or conflicting interactions with peers of other races can hinder students' cognitive development and learning performance. In addition, racial stereotyping by faculties in school management might lead to the prejudicial treatment of minority students (Keierleber, 2020).

Diversity Management

Diversity in higher education is a reflection of its responsiveness to the growing diversity of society, with the aim of developing diversity policies that allow students from different

backgrounds to study on an equal footing (Recsh, 2023). In a study conducted by Syed and Tariq (2017), they provide a general definition of diversity management. They argue that diversity management could be:

“a set of organisational policies and practices aimed at recruiting, retaining, and managing employees of diverse backgrounds and identities and creating a culture in which everybody is equally enabled to perform and achieve organisational objects and personal development” (Syed & Tariq, 2017, p.1).

Since this study would be conducted in an educational environment, diversity management can be interpreted as university policies and practices in maintaining the diversity of students' backgrounds in recruitment and managing students in a way that protects and integrates their diverse identities and cultures to create a safe, inclusive and fair learning environment for students (Roskoša & Stukalina, 2022). However, when discussing diversity management specifically, we find that more research has been conducted on diversity management within companies than it does in an educational context. This study would therefore discuss previous research based on both work and educational contexts, which can provide us with additional sources of knowledge.

Universities' racial diversity management involves students and faculties (Leišytė, Deem & Tzanakou, 2021). Engaging as many stakeholders as possible in the process of diversity management could increase the level of understanding and appreciation of diversity, and will increase the motivation to promote ethnic and racial diversity and inclusion in the environment in which they live. A study of the School of Pharmacy at a US university showed that the establishment of a “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee” made up of university leaders and people with knowledge of race, diversity, inclusion, etc. had a significant positive impact on the smooth implementation of diversity policies and the integration of diversity into other activities of the organisation (Kolluru, Wanat, Ficzer, Akiyode, Haber, Hayatshahi, Caldwell, Raman-Wilms & Edwards, 2023, p.635). At the same time, the inclusion of race literacy education in higher education can help both university faculties and students to be able to understand and engage more with race issues through critical reflection (Adhikari-Sacré & Rutten, 2021). In addition, Robinson, Byrd, Louis and Bonner (2013) suggest that increasing the ethnic and racial diversity of university faculties can create a more inclusive learning environment for students. And this would also give

ethnic minority students confidence in their future, as these faculties from ethnic minorities are in a sense role models for students (Blazar & Lagos, 2021).

In implementing diversity management, however, school management faces a variety of challenges. Empirically, there is little evidence on whether the implementation of diversity management policies is effective, for which specific groups of people or in which specific contexts (OECD, n.d.). This then reflects the requirement for the existence of a measurement tool for the effectiveness of diversity policies. Also, the lack of clarity in the definition of some key terminology in the implementation of diversity policies could have a significant impact on the level of engagement of all stakeholders in diversity management (Coleman, Keith & Webb, 2020). Further, the lack of support from white managers can be one of the challenges to the implementation of diversity policies, which may not be due to subjective resistance from these whites to other races, but rather resistance to change in the status quo (Frazier, 2012).

As mentioned above, tracking and measuring the effectiveness of diversity management is also a reference to show the way forward for diversity management. A study by Resch (2023) provides systematic insights for institutional policymakers by collecting university students' experiences and feedback on different diversity policies. Therefore, a regular and systematic feedback collection could be beneficial for understanding what success has been achieved through what measures (Agterberg, 2020). Principal Annelin Bredenoord at Erasmus University Rotterdam has also commented on the positive effect that having more comprehensive and accurate data about the origins of faculties and students can have on universities in assessing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of diversity management policies (Agterberg, 2020). In addition, McGuire and LeMaster (2013) suggest that collecting and analysing diversity and discrimination data on a departmental basis and aggregating them at a central level allows the university to better understand diversity and thus manage it in a targeted manner. And for collecting those data, especially on discrimination, diversity faculties could track students' comments on social media to better understand the diversity climate at school (McGuire & LeMaster, 2013).

2.2.2 Inclusion

Before talking about the definition of inclusion in an educational context, it is necessary to recognize the terms “inclusion” and “inclusiveness” and the difference between them.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, “inclusion” is the process of including someone or something in a group or list, and in the circumstances of education and social science, inclusion means the same facilities, activities and experiences are for everyone. While the term “inclusiveness” in Cambridge Dictionary means “the quality of including many different types of people and treating them all fairly and equally”. So the differences are clear in the linguistic definition of the terms as “inclusion” tends to express the process of including, while “inclusiveness” tends to express the result of including. Therefore, for this study, inclusion is a more appropriate choice when discussing the concept of management which is as a representation of “process” (Anthony, 1965, p.4).

Inclusion can be understood differently not only in different fields of study but also in the educational context of the university, where the subject matter is discussed differently. Leišytė, Deem and Tzanakou (2021) argue that inclusion in university is about embracing different kinds of diversity, supporting and preventing from discrimination and stigmatisation. A study conducted by Nīmante, Baranova and Stramkale (2021) argues that inclusion means that higher education should be accessible to everyone, especially to relatively disadvantaged groups, in order to provide them with equal opportunities to learn and socialise. In this study, the authors also refer to the fact that such inclusion requires respect for the multifaceted diversity of students, including race, faith, physical condition, socio-economic background, etc (Nīmante, Baranova & Stramkale, 2021). So to be more specific, in terms of racial and ethnic inclusion, Wilson, Townsend, Hargraves, Butler and Allison (2022) point out that inclusion means universities need to have a number of initiatives actively to protect staff and students from disadvantaged groups from microaggression and slights. Also, Fahd and Venkatraman (2019) mention that a prerequisite for increasing racial inclusion in schools is to clarify the forms in which racial discrimination exists. But in retrospect, the basis and fundamental purpose of inclusion is equity (Aranka et al, 2021).

Another interesting concept is segregation, which is the opposite of inclusion. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), people identify socially according to the group to which they belong, thus distinguishing between the concepts of in-group and out-group. The contrast between these two can lead to stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination based on the need to identify within the in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The perception of ethnic minority students is that segregation might stem from a lack of understanding and perception of their

ethnicity and less-inclusive teaching content by educators (Matus-Betancourt, Schilling-Norman, Bastidas, Peres-Villalobos, McColl-Calvo & Espionza-Parcet, 2018).

2.2.3 Racial Diversity and Inclusion Management

Diversity and inclusion are interconnected and they should all be reflected and assessed on the basis of the effective satisfaction of the individual's most basic needs (Aranka et al, 2021). The diversity-inclusive universities can offer students the possibility of being exposed to a wider range of worldviews, and the interaction between peers has the potential to help shape each other's worldviews (Moody, 2020).

When it comes to racial diversity and inclusion management in higher education, the management layer should see diversity and inclusion as an intersectional proposition, meaning that it is not just about the most obvious racial appearance of students, but also other ethical characteristics, such as the use of English as a second language (SNU, 2021). Diversity can also be synonymous with minority groups, and in many universities that promote diversity and inclusion, minority students can still face challenges regarding inclusion (Moody, 2020). School administration and teachers are an important way to achieve diversity and inclusion on campus, which includes not only the most basic focus on personal interaction with students but also enriching the diversity of the faculty itself and increasing the recruitment of underrepresented teachers of colour (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). However, it is still significant to stress that teachers' attention and personalised support for students is the basis for coping with the changing diversity (Aranka et al, 2021). A study conducted by Chattopadhyay (2022) suggests that microaggression is an important indicator of students' sense of belonging and attitudes to diversity. Students' perceptions of belonging and attitudes towards diversity could be enhanced when positive diversity and inclusion content is demonstrated by school management, or when diverse interpersonal interactions between groups are a positive experience.

In addition, a study by Grier-Reed, Houseworth, Moody and Quiñones (2021) refers to the concept of a "tipping point". They suggest that when the proportion of people of colour in the USA society reaches a tipping point of 40%-60%, whites would experience a sense of threat to their status and resources, leading to negative attitudes towards diversity and thus affecting the quality of inclusion (Grier-Reed et al, 2021). This is in fact a habitual perception by whites of white privilege and a misunderstanding of what is truly fair (Grier-Reed et al,

2021). While it is not clear what this “tipping point” would be in Europe, in Sweden, or whether this view is applicable, the study still points out some management ideas for higher education, which is a microcosm of society (Margolis, 2001). It is suggesting that when managing and implementing policies on racial diversity and inclusion, management should be better equipped to respond to such perceptions of whiteness, such as breaking down this “white racial framework” of “white dominance” which is to see equity as “reverse discrimination” or “reverse racism”, getting white students and faculties embracing diversity training, etc. (Grier et al, 2021)

2.3 Analytical Framework

The understanding of how subtle racial discrimination works plays a key role in the design of our research methodology. It helps us to understand and define our research direction on the topic of race in the early stages of the study, is a strong reference for us in designing the survey and provides many practical examples for us to use as theoretical support for the design of the questions in the survey.

Table 1: Definition of main concepts for this study

	Definition for this study	Sources
Critical Race Theory	A research framework that examines the phenomenon of racism and helps whites better understand racial discrimination.	Ladson-Billings, 2019; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Chaisson, 2004; Chadderton, 2013
Subtle Racial Discrimination	Intentional or unintentional verbal or non-verbal negative treatment of racial and ethnic minority students on the basis of their racial and ethical attributes	Dovidio, 2002; Solorzana, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Offermann et al, 2014
Racial Diversity and Inclusion Management	A number of initiatives, mainly implemented by the school management, aim to create an equal and inclusive learning and social	Aranka et al, 2021; Syed & Tariq, 2017; Leišytė, Deem & Tzanakou, 2021

Definition for this study	Sources
environment for diverse groups of students, especially those from ethnic minorities.	

Table 1 shows the definitions and clarifications of some of the key concepts in this study, which will aid understanding and clear up potential misconceptions in subsequent studies. And regarding the subtle racial discrimination, some alternative words would follow, such as “subtle racial-bassed treatment”, etc which are more moderate, especially in the interviews to allow the interviewee to better understand or not feel offended.

