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Culturally Responsive Curriculum Implementation of Middle School Principals in Southern Texas

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Abstract

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MEd, University of the West Indies, 2005

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Although culturally responsive curricula are designed to educate students to be both socially and culturally successful, the curriculum implementation leadership practices middle school principals have used to support such curricula have been unclear. This study explored how middle school principals in southern Texas were supporting their teachers with implementing a culturally responsive curriculum in their schools. This basic qualitative study employed the applied critical leadership conceptual framework to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas. The criteria for the selection of participants were 2 to 5 years' experience as a principal in a middle school managing a school in grades 6, 7 and/or 8 with a population between 300 and 1,200 students and a self-reported minority presence. Data were collected through interviews with 10 purposively selected middle school principals recruited from LinkedIn. Data analysis included the identification of emergent codes, categories, and themes. Findings revealed that these principals build collaboration within their schools to promote cultural appreciation and belongingness to meet the diverse needs of their students who were experiencing challenges. Results indicated that principals reported being proactive and adopting restorative approaches in addressing race and social injustice issues. They reported implementing culturally responsive curriculum leadership practices in nonstandard ways based on situational responses. These results are valuable for educational policymakers to plan how to standardize culturally responsive practices for diverse environments in the more positive social integration of immigrants into the wider society.

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Dedication

To my mother, Elsie Henderson, and my grandson, Raihan Narine.

“If you do not enjoy what you do, don’t do it”

Acknowledgments

The successful completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without a very supportive committee. My Chair, Dr. D. Jones, you are remarkable at giving support, timely feedback, and guidance with a calm demeanor. Dr. P. Dawidowicz, having you as my methodologist with your wealth of knowledge was an honor on my doctoral journey. Dr. M. Robb, my URR, you charted the pathway for this study. My heartfelt gratitude to the principals whose participation was integral to conduct this study.

I thank my closest friend, biggest critic, and soul mate, my husband Dr. Ganesh Narine, who walked this journey with me. I am grateful to my son, Vivian, and his wife, Siddiqa, for their support and bringing the greatest gift, my grandson, Raihan, who provided the inspiration to complete this study. A special thank you to Varna and Lakshmi (Tara) Singh for being there and believing in me.

It is indeed disheartening to know that my biggest fan, my mom, Elsie Henderson is bedridden with Alzheimer's and is unaware of this success, which was her life plan for me. To my father, Gabriel Henderson, surpassing you was my life's goal. My sisters, Jennifer and Annmarie, I appreciate your prayers and taking care of mama as I pursued my doctoral studies. Annie, despite your physical challenges, your resilience and selflessness reminded me not to give up. I cannot forget the community and extended family members who believed in me along my educational journey in Trinidad and Tobago. You confirmed my belief that it takes a village to raise a child. Finally, I thank all the educators in Trinidad and Canada who touched my career at some point.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The problem addressed in this study was that middle school principals in the United States may not be effectively supporting their teachers with implementing a culturally responsive curriculum. The issue is not unique to the United States but is mirrored internationally in countries that reflect a diverse demographic outlook. Khalifa et al. (2016) posited that it is necessary to promote the culturally responsive school leadership behaviors of principals and assistant principals to positively influence instruction and student learning. Faas et al. (2018), in their interviews with principals in Ireland, revealed that culturally responsive pedagogical practices symbolize school ethos in student-teacher interactions, students' preconceptions, values, and goals as a vital part of positive school multicultural environments. Furthermore, DeMatthews (2016) and Dumas and Nelson (2016) concluded that Black and Hispanic middle school children tended to give disciplinary problems and experienced low achievement because of the limited inclusion of culturally relevant experiences in the classroom. According to the Texas Education Code (2020), principals are legally responsible for instructional guidance in their schools.

Although some principals have implemented a culturally responsive curriculum in the United States, others are likely not using these practices. Wang and Degol (2016) highlighted the use of whole school programs such as school climate while Kraft et al. (2018) and Stosich (2018) posited the benefits of in-school coaching, which allows principals to better manage instruction by integrating the external policies with their school’s priorities to create internal school coherence and build capacity in their schools.

Owens (2018) highlighted that districts such as Tucson, Arizona include Mexican American Studies (MAS) as part of their curriculum, but it was fraught with controversy, which led to its revocation in 2010 and made it illegal. Meanwhile, Sawchuk (2018) revealed that MAS became law in Houston, Texas, in 2018.

Despite various initiatives, scholars such as Khalifa et al. (2016), Murakami et al. (2017), Santamaría and Santamaría (2015, 2016), and Scanlan et al. (2016) concurred that further research is necessary to examine whether principals are implementing a culturally responsive curriculum. Because Texas exemplifies a diverse American state, the conduct of a study in Texas was feasible. There have been limited studies done in southern Texas to examine how middle school principals are implementing a culturally responsive curriculum that teachers deliver to the increasingly diverse population of Blacks and Hispanics within the school environment. In the few available studies, researchers such as Keehne et al. (2018) and Milner (2016) indicated that there was a problem with culturally responsive leadership practices in middle schools in southern Texas. The specific problem was that middle school principals in southern Texas were likely not implementing a culturally responsive curriculum.