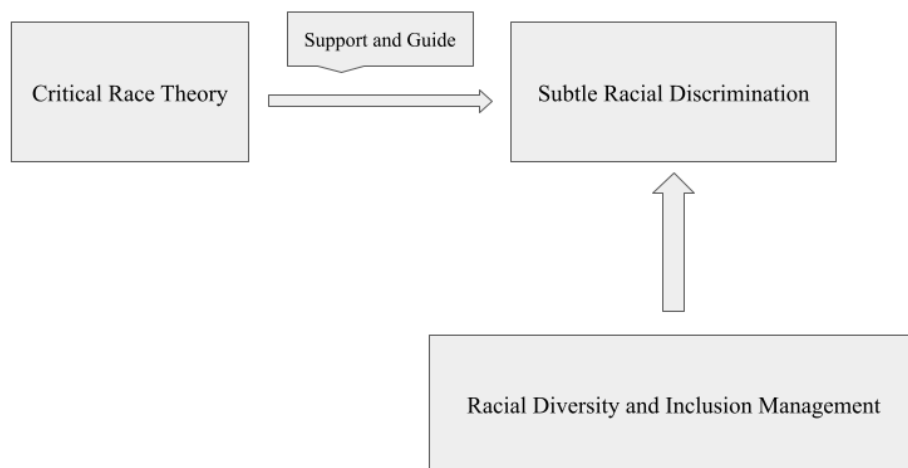


Figure 1: Analytical framework 1/2

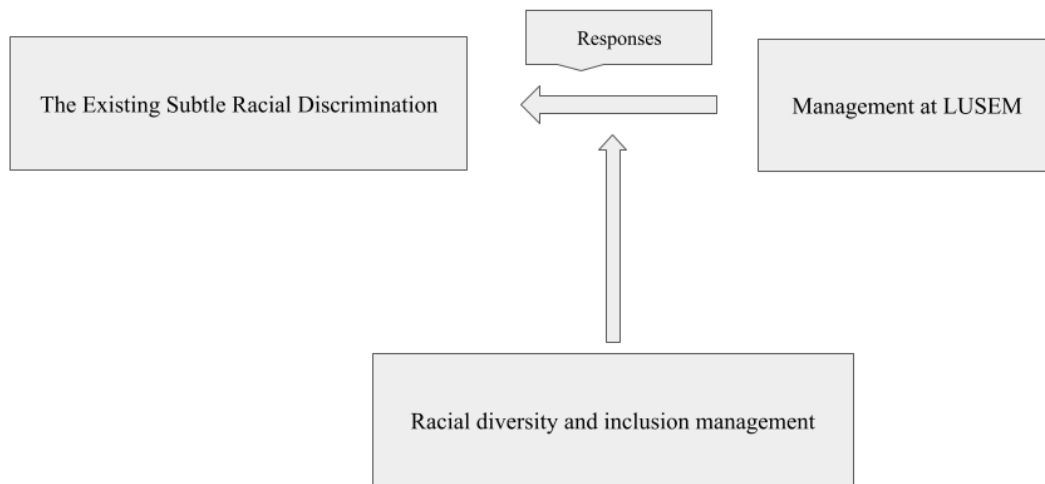


Figure 2: Analytical framework 2/2

As shown in Figure 2, this study identifies a range of different treatments based on racial attributes with the support of critical race theory and combines it with a range of theories of subtle racial discrimination, aiming to answer the questions of (1) whether LUSEM students perceive the presence of subtle racial discrimination or subtle racial characteristic-based differential treatment and (2) if so, what its manifestations can be. Moving to Figure 3, after identifying a range of phenomena related to subtle racial discrimination, we will use the theory of racial diversity and inclusion management to analyse what management at LUSEM is doing at this stage and make a series of recommendations based on this theory and the results of the interviews.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach & Design

To most effectively collect the data we needed, the study uses an anonymous survey and interviews to collect data from the University. This was done to uncover how subtle racial bias is manifested and the role of management in dealing with this issue. The purpose was to use the survey to collect data and understand the broader picture that would help to answer the first research question about students' perception of whether race is a problem for them in LUSEM. Moreover, to gain further clarification from the survey results and to answer the rest of the research questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with students who showed interest and left their contact details in the survey. Further depth to the study was gained by also interviewing faculty with managerial power at LUSEM. In interviewing both students and faculty, the study seeks to uncover the disparities between the experiences of students and the perspectives of faculty and what they know of the situation as it was suspected students withheld options on the topic of race. This is aligned with Offermann et al. (2014) that claims people who are subjected to subtle racial discrimination often choose to remain silent out of self-doubt and do not speak to others about their experiences. Therefore the two-way perception of race management and inclusion at LUSEM would help break down the information barriers between students and management.

3.1.1 Survey

Under the broad umbrella of surveys, three forms of sampling were applied: non-Probability Sampling, snowballing and convenience. Given the topic of race and ethnicity is sensitive, the use of anonymous surveys serves to make the process more comfortable for those participants to answer honestly and without the pressures of answering in line with social norms. The survey was carried out through the non-Probability Sampling method which is the more viable option for researchers performed by students at an undergraduate, and postgraduate level (ResearchGate, 2022). Given the challenges around gathering enough participants within the constraints of LUSEM, another method that was applied to increase the number of participants was snowball sampling. This involved using pre-existing contacts to gain further connections to those who would participate (ResearchGate, 2022). This aimed to increase the validity by increasing the number of participants.

Convenience sampling was also used and involves the researcher choosing participants based on ease of access through personal relationships, physical proximity, and previous administrative structures and choosing willing participants. Under the method of convenience sampling, the survey was sent out to our fellow programme students, peers and friendship groups. In general, this method is more unfavoured in social science research given it brings to question any claims of generalisability given the possibility of affecting answers through the personal relationships with the participants to draw particular conclusions. As such, this will be discussed as part of the limitations of this type of research method (ResearchGate, 2022).

3.1.2 Survey Question Design

When designing survey questions, the way the questions are phrased, the order of the questions, the type of questions and many other details need to be carefully considered (Yaddanapudi & Yaddanapudi, 2019). To address biases in data collection and analysis related to racial inclusiveness, it is important to ensure that datasets are representative of various demographic groups, including age, gender, race and ethnicity (Kamikubo, Wang, Marte, Mahmood & Kacorri, 2022). Therefore, the survey included some basic questions at the beginning to gather the background of participants as comprehensively as possible. And this could also provide an optional space for subsequent analysis to ensure the relevance of the information gathered (Jenn, 2006). Meanwhile, filtering is also a common tool that allows participants to only answer the relevant questions (Jenn, 2006). Whilst in practice, due to the functional limitations of the chosen form tool (Google Form), we chose to combine these two sections together in the survey questions and explain them in the analysis.

In the survey (Appendix 1), questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 were the collection of participants' general background including their nationality, gender, native language and race. In order to collect racial data to offer convenience to the following analysis, some of the terminology used to classify racial identity as noted by Brener, Kann and McManus (2003) were drawn on. Meanwhile, this survey combined the close-ended questions with open-ended ones since nationalities and races are too many to be put into choices. Questions 2 and 6 are filtering questions to identify if the participants were eligible and if their responses would be indicative. Question 2 was to make sure the participants are from LUSEM. Question 6 was a prerequisite for the other follow-up questions, meaning that participants had to have had

experience working with students of other races in order to answer the subsequent series of questions based on this scenario, otherwise, their responses would not be informative.

Based on our research, there were not many surveys done in previous studies we could use as reference. Therefore, new questions were created based on previous relevant literature and relative reports. This survey used a combination of scenarios and similar questions from available literature to design the survey. Lusanda (2021) wrote an article that describes an account of an international student's real-life experience of racism while studying in Sweden. Among them, she described how, when her opinions and ideas were ignored during discussions with other students, she needed to expend a lot of energy thinking about whether this was a racist attack on her in Sweden or not (Lusanda, 2021). This was a manifestation of subtle racial-based treatment and therefore, the group work was chosen as a scenario in the survey as shown in questions 6 to 14 and 19. In addition, according to Berger (2020), some apparently well-intentioned language may also have a subtle derogatory connotation. For example, complimenting a Black person "so articulate" could also be seen as a racial micro-insult (Caporuscio, 2020). Therefore, question 20 was designed based on this phenomenon as a complementary to the scenario questions to examine students' perception of race and ethnicity. Besides, questions 15 to 18 were about students' perceptions of racial diversity and inclusion management at LUSEM. The questions were designed to provide an overall picture as well as a portion of the topics discussed for the follow-up interviews, particularly with faculties who have management responsibilities at LUSEM.

3.1.3 Interview

The survey also acted to provide participants with the topics to be further examined. The interview ultimately sought to understand more clearly the thought process behind how participants answered the survey questions and the practical experiences that connected with their responses. The interviews aimed to gain a more thorough understanding of the factors that contribute to subtle racial discrimination where the survey left areas open to interpretation. To do so, interview methodology was applied to build on the data collected from the surveys and ensure a more comprehensive picture of the participants' experiences and perceptions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Interviews were carried out as a directed conversation between the interviewer and the participant or participants. The chosen interview method was a semi-structured manner, with pre-set questions for the participants that were designed to detect and explore where subtle racial bias manifested and in what

forms. This would form the foundation for questions about the role of management at LUSEM in handling the issue.

The structured part of the interview consisted of asking prepared questions in advance in the order of introduction to the topic, concepts to be discussed and suggestions for exploratory questions. In every interview, we made sure to introduce the topic and the information we sought from the interview. The participants were told it would be anonymous and that they would not be named in the thesis. It was made clear that the recording of interviews was only to be used to refer to for analysis and kept confidential. To make the experience more accessible to the interviewee and ensure their participation throughout the interview, it is typical interview practice to begin with straightforward and less challenging questions which were applied. This acts to create a more comfortable environment in which the interviewee can be their most authentic selves and progress to the more detailed questions that ask for depth and comprehensiveness. Next comes the follow-up questions that are exploratory. The same base questions are asked of all the interviewees and in the same environment in a structured interview for consistency (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The unstructured part was aimed at gaining the needed answers by using follow-up questions based on the initial responses given (Bryman & Bell, 2017). The unstructured element of the interview stemmed from the follow-up questions that were poised depending on the answers received to gain more thorough answers. Whilst the aim of the unstructured part of the interview seeks to add depth to the investigation, this also adds an element of uncertainty that is dependent on the interviewee (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

As mentioned above, racial discrimination is increasingly ebbing towards more subtle forms of existence, this has been reflected in more recent racial studies in modern sociological studies showing a drop in racially driven behaviour. However, Kinder and Sears (1981) comment on if these studies actually reflected a drop in variances of behaviour towards racial differences or that the social decline in acceptability of racial-based behaviour has meant individuals purposely withheld their honest impressions towards this issue. This has made the study of racial bias in the LUSEM very difficult as it is all in subtle behaviours instead of clear racial discriminatory behaviour. In line with various techniques developed by social scientists since the 1970s, this study will seek to gain the most honest opinions of those being interviewed by reducing their hesitancy to answer or respond in a socially unaccepted way

(Kinder & Sears, 1981). It was found that using these techniques yielded new racial biases that were founded in their morals and principles. An example in a study conducted by Kinder and Sears (1981) is that whilst participants that were racially white strongly supported racial equality in their responses, they still resisted actual change through policies to achieve this. This showed a principal-implementation gap that insinuates that there is a genuine belief in principles of Western liberal democracy that has merged with moral resentments that are impeded by childhood teachings and racial group threats (Blumer, 1958).