The findings of this study are critical for educational policymakers to plan for a culturally different school environment that can promote positive social change. The outcomes are relevant for the recruitment and training of principals in their leadership roles (see Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015). The conclusions of Santamaría and Santamaría (2015) have informed other stakeholders such as parents and the wider community of the extent of the implementation of a culturally responsive curriculum in

schools. Carey et al. (2017) recommended that further research on a culturally responsive curriculum could have positive social implications, which might resonate in an increase in social integration and a decrease in intersectionality. Carey et al. proffered that it is necessary to develop a cultural and linguistic interconnection among the school environment, home, and the community. This chapter includes the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, the research questions followed by the conceptual framework, the nature of the study, relevant definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance.

Background

The focus on culturally responsive leadership practices in schools is not new to researchers in education. Several studies, such as Keehne et al. (2018), Milner (2016), and Santamaría and Santamaría (2015), have addressed culturally responsive practices in elementary and high schools and have highlighted the need for more research primarily on the implementation of the curriculum. Information about middle schools was limited, especially in the diverse area of southern Texas. In their qualitative study, Roberts and Guerra (2016) revealed that principals in Texan schools were ill-prepared to implement culturally responsive practices. Scholars have emphasized that a culturally responsive curriculum is necessary because of the increasing diverse population in schools (Santamaría, 2009).

The presence of English language learners (ELL) in schools means that the principal as an instructional leader needs to guide teachers on how to deliver a culturally responsive curriculum (Texas Education Code, 2020). Crawford and Fuller (2017)

concurred that Texas represents the largest diverse population in the United States and has similar educational legislation and school reform challenges as other states. In light of this, researchers such as Kennedy et al. (2016) investigated the needs of immigrant ELLs in their synthesis of 133 articles on cultural responsiveness in middle schools. Kennedy et al. proffered that principals need to connect the school with the community to address their instructional leadership challenges. Aronson and Laughter (2016) believed that as a result of the ELL population and other challenges among minority and diverse groups in schools, principals need to promote inclusion and equity. Aronson and Laughter highlighted the need to examine the culturally responsive leadership practices of principals and posited that they should include the experiences of all learners in the school curriculum.

Researchers have found that principals as instructional leaders should display culturally responsive behaviors in the implementation of their leadership practices. In their synthesis of 37 articles from academic journals and eight books, Khalifa et al. (2016) posited that culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) is essential for inclusion and equity, but, as a topic, it is under-researched. They concluded that CRSL behaviors center around inclusion, equity, advocacy, and social justice. Santamaría (2009) conceded that these CRSL behaviors, transformative leadership, and servant leadership are crucial for teachers to deliver a culturally relevant curriculum.

Moreover, when principals are limited in their instructional guidance of teachers who deliver the curriculum, adverse cultural and linguistic challenges are experienced by diverse learners (Minkos et al., 2017). Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) and Minkos et al.

(2017) posited that in the United States, there is a diversity issue with increasing ethnic, cultural, racial, and linguistic effects on learners. Linan-Thompson et al., in their qualitative exploratory study, observed teachers in multilingual classrooms in the United States and indicated that the integration of culturally and linguistically responsive practices are critical for positive academic outcomes. Minkos et al., in their exploratory study, accentuated that school leaders could apply the U.S. national policy on professional standards to reflect culturally responsive leadership practices that embrace culturally linguistically diverse learners. Linan-Thompson et al. and Minkos et al. found relevance in the inclusion of the learners' cultural experiences within the school curriculum.

Furthermore, in a qualitative case study, Santamaría (2014) employed the critical race theory and applied critical leadership framework by interviewing six non-White participants in Southern California. Santamaría acknowledged the use of implicit and explicit culturally relevant leadership practices and strategies by research participants. Santamaría and Santamaría (2016), in their synthesis, revealed that the demographic shifts in the United States have contributed to increased diversity and that change requires educational leadership to become culturally responsive and to sustain that focus. Similarly, Faas et al. (2018), in their qualitative study, completed nine interviews with three principals and six teachers on the role of ethos and leadership in Ireland. They proffered that school ethos is crucial when developing a positive multicultural school environment. Santamaría and Santamaría (2016) and Faas et al. used the interview process, which I adopted as a data collection method. Their expertise in the qualitative

approach with a focus on the interview methodology was a valuable template for my study.

To further emphasize the relevance of delivering a culturally responsive curriculum, Khalifa (2018) explored minority students in urban Michigan by doing a single case study of a principal in a school with a large, diverse population. Khalifa concluded that it is essential that teachers include the unique community cultural differences in the delivery of the curriculum. Khalifa's findings were similar to Minkos et al. (2017) that leaders need to embrace inclusive strategies to align school programs with the state policies that support the involvement and influence of a wider community. Principals retain the responsibility for adoption of the mandatory school curriculum, to employ their instructional leadership practices, and to plan and guide teachers on the inclusion of diverse learners.

In separate and distinct studies, Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) and Minkos et al. (2017) agreed that principals who employ culturally linguistic practices in evidence-based instruction use relational methods that build trust and respect between teachers and students. To guide culturally responsive instruction, Carey et al. (2017) and Keehne et al. (2018) emphasized that it is necessary that educators maintain close connections with the community to access information and to implement culturally responsive instruction. Furthermore, Knight-Manuel et al. (2019) indicated that principals and teachers must have a culturally relevant shared vision and embrace conversations on cultural identity, academic proficiency, and community advocacy. Linan-Thompson et al., Keehne et al., Knight-Manuel et al., and Minkos et al. revealed the crucial role of principals as

instructional guides in their schools and that they should collaborate with stakeholders to achieve a culturally responsive curriculum.

In southern Texas, information about the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in middle schools was limited (Milner, 2016; Taylor, 2010). Scholars have recommended that more research is necessary on instructional leadership and that it is necessary to guide teachers in cross-cultural, multicultural, multilingual, and diverse educational contexts for improved students' outcomes (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Murakami et al., 2017; Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015; Scanlan et al., 2016). This study helps fill the gap on how principals in Southern Texas use their instructional leadership to guide and assist a culturally responsive curriculum in their schools.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study was that middle school principals in southern Texas may not be effectively supporting their teachers with implementing a culturally responsive curriculum in their schools. Principals in Texas are legally responsible for providing instructional leadership to their campuses by implementing specific educational curricula planning objectives. As a result of the increasing diverse learners in schools, researchers such as Keehne et al. (2018), Roberts and Guerra (2016), and Santamaría and Santamaría (2015) have posited that a culturally responsive curriculum is necessary for these learners who have unique cultural experiences. In addition, Guo-Brennan and Guo-Brennan (2018) and Khalifa et al. (2016) highlighted that the migration of individuals across borders has resulted in diverse populations in countries such as

Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Against this background, Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) and Minkos et al. (2017) revealed that globally Black and Hispanic immigrant ELL face cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical alienation in the classroom. Santamaría and Santamaría (2016) also documented the need for more information on how leaders were modifying curriculum implementation in schools to promote culturally responsive practices, which might alleviate the challenges of indiscipline and low academic achievement.

The findings from several studies have revealed that diverse learners are not socially integrated into the wider society (Carey et al., 2017; Khalifa el., 2016; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018). They highlighted that there is the possibility that educational leaders are not planning for the needs of ELL, who are often misunderstood by their teachers and do not understand the curriculum, which teachers delivered in English. Carey et al. (2017) proffered that because schools represent the mainstream to the wider society, it is necessary for curriculum implementation to reflect social integration in the classroom. Moreover, Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) concluded that the practice of intersectionality and exclusionary practices creates ethnic and cultural divisiveness, which extends from the school into the society where inevitably minority individuals face difficulties with social integration. To realize social integration in the classroom, Khalifa et al. (2016) found that teachers depend on their principals to direct the pathway to relevant professional development to promote the culturally relevant pedagogical strategies needed to guide diverse learners. These authors concurred that culturally

responsive instructional leadership practices in schools promote social integration and are critical for the elimination of intersectionality and exclusionary procedures.

Although there is a diverse demographic outlook in schools, some principals in the United States may not be implementing culturally responsive curriculum leadership practices that are crucial for the social inclusion and integration of the culturally different learners (Seto & Sarros, 2016). Easton-Brooks et al. (2018) revealed that the population specific to schools in southern Texas mirrors the diverse society, typical of other states. Therefore, the conclusions of Abacioglu et al. (2019) and Castillo and Maniss (2018) are relevant in proffering that principals should tailor their school-based curriculum to include plans for inclusion, multiculturalism, and social integration of students. The emphasis of these researchers was that the diverse educational environment in the United States demands culturally responsive instructional guidance to socially integrate and include all learners.

The limited inclusion of culturally relevant practices in the implementation of the curriculum for Black and Hispanic middle school children has caused them to exhibit disciplinary type problems and experience low academic achievement (DeMatthews, 2016; Dumas & Nelson, 2016). Furthermore, Johnson et al. (2016), in their report on Texas, specified that from as early as 6 years old, non-White kindergarten students are more likely to be sent to a disciplinary alternative education program to address disciplinary problems. DeMatthews (2016), Dumas and Nelson (2016), and Johnson et al. conceded that non-White students are more likely to experience behavioral problems and

are removed from their school setting because of the lack of culturally responsive instructional strategies in the classroom.

Non-White students' behaviour has caused discipline problems that has led to the experience of attrition because they struggle to keep up with an alien curriculum that is written and delivered in English by teachers who do not understand and are not qualified to teach them (Brown & Crippen, 2017; Johnson et al., 2016; Michals, 2018). Evidence from the Intercultural Development Research Association report supported that in Texas, 102,610 students were missing from the public high school enrollment in 2015-2016 (Johnson et al., 2016). Of these, one in three were Hispanic students, and one in four were Black students. Johnson et al. conceded that the attrition or drop out rates reflect an inability to keep students enrolled until they graduate. The high rates of out of school suspensions and referrals to alternative programs have accounted for the attrition rate for Black and Hispanic students, which signals a problem in curriculum implementation. Johnson et al. (2016) emphasized the zero tolerance for minor school infractions, which has resulted in double the amount of suspensions annually with Blacks receiving nearly twice the suspensions of the local school population and 9% more than Hispanic students. These occurrences are symptomatic of a deeper problem with a limited, culturally responsive curriculum implementation.