3.2 Data Collection Method

In total, this study received 44 responses to the survey and conducted 7 interviews, 5 student interviews and 2 faculty interviews.

The initial plan to ensure reliability and exposure for the results was to send the survey out to LUSEM students and faculty with managerial power. As stated by Offermann et al (2014), the research for subtle racial discrimination is conducted to reveal the “implicit discrimination” or “aversive racism” from the perpetrator’s perspective. Although it could not be proven, logically someone must be the perpetrator in this case. The disciplined approach is to send out the survey to everyone to ensure students from various races are included to avoid falling into the trap of stereotypes. This would act to mitigate potential personal biases if the individuals that the data was collected from were not personally known. At the start, there was a tentative understanding from the course convenor to help use the school administrative system to reach all students. However, when the time came to distribute the survey, the administrative personnel were unable to help with the distribution as they explained, if they complied with such requests, students would be overwhelmed with surveys. As such, these distribution methods are saved for compulsory school related materials. This was a major setback for the research as we had to consider ways to distribute the survey to a wide audience.

This posed a challenge in deciding if we should continue to use the survey as we would need to manually send the survey to those we personally knew at LUSEM. This would act to limit the amount of data that could be collected and compromise the validity. Another concern that was noticed was in only being able to send the survey to people known by the study, there would be a limitation in perspectives and the possible assumptions that responses would be biased given the personal relationship with the interviewees.

In this case, it was important to first narrow the survey to only the master's cohort. As for the distribution of the surveys, there was a heavy reliance on our connections with LUSEM and LUSEM students on some social media platforms to help us share the surveys. In order to collect as many survey results as possible, we used our personal network of contacts and asked for help from each of the LUSEM departments. Firstly, we sent the survey to our own project's class group and to a Whatsapp group chat of Chinese students from LUSEM. In the process of requesting help from the various department coordinators, only the coordinator of the Department of Economics replied with the intention of helping us post the survey on their canvas. In addition, we also posted the survey to the LUSEM Alumni group on LinkedIn (a group that includes former and current LUSEM students). Because LUSEM alumni were also asked to participate through these channels, there were a small number of non-current LUSEM students that showed in the survey results.

We then contacted some of the administrative staff at LUSEM in subsequent interviews to collect more in-depth data directly based on inquiries about the management administration of LUSEM and our initial analysis of the survey results.

3.3 Data Analysis

In this study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used. However, the main focus was on a qualitative research approach, despite the fact that surveys are often used in quantitative research. The intention was to obtain the largest sample possible to answer the research question of whether students consider race to be an issue. A range of influences based on ethnicity would be also explored. However, due to the limitations of the sample size, there was a decision made not to use technical means to measure correlation values between the factors. Some of the influences observed were also included in the interviews for further discussion with the participants.

To analyse the results of the survey, this study used a combination of graphs and filtering of results to identify and understand how responses to particular questions linked to each other. For example, in filtering the results, this study found that the number of individuals that responded to experiencing or witnessing racial bias differed, depending on how the question was phrased and in what manifestation. In addition, the answers were categorised to answer our research questions by establishing the extent of how students felt about racial bias at

LUSEM and the role of LUSEM management in how they have responded and can improve moving forward. This process of reviewing the answers provided insights for the understanding of racial bias manifestations and inspirations for possible effective solutions.

In regards to the interviews, there was a thorough review of all the interview audio recordings and notes that were taken alongside the reviews to spot the similarities and differences between participants. The criteria that were used to assess if racial bias is prevalent in LUSEM were based on the responses that were given in the survey and their explanations provided in the interview. In each interview, the participants were clearly asked if racial bias is an issue. This direct question in most cases yielded a “yes” or “no” response followed by an explanation of their personal interpretation of the matter.

3.4 Limitations of Methodology

The biggest limitation was finding enough people at the LUSEM that are willing to conduct the survey. Given everyone in school was also writing their thesis, it was hard to ask for others’ time. From previous research, it is found that race is a sensitive topic in Sweden and there is a tendency to hide true feelings to be socially accepted by one’s peers. Therefore, the study aimed to create a safe space for candidates to answer honestly and openly. Meanwhile, considering that the authors of this study are both researchers and part of the group of respondents, we decided not to participate in the completion of the questionnaire in order to ensure the objectivity of the results as far as possible. Meanwhile, considering some of the respondents are personally known and know the research intentions or the hypothesis more or less in advance, all the candidates were kept anonymous in the survey to ensure a safe environment to speak out unless they offer their contact details on their own initiative.

Given two of the seven interviewees were more comfortable speaking in their native language and being more descriptive in their recounts, the poised challenges in the translation and biases that could be formed during this process. The study sought to mitigate this risk by using Internet translation tools to provide unbiased translations. Analysis discussions of these interviews were also conducted in their own native language to ensure parts that were harder to translate were accounted for. The interviewees were also recorded and ensured that they would be anonymous and their responses would remain within the study.

As such, to ensure the best results that are reflective of the diversity present in the University, the research design ensured the variances of respondents in terms of current students, alumni, racial/ethnic diversity and faculty across participants. In doing so, this approach sought to minimise the above risks and strengthen the validity of the results collected.

4. Presentation of Data

4.1 Presentation of survey results

The survey ended up with 44 responses (Appendix 1) and the results of it show that the overall diversity of the data is largely satisfied, allowing for some reduction in the bias of the subsequent analysis. As shown in Figure 3, the nationality of the students who completed the survey covered 23 countries, with almost an equal proportion of males (54.5%) and females (45.5%) and the participant's perceptions of their own ethnicity covered 7 ethnic categories. At the same time, only 11.4% of the participants were native English speakers, but almost 36.4% of the students were native Swedish or other Nordic language speakers, while the rest were fluent speakers of their own native languages.

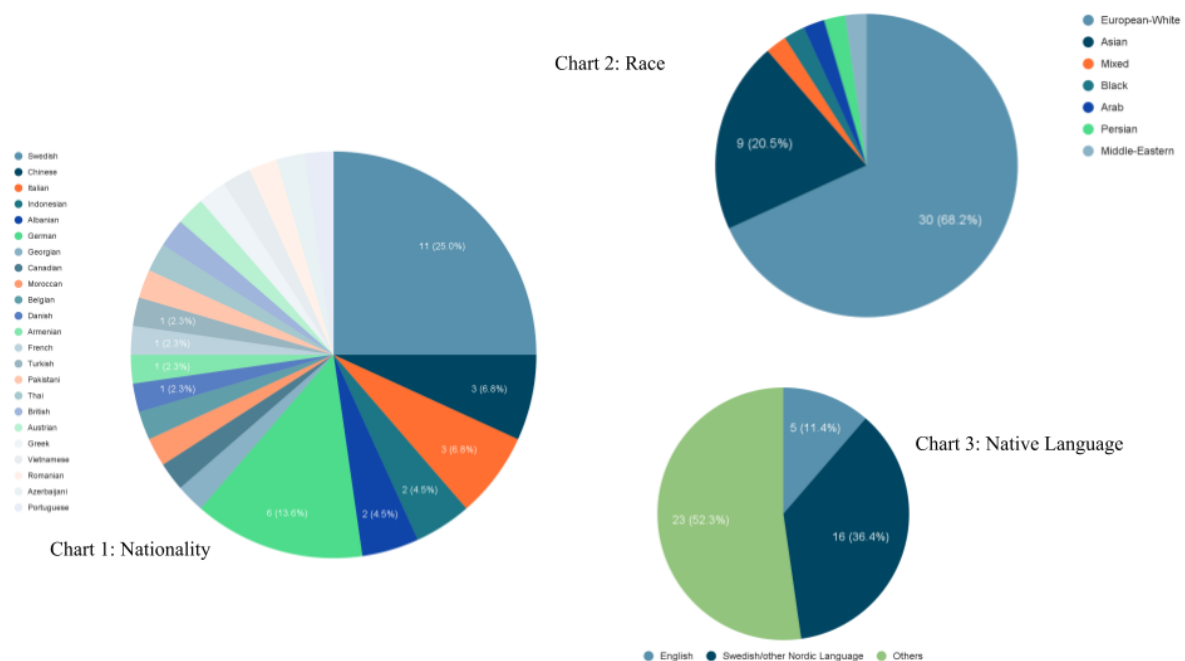


Figure 3: Nationality, Race and Native Language

Among the 44 responses, 4 respondents indicated that they are not currently LUSEM students completing a Master's degree. These 4 participants would have been presented with the survey through the "LinkedIn LUSEM Alumni" group, which includes both current and former LUSEM students. In designing this question in the survey, the intention was to make some comparisons between the views of current and graduated students. However, at present, given the small proportion of graduated students (9.1%), the following analysis in the next chapter will not comment on these 4 responses. In addition, most of the questions were designed to identify subtle racial discrimination by creating a group work scenario for the

participants, question 6 was set to filter out responses for students that have not worked with other races/ethnicities. Only 1 survey response showed a "no" for this question, but we were able to confirm that this was a mistake after contacting the participant through their contact details provided. Hence, there was no analysis made of the results of this response. Overall the 44 survey responses were all valid and will be used in the subsequent analysis.