Consequently, there is a crucial need for curricula reforms and actions in Texas to prevent disciplinary problems to provide equal educational opportunities and a quality education for every child (Johnson et al., 2016). Darling-Hammond (2017) and Ladd (2017) accentuated that by not adequately addressing culturally responsive curriculum

implementation, most immigrant students with unique cultural differences experience low achievement because of cultural alienation. As in the Ladd study, Mathis and Trujillo (2016) concluded that there are school reform flaws in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act and the Every Student Succeeds (ESSA) act as mandatory educational policies, which do not cater to the needs of minorities.

In the United States, the increasing immigrant numbers have created a *"*melting pot" of diverse cultures in the schools with the impending reality that the *"*minority" may soon become the *"*majority" (Craig et al., 2018; James, 2017). Consequently, Carey et al. (2017) and Keehne et al. (2018) proffered that school leaders need to maintain close connections with the community and to encourage culturally responsive instruction in their schools. Moreover, Knight-Manuel et al. (2019) posited that it is essential that principals implement curriculum responsive practices to support teachers in delivering a curriculum with a culturally relevant shared vision and be encouraged in conversations on cultural identity, academic proficiency, and community advocacy. To realize this, these scholars recommended that leaders need to plan for a diverse community, which would become the new norm in a traditional all-White society (Carey et al., 2017; Keehne et al., 2018; Knight-Manuel et al., 2019).

In the United States, school principals in 27 districts from nine states have received grants to implement school programs such as school climate to support their diverse students (Kendziora et al., 2018). Despite these efforts, Watson (2018) substantiated a point that was supported by Kraft et al. (2018) that principals need to include school programs to address the needs of culturally different learners. Overall,

more than 24 states have adopted school climate as a whole school initiative to equip each child with culturally inclusive attitudes (Wang & Degol, 2016). According to Piscatelli and Lee (2011), school climate is a whole school program guided by principals to improve the quality and character of school life to include all stakeholders' culturally relevant experiences of norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. The National School Climate Center (2007) emphasized the need to develop a positive school climate to promote character education, children's healthy social and emotional development, an increase in academic achievement, and a decrease in dropouts with an increase in teacher retention. Principals' use of science improvement and in-school coaching programs introduced innovative ways for teachers to deliver a curriculum that engages culturally different learners in the classroom (Kraft et al., 2018; Watson, 2018). According to Owens (2018), the Tucson Unified School District in Arizona implemented the MAS, that leaders eventually revoked and replaced with HB2282, which made the teaching of MAS illegal in 2010.

Researchers have emphasized the need for future examination on how school leadership in Texas integrates cultural responsiveness in the delivery of the curriculum (Martinez & Everman, 2017; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015). In separate studies, Keehne et al. (2018) and Milner (2016) identified the problem that middle school principals in southern Texas might not be implementing a culturally responsive curriculum. Researchers have focused on culturally relevant strategies in schools, but there is an existing gap that could be filled by examining the culturally responsive

curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas (Murakami et al., 2017; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015; Scanlan et al., 2016).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas. The findings of this study could help inform the leadership practices principals adopt to support their teachers in diverse settings and could be used to curb high attrition among minority students to alleviate discipline problems that often lead to suspensions and referrals. The research focus was to identify possible ways for principals to support their teachers to implement a culturally responsive curriculum to promote achievement and social acceptance and integration of a diverse population.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were as follows:

Research Question (RQ)1: What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas?

RQ2: What do middle school principals consider as they develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?

Conceptual Framework

The applied critical leadership (ACL) conceptual framework, pioneered by Santamaría and Santamaría (2015), formed the basis of this study. The ACL comprises nine indicators of culturally responsive leadership practices. For Santamaría and

Santamaría, the nine determinants that could be reflected in school leaders include the use of the critical race theory (CRT) to guide the analysis of issues, the use of empirical data by leaders to make informed academic decisions, encouraging a group consensus, having conversations on race and social injustice, acknowledging a stereotype threat, having a leader who is a role model, building trust, demonstrating servant leadership, and encouraging the voice of all stakeholders.

The indicators of ACL represented the guide in this study to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas. ACL symbolized the foundation of this study and predetermined the literary analysis to support the qualitative research design approach with the individual interview process. It was necessary to highlight the use of ACL in several works by Santamaría and Santamaría. It was especially significant that the literary gap was established when I found only two studies done by Aho and Quaye (2018) and Jayavant (2016) where the focus was on higher education instead of K to 12 schools and enhanced the relevance of ACL in this study. I used the nine ACL indicators in the data analysis to determine whether middle school principals were implementing a culturally responsive curriculum.

The indicators of the ACL conceptual framework informed the structuring of the research questions I addressed in this study. The determination of whether the curriculum implementation leadership practices of principals was culturally responsive led to a further groupings by Santamaría and Santamaría as transformational leadership (giving a voice to all stakeholders, being an advocator for positive change, the delegation of power,

servant leadership) in the content and context and critical pedagogical curriculum (cultural differences of learners, professional development of teachers, identity impacting leadership) and the CRT, which are evident in the content of the open-ended interview questions.

Nature of the Study

I conducted individual interviews in this basic qualitative study. The experiences of middle school principals about their beliefs and culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices were essential to this study. The experiences of principals represented the phenomenon in a naturalistic setting of the middle school environment in southern Texas and were within my philosophical constructivist orientation. The ACL conceptual framework was a guide to formulate the interview questions for this study.

I employed purposeful sampling to invite participants from the public domain through the social media LinkedIn (Appendix A) to conduct 10 individual interviews. Although I initially indicated that I would use snowballing in case I did not access a sufficient number of participants, that was not necessary despite the current world Covid-19 pandemic and its evolving uncertainty. I forwarded an invitation email to each of the purposefully selected individuals and applied the identified selection criteria to confirm their participation. The use of the interview process was evident in the literature review and presented in the works of Ayscue (2016), DeMatthews et al. (2017), Martinez and Everman (2017), Santamaría and Jean-Marie (2014), and Tyler (2016).

After institutional review board (IRB) approval, I conducted, recorded, and transcribed the interviews via the Zoom conference platform. This approach was preferred because of my location in Canada with the research participants in southern Texas. The Covid-19 virus pandemic and travel restrictions to the United States made Zoom a suitable platform for conducting this study. Participants confirmed consent and preservation of their confidentiality. The interviews included open-ended questions aligned to the indicators of the applied critical framework (see Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015) as outlined in Appendix B. Participants had the option to withdraw at any time. I allowed participants to describe their experiences about culturally responsive leadership curriculum implementation practices. The transcriptions of the interviews were sent to participants for member-checking. I used an Excel spreadsheet to code, categorize commonalities in responses, and identify emerging themes to generate findings.

Definitions

The achievement gap: The poor performance of minority non-White groups in high-stake tests that creates a disparity between them and the majority White group (Ladd, 2017).

Cultural responsiveness: The practices of leaders employing school programs that are sensitive to the delivery of a curriculum to culturally and linguistically diverse learners with different experiences to their peers (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015).

Culturally and linguistically responsive practices: Approaches in teaching that consider students' cultural identities (Linan-Thompson et al., 2018).

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP): Strategies used by teachers to include students' cultural experiences in the classroom (Larson et al., 2018).

Culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL): School programs, teaching strategies, and multicultural practices that were supported by principals to include the experiences of learners in the delivery of the curriculum (Kraft et al., 2018).

English language learners (ELL): Students whose first language is not English but are taught a curriculum delivered in English (Linan-Thompson et al., 2018).

Intersectionality: The ways leaders make decisions that negatively affect gender, race, religion, sexuality, language, ability, and class that could result in social division or oppression (Carey et al., 2017).

Servant leadership: Principals who guide their teachers by being a role model and exhibiting the willingness to understand their experiences and work with them (Seto & Sarros, 2016).

Social equity: The school system treats each learner in the same way (Scanlan et al., 2016).

Social justice: Rules arbitrated for each learner fairly (Bertrand & Rodela, 2018).

Social integration: The inclusion and meaningful understanding of minority groups within the wider society (Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2018).

Transformative leadership: The demonstration of principals' behaviors that embrace inclusion, equity, advocacy, and social justice for all ethnic stakeholders (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015).

Assumptions

I assumed that the findings of this study would allow for transferability to other locations in the United States because of the diversity of southern Texas. The projections for 2060 in Texas, California, Hawaii, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington reveal an expected growth of the Asian/Pacific Islanders (189%) and the Spanish speaking (114%) Latino population over the current level and these would impact the enrollment in public schools (Easton-Brooks et al., 2018; Garcia et al., 2017). I also assumed that participants were honest in their responses to the interview questions in an environment conducive to a positive relational trust and respect to produce accurate answers. (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Another assumption was that these principals were true representatives of their learning environment and were competent and knowledgeable in the information they proffer. The assumptions were relevant to the answering of the research questions to reveal the findings of this study.

Scope and Delimitations

Although the scope of the research was limited to the field of education and, in particular, middle school principals in southern Texas, the findings might be transferable to the other diverse areas in the United States and across international borders. Darling-Hammond (2017) posited that most of the innovative plans in education have originated in the United States, but most times, they translate into templates for other countries such as Canada and Singapore. The ACL framework previously used by Santamaría and Santamaría, (2015) informed the content of the specific interview questions in this study and has the prospect to be replicated in other contexts.