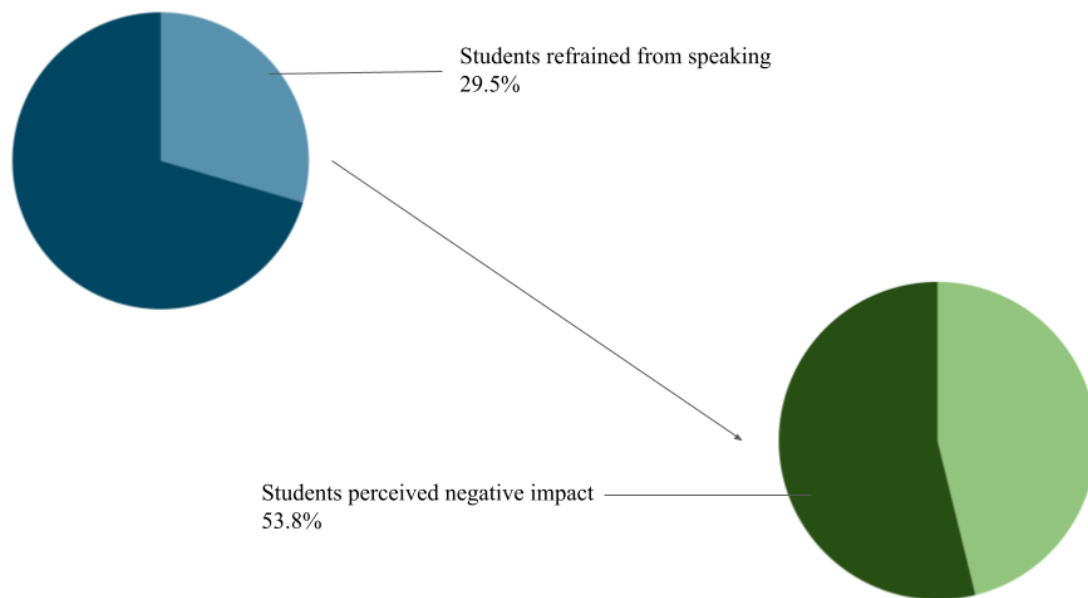


Figure 4: Data Presentation for Questions 8 & 9

Questions 7 to 9 focused on understanding whether language was a manifestation of ethnicity that had an impact in terms of students' sense of belonging and involvement. The results yielded some contradictory but interesting results. Question 7 indicated that the majority (97.7%) felt comfortable using English as the working language in a group setting. However, in reviewing question 8, 13 students (29.6%) believed they refrained from speaking in a group because they felt uncomfortable speaking English. The results for question 9 immediately afterwards show that approximately half (53.8%) of the students who indicated in question 8 that English was a factor which prevented them from expressing their opinions in a group said that it would therefore have a negative impact on their learning opportunities and performance. Meanwhile, of the 13 respondents, 12 were Non-Native English Speakers, 6 of whom identified as Asian, 5 were White and 1 was Arab.

Questions 10 to 14 and 19 explored the role of race and ethnicity and their impact on group work, based on a scenario in which students expressed their views in a group. In terms of the result of questions 10 and 11, for the sake of keeping the consistency of the analysis, the score 0-3 would be the benchmark to be considered as not frequent. This was based on the assumption that “0” means never and “5” means always. Meanwhile, those parts of responses are the focus of the following analysis. The other main purpose of this distinction was to select the students who would be interviewed in the next phase. The participants of the interview were loosely based on the criteria that answered as saying they felt that opinions were expressed rarely or taken into consideration. To be more specific in question 10, 12 respondents (27.3%) believed they did not express opinions frequently and by examining their native language, none of them had English as their first language. Looking at these 12 students’ responses in question 12, 8 which contributed to 66.7%, claimed that language was one of their concerns. When moving to question 11, 14 respondents thought their opinions were not regularly adopted by the group. By combining the results of questions 11 to 13 together, 5 of them which counts to 35.7% feel their race or ethnic identities have an impact on the phenomenon they have encountered.

Table 2: Data Presentation for Questions 13, 14, 19 & 20

	13 Whether your race/ethnicity affects the importance others attach to your views	14 Whether others’ race/ethnicity affects the importance you place on their views	19 Whether race or cultural differences are a hindrance for you in group work	20 Whether you have any negative experiences due to your ethnic background or characteristics
Asian	Yes	Yes		
Asian		Yes	Yes	
Arab			Yes	
European-White			Yes	
Asian	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Asian			Yes	
European-White			Yes	Yes
European-White				Yes
European-White		Yes	Yes	
European-White	Yes		Yes	Yes
European-White	Yes			Yes
European-White	Yes			
European-White				Yes

	13 Whether your race/ethnicity affects the importance others attach to your views	14 Whether others' race/ethnicity affects the importance you place on their views	19 Whether race or cultural differences are a hindrance for you in group work	20 Whether you have any negative experiences due to your ethnic background or characteristics
Black	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Asian	Yes			
Mixed	Yes		Yes	
European-White	Yes	Yes		Yes
European-White			Yes	
Asian			Yes	Yes
European-White			Yes	Yes
Middle-Eastern	Yes		Yes	Yes
European-White			Yes	
Asian	Yes		Yes	
European-White			Yes	Yes
European-White	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Different people have different opinions regarding the topic of race and ethnicity. Throughout the survey (Appendix 1), questions 13, 14 and 19 were 3 questions that set out to uncover this issue. They were set up to explore from different perspectives to find out whether students thought that race or ethnicity played any role for them in the scenario of group work in a more direct way. In addition, question 20 is another relevant and explicit question which gave no scenario to the respondents but an example of subtle racial-based treatment. As shown in Table 2, those who chose “yes” to any of the 4 questions (Table 2) were seen as perceiving the presence of race as an issue in LUSEM. After the statistics were taken, a total of 25 respondents chose “yes” to at least one of the 4 questions. This was interpreted as approximately 56.8% of students perceived race as an issue in their learning and working experience in LUSEM from different perspectives. From this, it can be tentatively concluded that some of the students do consider race to be an issue at LUSEM, but necessarily not all of them could perceive it or think the same.

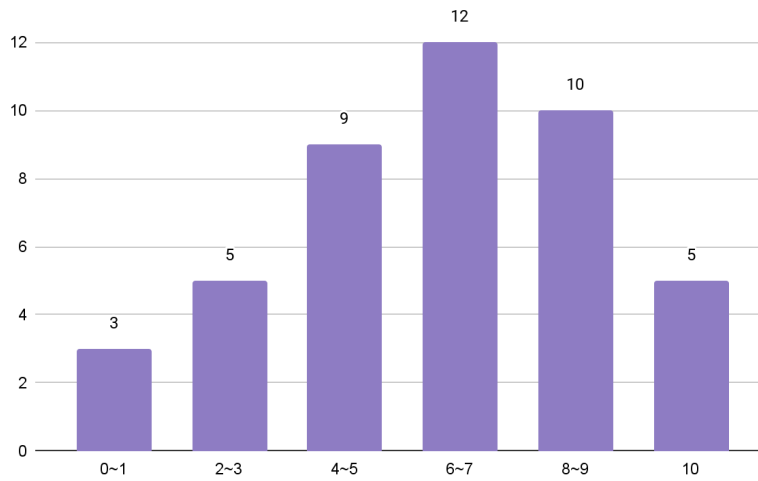


Figure 5: Data Presentation for Question 16

In addition, questions 15 to 18 were designed to address to what extent students perceive LUSEM to be racially inclusive in its management. It was found that half (50%) of the participants felt that the management of LUSEM is related to the inclusiveness they felt (question 15). However, in terms of the extent to which management plays a role in racial inclusion, students' perceptions of this were largely distributed. It should also be noted that one of the responses in the results was "no opinion", which is interpreted as no feeling about LUSEM's management of racial inclusiveness and therefore this response was made equivalent to a score of 0. Question 17 presented a selection of factors that participants felt were relevant to LUSEM's current level of racial inclusiveness. Question 18 showed that 4 people (9.1%) felt that they had been treated differently by their teachers because of their ethnicity. The responses from these 2 questions would be used as topics for interviews and discussed in depth, and therefore would not be dwelt upon too much in the following survey analysis.

4.2 Presentation of interview results

Table 3: Interviewees' perception on if race is a problem at LUSEM

	Identity	Race	Perception on if race is a problem at LUSEM
Interviewee 1	student	Asian	Yes
Interviewee 2	student	Asian	Yes

	Identity	Race	Perception on if race is a problem at LUSEM
Interviewee 3	student	European-White	No (interpretation)
Interviewee 4	student	Middle Eastern	Yes
Interviewee 5	student	Middle Eastern	Yes
Interviewee 6	student	European-White	Yes
Interviewee 7	faculty	European-White	No
Interviewee 8	faculty	European-White	Yes

The study ended up with 8 interviews including 6 students and 2 faculties as shown in Table 3. Among the students, the race was equally distributed with 2 that identified as Asian, 2 as European-Whites and 2 as Middle-Eastern. In terms of the faculties, they were both European Whites which was expected given the School is set in a Scandinavian environment. Furthermore, regarding research question 1, which is about students' perception of race and ethnicity, there were 5 students who answered "yes". Only one student participant, interviewee 3 answered what was interpreted as a "no" based on their justification and tone. Meanwhile, among faculties, this question was also brought up to gather another perspective from the management side and to be used in further interviews with them. One faculty member interviewed said "yes" to identifying racial bias exists at LUSEM and another answered "no" as they stated it would be a surprise if someone expressed being treated differently based on their racial or ethical attributes.

Table 4: Manifestation of subtle racial-based treatment

Manifestation	Description	(From how many students and faculties)
Group Discussion	Not being asked for advice during group discussions, or having their views not considered or even brought up	5 students & 1 faculty
Non-Swedish-Speaking Background (NSSB)	Swedish "bullying": Peers talk and make decisions in	4 students

Manifestation	Description	(From how many students and faculties)
	Swedish both in learning and socialising setting	
Stereotype	Making assumptions about a person's personal characteristics based on their ethnicity	5 students & 1 faculty
Hesitation in Bringing up Issues	When a person experiences vague racial discrimination, he or she will hesitate to express his or her displeasure to peers or teachers	3 students & 1 faculty

In order to answer research question 2, some manifestations were identified and organised as the four aspects shown in Table 4. The right column shows the identity and number of people who have perceived this phenomenon.

Table 5: LUSEM Management Responses

Initiatives	Description	(From how many students and faculties)
Promotion of Diversity	The value of staff in promoting diversity at LUSEM	1 student & 1 faculty
Social Activities	Supporting after-school activities organised by minority students to promote their culture	1 student
“Base Team” in MiM Program	Grouping students from different ethnic and national backgrounds	5 students & 1 faculty
Tutorial and ToL (Teamwork and Leadership) in MiM Program	Provide regular guidance on how to work in an ethnically diverse team	1 student

Table 5 indicates the solutions have been made by Management at LUSEM that were known by students or known by faculties.

5. Analysis & Discussion

5.1 Analysis and Discussion of Survey Results

In terms of the data currently available from the survey, approximately half of the students perceived a variety of issues arising from race and ethnicity.

In response to the two language-related questions, questions 7 and 8, there was a clear gap in participants' perceptions of the role of English as the working language. As shown earlier, this increase in the proportion of discomfort with using English from question 7 to question 8 can be attributed to the spoken language element included in question 8. This was attributed to participants feeling more uncomfortable speaking and expressing themselves in English than they do listening and reading during group work which is supported by Tong (2020). Actively expressing opinions in group discussions is often seen as one of the measures of people's willingness to contribute (Tong, 2020). However, what the aforementioned data presents also reflects the fact that an individual's level of participation in the group is influenced by his or her language proficiency and cultural background, both of which are manifestations of ethnicity as supported by Tong (2020) and Melles (2004). This is also aligned with the data shown before that according to questions 10 and 12, 66.7% of respondents argue language proficiency is influencing their engagement in group work. The resulting misunderstanding could have an impact on other students' perception of an individual's abilities and therefore affect the learning experience and performance as shown in the results of question 9.

And when continuing to look at the results of the combination of questions 11 to 13, it becomes clear that one of the reasons why some participants felt that their expressed views were not considered or endorsed by others in the group was because of their own race. This is actually a form of microaggression that is supported by DeAngelis (2009). However, in order to gather a more visual picture of students' perception of race, as mentioned earlier, 4 explicit questions were set, 3 of which (questions 13, 14 and 19) were based on group discussions. Thus, this was used to uncover whether they were treated differently by others for any racial reason, if there was differential treatment to others because of others' race, or whether they simply perceived race as a hindrance in group work. It was all their direct recognition that the presence of racial differences had a non-positive impact on their learning process. However, this perception is more of an awareness of subtle race-based differences in treatment. As well

as a proportion of respondents indicating that others had criticised them because of their racial identity in question 20. Due to the natural limitations of the survey, it is unlikely to explore more into the experiences behind these participants and thus it is hard to determine whether this feeling was blatant racial discrimination or those microaggressions that came from the unconscious of others. But in general, these people are conscious and aware of the presence of racial issues in LUSEM.

While, when examining the responses to question 20 specifically, European-Whites made up the majority (80%) of the 10 respondents who felt they had had a bad experience because of their ethnic background or characteristics along with 10% Asian and 10% Middle-east. This could be seen as a “tipping point” phenomenon that is also present at LUSEM, meaning that the racially diverse learning environment can already be somewhat of an encroachment on the resources of white students (Grier-Reed et al, 2021). Alternatively, on the other hand, 9 of them are non-Swedes. This could be interpreted as a feeling of native “superiority” from the Swedes, independent of skin colour (Schough, 2008, pp.36-38). Previously it is generally thought that both sides of racial discrimination tended to be dominated by white people and passive by the minority of colour (Chaisson, 2004). Perhaps it is also worth considering how this phenomenon changes in different national contexts. However, in doing this analysis it must not be forgotten that in the overall sample size, whites are significantly more represented than other people of colour.

In addition, students’ experiences of racial diversity and inclusion management at LUSEM, as demonstrated by the previous data, were very varied in the extent to which this was felt. This is aligned with the literature stated previously that one of the implementation challenges of diversity management is that there is no measurement of its effectiveness, and feedback from those being managed, i.e. students, is the most intuitive reference for judging the effectiveness of management policies (OECD, n.d.; Agterberg, 2020).

However, this must not be the most comprehensive result because the scenarios given in this study are limited. Group discussion is not the only scenario in the LUSEM learning process and relying on the survey alone would not have uncovered more perspectives on what people think (Brener, Kann & McManus, 2003). Nevertheless, this survey completed the mission of answering research question 1, that some students do consider race to be an issue in their LUSEM learning process. Considering the randomness of the survey distribution process is

assured, the proportion that over half of the students perceived race as an issue at LUSEM could be indicative and draw needed attention from LUSEM management.

Overall the aim of our research on the methodology of the survey has been achieved as it responded to the fact that some students did consider race to be an issue and is considered to be relevant to the management of LUSEM. Although there is no absolute quantitative advantage, the results, combined with the collection of their background information are random and diverse and can be used as a reference.

5.2 Analysis and Discussion of Interview Results

To determine if subtle racial bias is present in LUSEM and the role of LUSEM management currently and potentially, we used the following criteria: (1) if students were able to retell practical examples of previously witnessed or experienced accounts of subtle racial bias and (2) their ability to describe practical steps taken by LUSEM and their options on how to improve the situation moving forward.

5.2.1 Subtle Racial Discrimination

The students interviewed were culturally and ethnically diverse with varying levels of interest in the topic of race. This contributed to the length of the interview, which ranged widely with the shortest at 6 min and 4 seconds with a student and the longest at 57 min and 21 seconds with a faculty staff member. Participants that had personally experienced racial based bias had longer interviews as they had more experiences to describe and had more thoughts on the matter in general and how they would improve things given their negative experiences. This is also reflected in research done by the Pew Research Center (2021), a survey found that there are high levels of differing interest in race in America depending on the racial groups' experiences with racism. The survey found that 75% of black adults had strong views on the nation's racial history and changes needed to improve it, whereas in comparison 46% of white adults had strong views and felt the need to pay attention to the matter (Pew Research Centre, 2021). The study results also reflected this. Interviewee 3 was the one student that did not answer with a definite "yes" or "no". They responded with "as a white person it is difficult for me to comment on that as a white person however, because I'm white I haven't noticed anything myself". This was interpreted as the respondent not identifying race as a problem present at LUSEM. This was further supported by their statement when asked if they had noticed any differences in behaviour based on racial attributes for others around them to

which they responded with “no, I haven’t noticed anything”. However, the respondent added afterwards that they didn’t believe any variances in behaviour were “related to race but to language barriers”. Comments regarding language were a common thread throughout most of the interviews conducted and their role in creating differences in behaviour amongst other students and between staff and faculty.

Following our review of the interviews we conducted, we came to several conclusions. Overall, there was a general consensus that whilst outward and deliberate racist behaviour in Swedish education is rare (Arneback & Jämte, 2022), subtle racial bias does happen at LUSEM. According to Taylor et al (2020) research, “Despite the growth in access to higher education, the opportunity and experiences of students, faculty, and staff in higher education continue to vary along racial and ethnic lines”. This conclusion was drawn given the majority of students interviewed answered variations of “yes” when asked directly if race is an issue present at LUSEM. This was based on their experiences in which they stated in a matter of fact manner, there is definitely “racism” but it is not expressed “directly” in the setting of LUSEM. This falls in line with Sweden’s society in general as according to the UN, systemic racism occurs and is rising in Sweden.

The participants provided clear examples of several instances of how these behaviours have manifested in LUSEM and to what degree it affects them as individuals. It was noticed that for some, subtle racial behaviours do not necessarily directly impact some students given their particular personality and cultural/ethnic background, but they are still noticed and witnessed. This can be seen in group work where a student feels they are not seen as favourably due to racial factors including cultural stereotypes and language preferences and therefore hesitates or doesn’t feel comfortable speaking and expressing their ideas in fear of negative responses. As such, this places such students at a strong disadvantage not being able to express their ideas to be discussed and tested in a safe and controlled environment designed for students to learn.

A clear manifestation of subtle racial bias is the use of language, which is linked to one’s ethnic profile. In the case of LUSEM, a student’s ability to use English, particularly in their speaking ability played a strong role in how they were perceived and treated which aligns with previous studies conducted (Dafouz & Gray, 2022) This was also reflected in interviewee 7 who as a faculty participant stated he would be “surprised” if students were to

approach them to bring up issues arising from race but have clearly noticed comments circulating around one English language ability and how group members work with the difference in their ability to work in English. According to Said (1993), in the hierarchy of languages, there is a privilege connected to a student that is capable of speaking the English language well which places them at an advantage in comparison to their not-as-strong English speaker peers.

However, in reviewing the interview for interviewee number 4 who identified as ethnically middle eastern but spoke native level English that was reflected in the fluent, well thought out and articulate responses given, language is not necessarily the only issue driving variances in behaviour. This individual was able to very articulately provide clear examples of their previous racial biases experiences and how this affected their experience both socially and academically at LUSEM. An example that they brought up was the variances due to race/ethnicity felt in student societies where it was felt other society members were “not taking me seriously because I was an international student and expected to leave”. Racial bias towards non-caucasian students in Western higher education is a widely studied phenomenon that has been shown to arise from generalisations made towards them that cannot be proven (Moosavi, 2022).

Most interviewees brought up the stronger prevalence of subtle racial bias in social and group work settings. In group situations, the lack of mutual respect for group members becomes more pronounced (Tasca, 2021). Whilst other respondents also did not feel the effects of racial bias personally as interviewee 7 responded with “only positively” when asked about their experiences working together with international group members and when introducing themselves as a culturally and ethnically Swedish individual, they responded as having witnessed racially biased behaviour at LUSEM. The barrier of not speaking Swedish acts as a barrier to group discussions in both these settings despite all master programs being taught and conducted in English. There are natural advantages to speaking the native language in which one is located and in this case, given the study is based in Sweden, Swedish (Leverage Edu, 2019). Interviewee 6, described race and ethnicity as a major contributing factor in how individuals “talk to one another, or are prone to talk to one another”. This was interpreted as unintentional racial behaviour, that leads to feelings of isolation from those not included due to the language barrier that was not made clear when starting an English-based programme (Leverage Edu, 2019).

Once the respondent gave a response to their perspective on if race is an issue at LUSEM, the interview questions focused on assessing how they manifested in the individual's experiences. This differed greatly depending on how the individual responded to the same biases as others. For example, interviewees 1, 4 and 5 brought up not speaking Swedish as a deterrent to fitting in both socially and in an academic environment. But when questioned about its impact, interviewee 5 responded stated it was an accepted part of the school and did not imply it was an issue that needed to be addressed. In contrast, when responding with the same concept that the use of Swedish amongst domestic students is isolating to internationals, they also followed up how they believe this needed to be changed, "should make compulsory for all school-related activities to be conducted in English".

Another general consensus among participants was that they believed most racial-based bias behaviour felt or witnessed was in most cases done unintentionally and not deliberately by both other students and teachers. This is supported by the United Nations (2022) which points out in previous studies conducted, these subtle racial-based prejudices materialise in Swedish society in the form of being excluded from career and education opportunities, media and public services.