Limitations

My personal bias could have limited the outcomes of this study because I have been an administrator in the Caribbean and Canada with empathy towards the circumstances of diverse learners. I addressed this by activating bracketing, which I have done in my previous leadership roles, kept an audit trail lodged in a journal, and reached out for dialogic engagement with my committee members. The realization that principals might not be practicing culturally responsive curriculum implementation was a possibility in this study. It was my responsibility to reveal discrepant findings. The findings may be useful for the diverse setting in southern Texas but may not be transferable to some parts of the United States and in other contexts where individuals may have different experiences. The decision to only seek participants using LinkedIn may have led to the exclusion of other middle school principals whose curriculum implementation leadership practices might have been valuable to this study. The deciding factor for this particular strategy and approach was the existing Covid-19 Pandemic.

Significance

The study adds knowledge to the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals within a diverse environment. This new awareness informs educators on relevant practices that they may appropriately apply to the curriculum delivery in their schools. In their research, Murakami et al. (2017) and Santamaría and Santamaría (2015) focused on the culturally responsive practices of principals in elementary schools and states other than Texas. Addressing this problem in middle schools provided educational policymakers with

valuable information to standardize culturally integrative curriculum practices for school leaders in diverse environments. The information may lead to curriculum modifications to enhance cultural relevance. This study's social change implications could be evident in the schools and transcend into positive social integration in the wider society. Principals may improve practice and positively impact teachers' pedagogy to influence the inclusion of immigrant children in schools and the wider community. Roberts and Guerra (2016) have underscored that the sharing of participants' experiences and practices might inform leaders on how to prepare and manage new school-based programs. Equity, mindfulness, and tolerance of diverse groups by educators may translate into the wider society. The findings of this study could lead to the establishment of learning communities and promote the interaction of schools with stakeholders.

Summary

The focus of this study emerged in the problem statement from the background on the issue, highlighting the works of past scholars who postulated relevant findings. The purpose projected a basic qualitative research design with the individual interviews as the methodology guided by the ACL. The literature review in the next chapter enhances the iterative research process, which established the literature gap and the formulation of the research questions. Alignment among the conceptual framework, the problem, purpose, the research questions, and the data collection method and analysis were essential for this study. I determined the assumptions, scope, and delimitations and limitations by analyzing the features of the study. The significance revealed the tentative contribution of this study to the educational field and the social change objectives. The following chapter

comprises the scholarly works that address the issues surrounding the problem of the implementation of a culturally responsive curriculum.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem was that middle school principals in southern Texas may not be effectively supporting their teachers with implementing a culturally responsive curriculum in their schools. The purpose of this study was to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas. The crossing of borders by individuals and their families has resulted in more diverse societies in countries such as Australia, Canada, Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States, where migrants were hoping for a better life (Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2018; Smith & Fernandez, 2017). As a result of increased immigration to the United States, demographers have predicted that by 2050, the so-called immigrant *"*minority" would be the "majority," and the schools' tasks are to prepare for diverse learners (Khalifa et al., 2016). The achievement gap has been a significant concern for educators globally. In the United States, successive presidents have appeared to focus on the academic outcomes of students as an indicator of success in comparison to their peers in other countries. As the diverse learners in the United States have increased rapidly, academic gaps have developed as they struggled with linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic challenges. The roles and duties of educational leadership have seemed to change in response to educational change. For this reason, most educational leaders struggle to find ways for teachers to deliver the curriculum so that diverse learners can understand. The review of literary works in this chapter addresses the ACL conceptual framework, the impact of diversity, school reform,

discipline as a strategy for educators, research on Texas, defining cultural responsiveness, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Research Strategy for Literature Review

For the literature review, I identified the following keywords: *culturally responsive practices, immigration, social integration, social equity, social justice, transformative leadership, servant leadership, multiculturalism, racism, critical theory, critical race theory, social integration theory*, and *English language learners*. I employed different strategies to retrieve peer-reviewed journals, magazines, news media, and books by using Google Scholar searches, alerts, and a really simple syndication (RSS) feed to organized information in a literature review matrix. The Walden library was significant in assisting me to access peer-reviewed journals from Emerald Management Journals, SAGE Premier, the Thoreau Multi-Database, and ProQuest databases. The search of these databases unfolded other keywords such as *cultural responsiveness, applied critical leadership, Mexican American studies, school climate, diversity, culturally and linguistically diverse, culturally responsive strategies, culturally responsive practices, educational leadership, educational policy, culturally responsive pedagogy*, and *intersectionality*.

My objective was to preserve a 3-year window to keep my review with the latest works. This strategy worked and highlighted the research gap for this study. However, I included seminal works for the conceptual framework. Researching culturally responsive pedagogy necessitated historical referencing to past scholarly works outside of the 3-year window, including one from 1999 and a few from 2001 to 2014. The awareness of the

need for a culturally responsive curriculum has been evident in scholarly works since the 1990s. I developed an understanding of the cultural responsiveness of educators in the broader context and eventually narrowed my focus on curriculum implementation to fill the research gap in middle schools in southern Texas. The past literary works charted my pathway for this study. The concentration on the areas such as the chosen conceptual framework, theory, the impact of diversity, school reform, disciplinary strategies, and culturally responsive pedagogy emanated from the research. By conducting a comprehensive literature review, I was able to identify the research gap and selected the methodology to answer my research questions, which may create new knowledge for leaders managing in a diverse school environment.