Previous research has shown that in many cases school management is unclear on how to address racial-based issues (Arneback & Englund, 2020). Without this knowledge, those with administrative power to create change are unable to act given the uncertainty of what the problem is and thus how to invoke action to resolve it (Arneback & Jämte, 2022). In interviewing a member of faculties that oversees the administrative side of the school including having exposure to the immigration side with international students as the one writing letters for students to obtain visas, there was a clear admission that racial behaviours are a much larger problem than just within the school. The school is a reflection of Sweden's current and historic political state. The last decade in Sweden has seen the presence of right-wing parties that have advocated for the tightening of immigration. With these developments, the presence of racial-based intolerance and structural discrimination of ethnic minorities has followed (Manga & Rosales 2017). These societal changes have been proven by research to be reflected in the Swedish education system in various manifestations (Jämte, 2012; León Rosales, 2010).

5.2.2 Diversity and Inclusion Management

The role of LUSEM management was also examined to define their current role in dealing with the issue. It was noticed that some participants could identify and articulate actions taken by the School such as after-school social activities held by minority groups supported by LUSEM. This is a form of the intersectional utilisation of diversity and inclusion (Aranka et al, 2021) since it embraces culture from other races. However, interviewee 2 said, “This is good but there could be more”. This student points out that cultural communication activities like this could be encouraged more since there were only a handful of such events in one of their academic years. This is actually part of race education, as knowing someone’s cultural background also helps to reduce stereotypes.

Another well-perceived solution conducted by Management at LUSEM was creating compulsory group work with culturally/ethnically diverse individuals to improve relationships between students of different cultures/ethnicities. However, a majority noted, more could be done through administrative processes. In Swedish educational settings, schools have primarily focused on directly responding to racial-based behaviours with students instead of implementing formal, structural-based approaches (Arneback & Quennerstedt, 2016). To be more specific, the setting of a “base team” in one of the programs at LUSEM that allows students of different ethnicities from different countries and cultural backgrounds to work together in teams for a year was also discussed by the interviewees as an effective method for students to get access to various cultures and improve understanding of diversity. However, interviewees also indicated that such diversity management initiatives had both positive and negative impacts on their learning. This also coincides with the two sides of racial diversity (Brown, 2020; Phillips, 2014; Roska et al, 2017). It is also argued that it is not the best way for racial inclusiveness since diversity is confined to the team and working with the same group of people for a long period of time is not an opinion that is conducive to wider racial inclusion. Further, some subtle racial-based treatment as revealed and discussed above also affected their learning journey. This requires management to be more knowledgeable about ethnic diversity, to understand its negative impact and to respond to it when implementing initiatives.

In addition, the students interviewed generally believe the dissemination of diversity's positive impact from teachers improved their awareness of embracing and including racial diversity at school. This is aligned with what Leišytė, Deem and Tzanakou (2021) argue that students and faculties are the main subjects in racial diversity management in universities. Diversity education similar to this is what was specifically perceived by one student from the program which has a regular tutorial and ToL as guidance for improving their teamwork in a racially diverse team. These are all strong measures implemented by management to promote the inclusiveness of ethnic diversity. It is worth noting that not all of the interviewees were from that programme and similar initiatives do not seem to be present in the learning experiences of students from other LUSEM programmes. Similar sessions could be used in a wider range of contexts and in a broader context.

At the same time, the hesitation to express their mistreatment contributed by race attributes that students mentioned in the manifestation was in line with the argument from Offermann et al (2014). This can certainly cause problems for the student's learning experience, as one of the students interviewed expressed that "I would be a little bit unconfident" when their opinions were not recognised or even discussed by the group, which is in line with the phenomenon mentioned by Lusanda (2021). This also requires the management to work on obtaining students' perceptions of mistreatment based on racial issues as Resch (2023) suggests.

6. Conclusion

In this study, we sought to identify if subtle racial bias is perceived at LUSEM and to determine in what ways they were seen and experienced. Once known, the study wanted to know if the management at LUSEM played a role in mitigating found issues and how they could improve moving forward. These concepts were examined through our poised research questions, in which we used a combination of the results from our survey and interviews to answer. We aim to use the outcome of our research to improve the welfare and experience for international students at LUSEM and for the school to continue growing as an internationally diverse environment in which students can benefit from the differences in cultures and perspectives. It would also be meaningful if the outcome of our study could give any insights into Swedish higher education in general.

By using a combination of a survey and the interviews with the students and faculty at LUSEM, we were able to answer the poised research questions.

1. Do students feel race is a problem at LUSEM?
2. If so, in what form do subtle racial manifestations/forms take at LUSEM?
3. If so, what has management at LUSEM done previously and currently about racial biases?

Based on our data collection and academic research, whilst outward racism is rare in Swedish Universities and LUSEM, subtle racial-based behaviours that are harder to distinguish do occur. Given we were not able to use the school's administrative system to send the survey to the entire cohort at LUSEM, the survey was presented on as many social platforms within our capability to increase the number of participants. Empirical data from both the survey and interviews were gathered and analysed through various methods to achieve our set research goals. The following tools were used to help with the analysis of collected data. Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the connections between applied theories and the study outcomes.

The outcome of this study has shown that whilst outward racism is very rare, subtle racial bias is prevalent and to decrease it at LUSEM in Sweden, more awareness needs to be brought to the issues. This allows for the identification of its manifestations and in turn possible resolutions. Through formal policy changes such as the implementation of introductory lectures to Swedish students on how their behaviours can be perceived as

exclusionary and ensuring all school activities are carried out in English, subtle racial behaviours can be lessened gradually. However, external factors to LUSEM also play a strong role. These behaviours are embedded into Swedish society and there are limitations in what the school alone can achieve.

The limitation of management in dealing with racial bias is that it is a structured method of action that is aiming to deal with a social and illogical aspect of education. There is an inherent bias that comes with trusting those with similar backgrounds and speaking one's native language. Whilst management can aid the process by implementing mechanisms to foster the growth of stronger relationships between students with different backgrounds, ultimately such relationships cannot be enforced and take time and effort on the student's behalf.

7. Recommendations

Based on a combination of the research conducted and the data collected and analysed for the study, the following recommendations have been made to improve the manifestations of subtle racial discrimination at LUSEM. Some recommendations are based on already implemented policies with slight changes made to enhance their effectiveness.

To offer valuable suggestions to the management at LUSEM, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms by which they operate. Formal roles held by the management team are the Dean, the Deputy dean, two associate vice deans and the head of the dean's office. The responsibility of the school and its strategic direction is distributed amongst these positions with the official role of the Dean holding the majority of the implementation of the school's strategic direction. They also hold responsibility for the fostering of relationships between the school and business and society relations. Another major component for which the dean holds responsibility and plays a major factor in the school environment for students is staffing appointments, financial expenditures and administration and infrastructure costs. These responsibilities are distributed amongst the management team and also supported by heads of departments and various research centres in Sweden's senior management council (LUSEM website f)

Whilst the programmes at the master level are taught in English, spoken Swedish between domestic students still acts as a major deterrent for internationals in academic and social settings to feel included and contribute strongly to feelings of isolation. As such, it would be beneficial for all social activities organised by the school to be conducted in English and for this to be compulsory and enforced. If not, this should be communicated to international students before they arrive so that they are aware that whilst lessons are conducted in English, many social activities are conducted in Swedish so that they are aware and not caught by surprise. To do so there needs to be an acknowledgement from LUSEM of racial prejudice behaviour that occurs and an understanding of how they are manifested on a daily basis. From this, the issues can be addressed by holding lectures for domestic students before international students arrive to promote and encourage Swedish students to interact socially with international students. This is aligned with the race education suggested by Adhikari-Sacré and Rutten (2021). Small changes such as the use of diverse international

case studies would positively reframe diversity in improving perspectives and ideas generated.

The building of these social relationships would act as a bridge to stronger relationships in academic group settings. A flow-on effect would be increased psychological safety in the LUSEM environment to allow students to feel more comfortable speaking up in an internationally diverse group setting without the fear of judgement and being grouped into predetermined racial/ethnic stereotypes that arise. In these lectures, students can be taught what racial-based behaviours are not acceptable and made clear what the consequences are if these behaviours are reported. A part of these lectures would be informing students of the structures in place to report and handle racial-based biases and what are the possible outcomes. This clarity would seek to remove the fear of students coming forward with issues that would be overlooked from the uncertainty around how things would proceed once racial-based issues are brought up. Another method identified is the use of surveys to ask students anonymously at the end of courses what their thoughts were on racial-based matters and if it was experienced or witnessed in the course (Resch, 2023). This could be helpful in informing the management how effectively the initiatives were taken to deal with the subtle racial issues (Agterberg, 2020). In addition, regarding the structure of management at LUSEM mentioned above, some initiatives based on organisational structure could be considered such as gathering data about diversity and discrimination departmentally and then aggregating them to the university as suggested by McGuire and LeMaster (2013). This would improve top-down management by increasing the acknowledgement of subtle racial-based bias from a down-top perspective.

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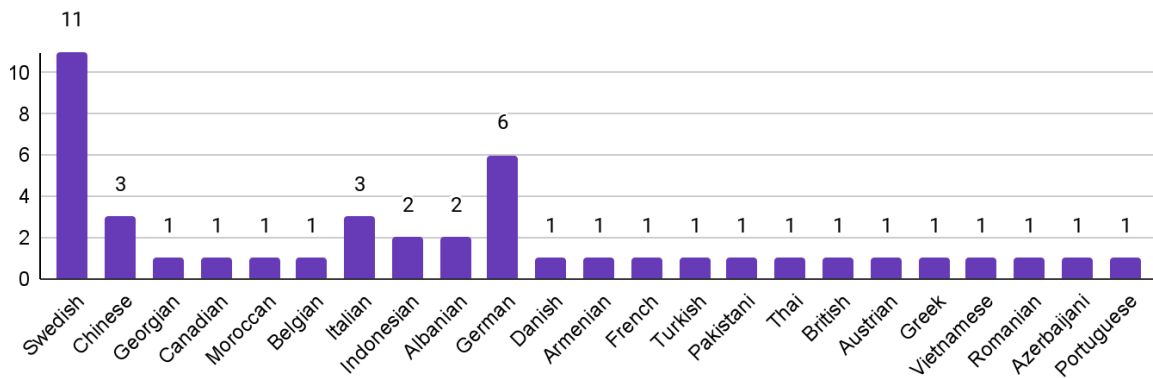
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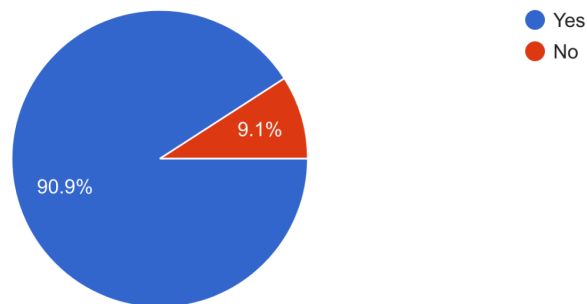
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Appendix 1: Survey Questions & Raw Data

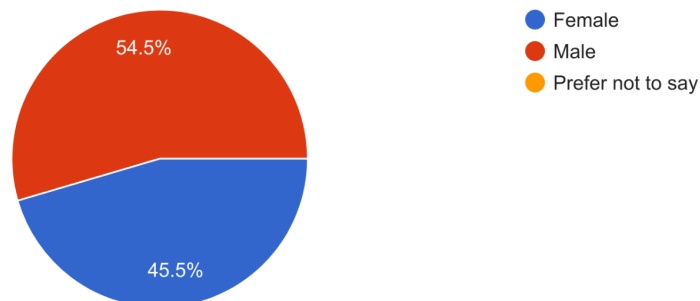
1. What is your nationality?
44 responses



2. Are you currently a Master's student at Lund University School of Economics and Management (LUSEM)?
44 responses

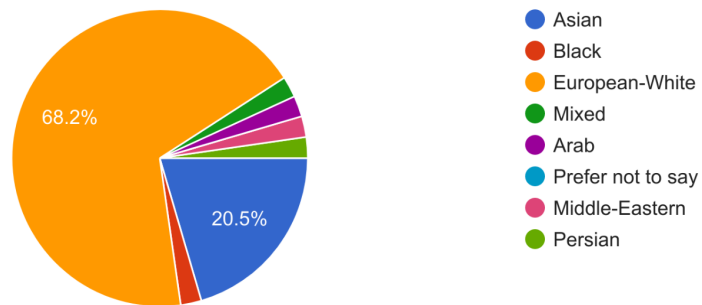


3. What is your gender?
44 responses



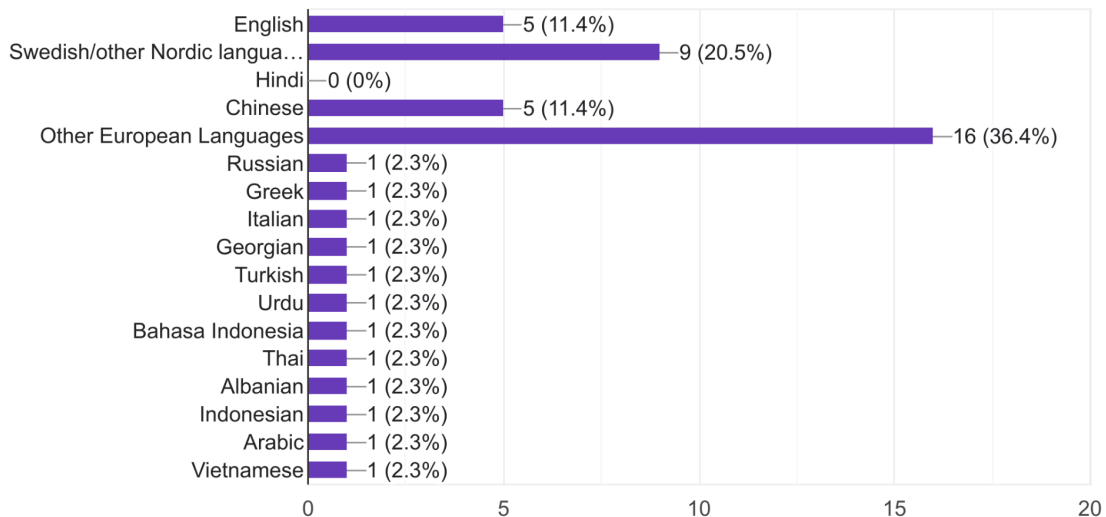
4. I will describe my race/ethnicity as

44 responses



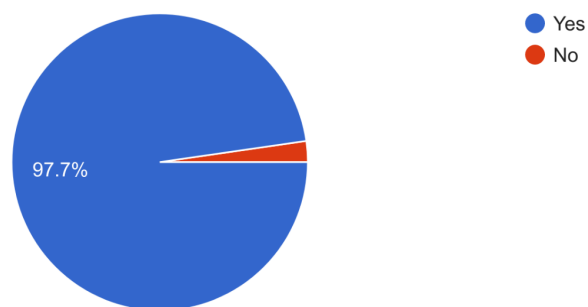
5. What is your native language?

44 responses



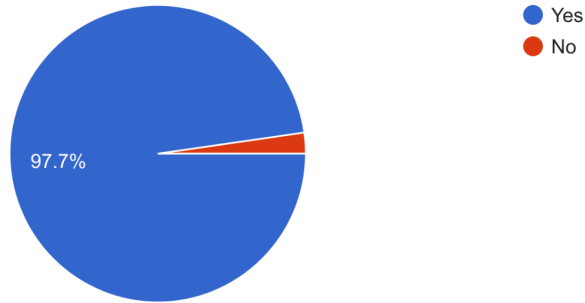
6. Do you have experience doing teamwork with people from other races/ethnicities?

44 responses



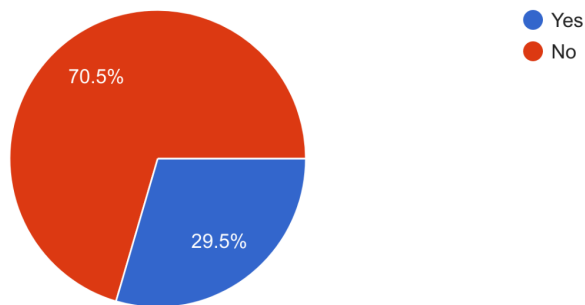
7. Do you feel comfortable contributing to group discussions with the working language (English) in team/group work situations?

44 responses



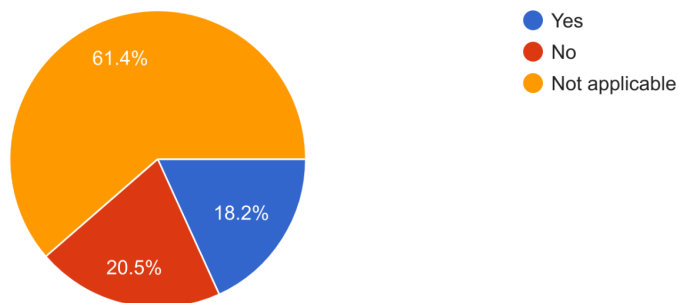
8. Have you ever refrained from speaking in a group setting because you were uncomfortable speaking English?

44 responses



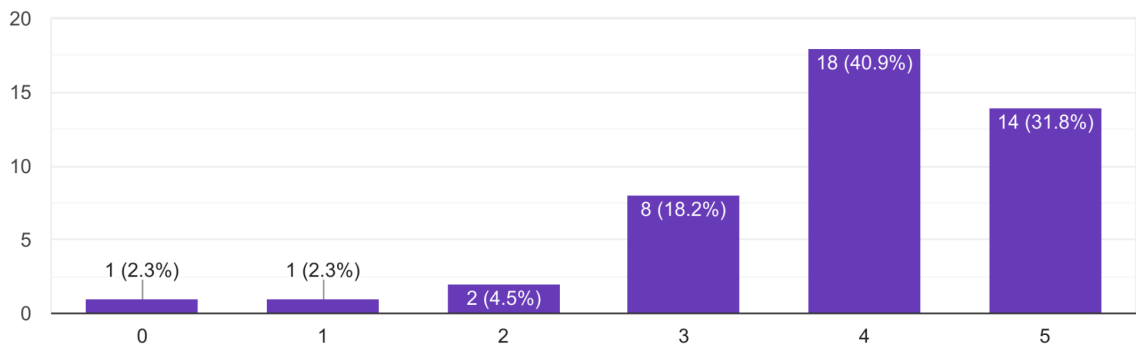
9. If so, do you think this has negatively impacted your learning opportunities or work performance?

44 responses



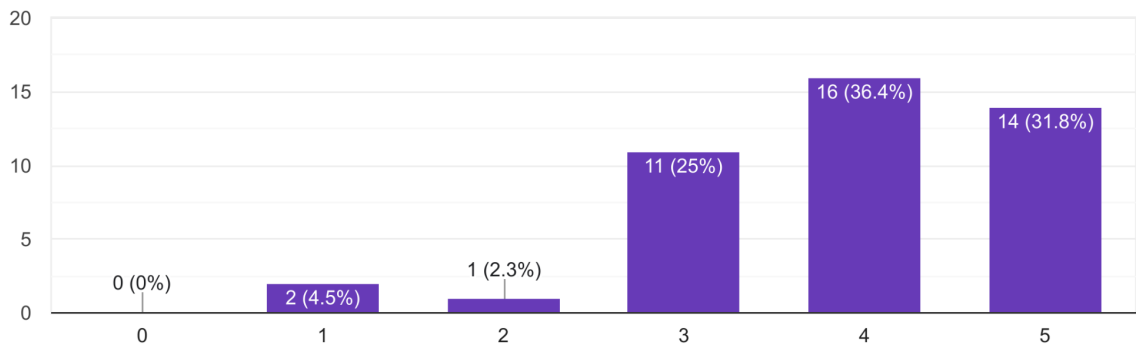
10. In general, how often do you express your opinion in class-based groupwork?

44 responses



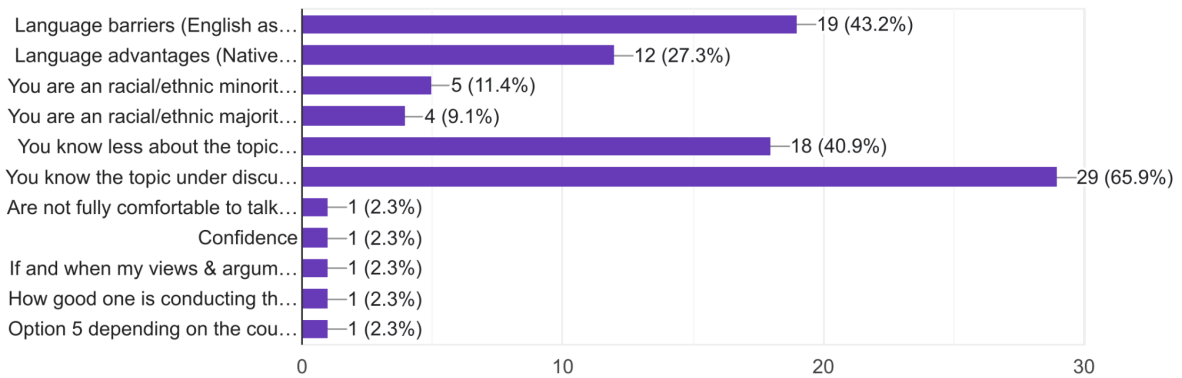
11. If you think you have come up with a good idea, how often do you think it is taken forward by the group?