Applied Critical Leadership Conceptual Framework

The ACL conceptual framework was a guide on how I explored the phenomenon of the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals. The indicators of the ACL were used to formulate the research and interview questions to explore how middle school principals are implementing culturally responsive curriculum leadership practices. ACL could be compared to the floor plan of the house, signaling how I disseminated information in this dissertation. Grant and Osanloo (2014) placed emphasis on the significance of the framework as the foundation of the research. The authors compared the conceptual framework to the blueprint or plan when building a house to guide the architect or researcher. The type of house to build is a mirror of the dissertation topic, while the structure is the conceptual framework. The ACL conceptual framework determined how the right structure predetermined the

outcome of the dissertation, just as the interior and exterior of the house. The floorplan of the house represented the research questions, purpose, statement of the problem, the research design, the presentation, and discussion of the findings, with reference to the ACL conceptual framework.

The ACL choice as a conceptual framework was personal to my scholarly, cultural beliefs and relatedness to the topic. My own experiences were critical in selecting the ACL to underline the study's personal and professional goals. The tenets of the ACL were grounded in the literature review and aligned to the methodology, the problem, purpose, significance, data analysis, findings, discussions, conclusions, and implications of the study (see Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The conceptual framework was a predeterminant on how I used the basic qualitative research design to answer the research questions. It had an iterative function and located me as the researcher in the study. ACL was the connective tissue of the study representing the knowledge of the scholarly experts in the field, which was reflected in past works and created new knowledge or epistemology (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) projected transformative leadership principles, culturally relevant pedagogy, and CRT to develop the ACL conceptual framework.

The ACL model comprises leadership practices: using empirical data to make curriculum decisions, having an open dialogue on social injustice, and perceptions of race, including all stakeholders, and building relational trust by practicing servant leadership (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015). CRT is employed as one of the leadership practice indicators to guide the analysis of group dynamics and consensus, to encourage

academic discourse, and to examine the impact of role models and leadership beliefs (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015).

CRT originated in the late 20th century when scholars and activists emphasized racial inequality and reviewed persistent racism among U.S. leaders (Alemán & Alemán, 2016; Annamma et al., 2017; Christian et al., 2019). Santamaría (2014) posited nine culturally responsive practices by applying the CRT among non-White principals to investigate social equity and fairness in schools and universities in the United States. Santamaría purposefully selected and observed six participants whom they knew for at least 8 years from southern California. The participants were self-described as culturally responsive leaders from African, Arab, Indigenous, Mexican, Native North American, Okinawan, male, female, heterosexual, and transgender origins. Santamaría conducted the interviews convenient to the participant who also had the choice to be interviewed at their educational institution of practice. Nine similar practices translated into the following tenets of the ACL framework that was employed by Santamaría in future research:

The ACL model projects nine leadership practices:

- having open conversations on issues of race and social injustice
- using the CRT as a guide to analyzing issues.
- ensuring a group consensus
- acknowledging and accepting a stereotype threat
- depending on empirical data to create academic discourse
- giving a voice to all stakeholders

- being a role model
- building trust
- having the belief that the leadership role is a calling synonymous to servant leadership.

Leaders' identities are evident from their family or community background, and leaders use the critical race perspective and critical multiculturalism to develop transformative leadership (Santamaría, 2014).

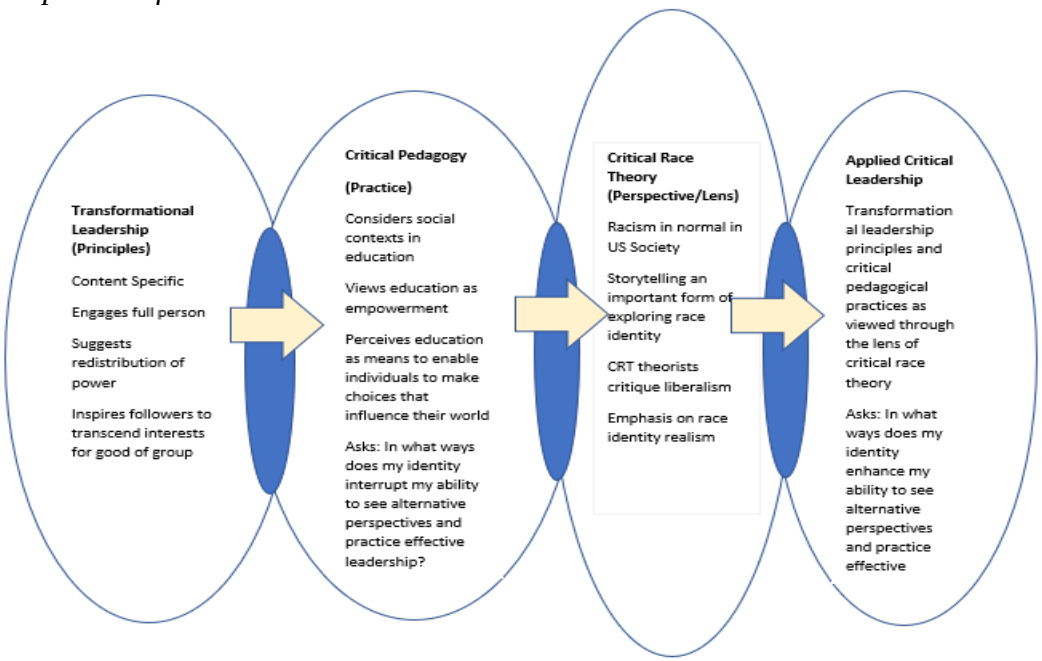
In another study, Santamaría and Jean-Marie (2014) examined a synthesis of literary works to expand the indicator of CRT to include indicators of transformative and personal leadership qualities to reflect culturally responsive leadership practices. Santamaría and Jean-Marie used a phenomenological methodological approach to analyze research from Santamaría and Santamaría in 2012 revealing a relationship between CRT and transformative leadership, which established the foundation of the ACL framework. The outcomes of their synthesis indicated that principals in the United States practiced critical, cross-cultural, and transformational leadership. Santamaría and Jean-Marie postulated that their findings are crucial to supporting improvement in student achievement and sustaining positive change in the education environment by understanding diverse cultures, equity practices, and improving relationships.