44 responses



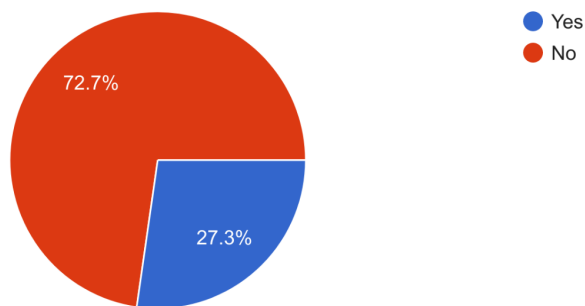
12. What do you think are the factors that influence the extent to which others consider your views?
Tick all that apply.

44 responses



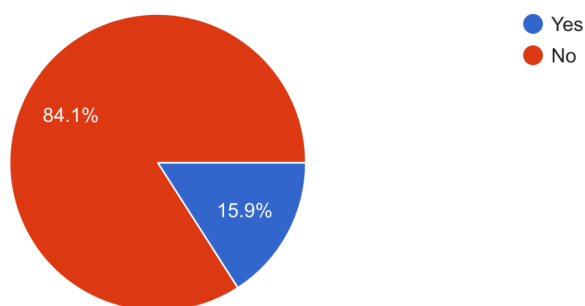
13. Do you feel that your race/ethnicity affects how much importance others attach to your views?

44 responses

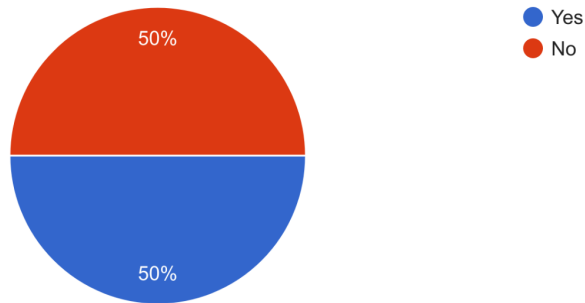


14. Do you feel that other people's race/ethnicity affects how much importance you place on their views?

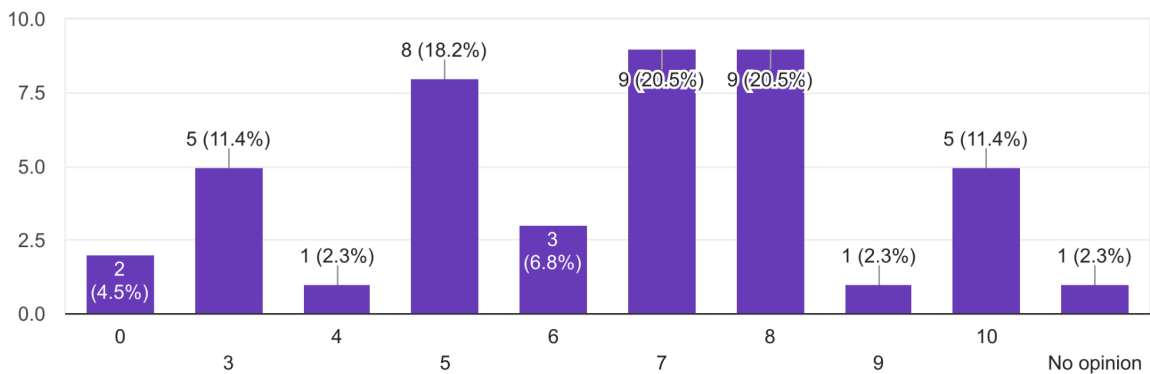
44 responses



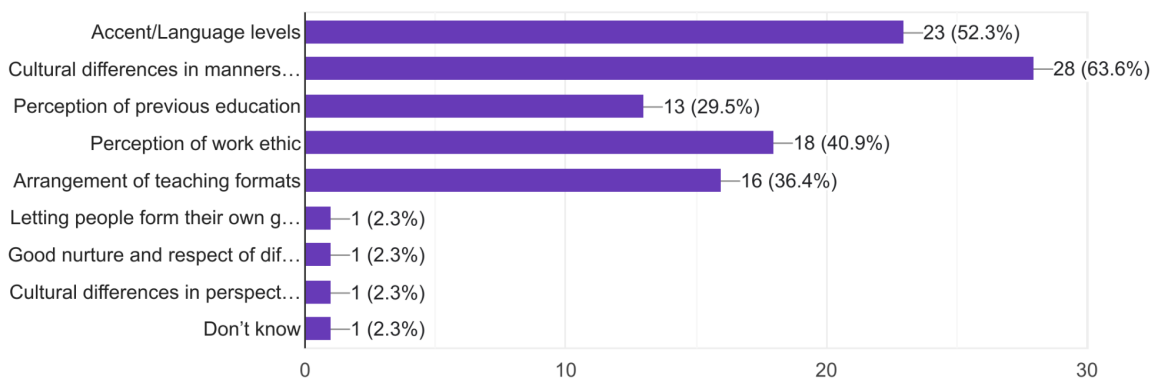
15. Do you think that the inclusiveness of the discussions in the group a consequence of the management of LUSEM (the management of curricul...les, the arrangement of group membership, etc.)
44 responses



16. To what extent do you think the management at LUSEM (your programme directors and administrative faculties) plays a role in racial inclusiveness? Please score from 0 (none) to 10 (a lot)
44 responses

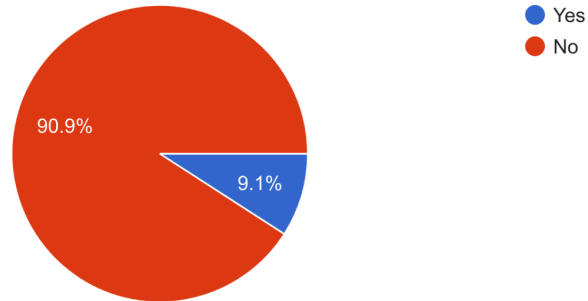


17. What do you believe are the contributing factors to the present level of inclusiveness at LUSEM?
44 responses



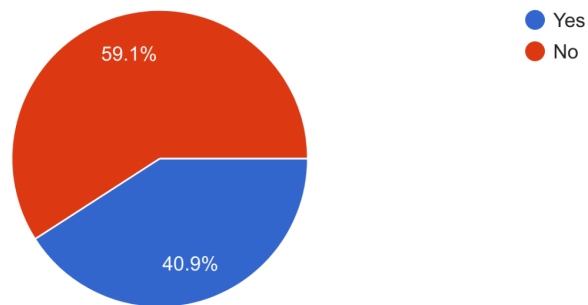
18. Have you at any point felt differences in perception/treatment from teachers based on your ethnicity?

44 responses



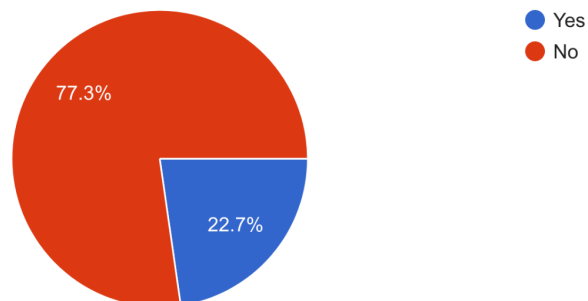
19. Have you ever thought about race and cultural differences as a hinderance in a group work setting?

44 responses



20. Have you ever felt judged/made uncomfortable based on your racial background or elements of your ethnicity, eg: accent when speaking English

44 responses



Appendix 2: Interview Questions

	Questions for Students	Questions for Teachers
<p>Subtle Racial Discrimination</p> <p>- Answer research question 1</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you witnessed differences in behaviour based on racial attributes at LUSEM? 2. Have you experienced differences in behaviour based on your racial attributes at LUSEM? 3. If so, please explain your most prevalent experience with this and what racial attributes (cultural practices/behaviours, accent), you contributed to this behaviour. 4. How would you say the racial-based treatment you received plays a role in (effects) your experiences at LUSEM? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning experience - Social (activities) experience 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you had students approach you about treatment that they faced because of their racial background? 2. If so, which would you consider as the subtle racial-based treatment between students? 3. Have you witnessed subtle racial-based treatment between students (working in internationally diverse groups)?
<p>Subtle Racial Discrimination and Management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think the management at LUSEM has taken any action to resolve your 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think management at LUSEM plays a role in handling the subtle racial-based

<p>at LUSEM</p> <p>- Answer research questions 2</p>	<p>encounter?</p> <p>2. What initiatives do you think the management at LUSEM has implemented to address the previous and current phenomenon of subtle racial-based treatment of students?</p> <p>3. What do you think about the effectiveness of the implemented initiatives?</p> <p>4. Do you know any current measures in place to ensure racial-based treatment does not occur?</p> <p>5. Please give some suggestions about what the management at LUSEM can take action in order to address the existing and potential subtle racial-based treatment of students.</p>	<p>treatment of students?</p> <p>2. If so, what do you think is the role of management at LUSEM in handling subtle racial-based treatment of students?</p> <p>3. What initiatives has the management at LUSEM implemented to address the previous and current phenomenon of subtle racial-based treatment of students?</p> <p>4. Based on what LUSEM management has done about handling subtle racial-based treatment, how do you believe this has been received by the students at LUSEM?</p> <p>5. What are the current measures in place to ensure racial-based treatment does not occur?</p> <p>6. Is there any mechanism in the management of LUSEM to measure or monitor whether students are subject to subtle racial discrimination?</p> <p>7. What do you think</p>
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		management at LUSEM can do in the future to further address the subtle racial-based treatment of students?
<p>Racial Diversity and Inclusion Management at LUSEM</p> <p>- Answer research questions 2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What methods have you seen the management at LUSEM apply to promote racial diversity and inclusion? 2. What methods do you think the management at LUSEM could apply in the future to promote racial diversity and inclusion for students? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What practical actions have been taken by LUSEM to promote a racial-diverse and inclusive learning environment? 2. Based on efforts to promote racial diversity and inclusion, how have you perceived to be the response from students surrounding this? 3. In the future, what actions does the management at LUSEM plan on undertaking to ensure the continual promotion of a racial-diverse and inclusive learning community?