The indicators of ACL are especially beneficial to leaders in diverse settings (Aho & Quaye, 2018). Applied transformative leadership includes role models who demonstrate the behavioral and high expectations they want to see emulated by staff. ACL symbolizes leaders who cross barriers of self-interest and beliefs for the institutional

good. ACL represents an integration with others because of personal attention from the leader who serves the staff (Aho & Quaye, 2018). Seto and Sarros (2016) promoted servant leadership, and Catone et al. (2017) posited the making of teachers as advocates of change. Furthermore, Santamaría and Santamaría (2013) showed the intersection of the principles of transformational leadership, critical pedagogy and CRT to produce the ACL framework as seen in Figure 1. Permission was granted by Santamaría and Santamaría (Appendix C).

Figure 1

Depiction of ACL Framework



Note. Adapted with permission from "Applied critical leadership in education: Choosing change," by L. J. Santamaría and A. P. Santamaría, 2013. Routledge Books. (https://www.booktopia.com.au/applied-critical-leadership-in-education-lorri-j-santamaria/book/9780415881098.html).

Interconnections Within the ACL Framework

By using a CRT lens, principals were reflective in using transformative leadership principles to include, engage, inspire and support their teachers, students and other stakeholders to produce applied critical leadership (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2013). Critical pedagogy was reflected in school curriculum as useful strategies that can be adopted by teachers in their classroom. Santamaría and Santamaría defined critical pedagogy as the social context of education to empower every citizen to make correct and relevant choices. For teacher adoption of this approach, knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy is necessary. Santamaría and Santamaría referred to the work of Paulo Freire, whose principles were used by educators in the Mexican American studies (MAS) initiative in Tucson, Arizona where critical pedagogy promoted communities of learning based on the needs of the learners. Santamaría and Jean-Marie (2014) used the ACL conceptual framework to examine the culturally responsive leadership practices of female principals in the United States who developed an identity based on their personal perceptions and experiences. Santamaría and Jean-Marie involved school leaders to examine if there was evidence of support for critical pedagogy in schools.

Culturally responsive transformative leadership practices were essential in schools with diverse populations. Santamaría and Santamaría (2015) adopted a multiple qualitative case study methodology to synthesize scholarly works on positive leadership practices in three years in the United States and New Zealand. The authors analyzed 20 comparative case studies of principals by using the tenets of the ACL framework to link to these leaders who demonstrated equity and social justice in a diverse setting. The

authors purposely selected cases with interviews, surveys, and observations of participants who experienced similar challenges as non-White leaders in New Zealand and the United States. To preserve the identity of the participants in the case studies, Santamaría and Santamaría created three counter stories from the themes revealed in the data for six cases in New Zealand and 16 in the United States. By examining the cases, Santamaría and Santamaría were able to derive the descriptive narrative experiences of the leadership practices of non-White leaders who explained their transformative practices.

Upon the completion of this study, Santamaría and Santamaría (2015) established the use of the ACL framework to determine effective leadership. Their findings projected that they accumulated adequate evidence to support the use of ACL with a theoretical foundation in CRT to impact culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom positively. Santamaría and Santamaría suggested that they could merge positive transformative leadership practices and use the ACL model to try to solve educational inequities. The authors also proffered that White leaders who interacted with non-White leaders in promoting positive professional practice were quite concerned and considered the underserved minority. In this study, Santamaría and Santamaría underlined the tenets of the ACL model with the support of the CRT as being evident in leaders who were confident in the empirical knowledge of their schools, acknowledge social injustice, make culturally relevant decisions, demonstrate humility, and connect their schools to stakeholders in the community.

Administrators could use the ACL framework to indicate culturally responsive leadership (see Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015) in the following ways:

- entering leadership spaces with informed knowledge or willingness to learn the socio-political, cultural, and linguistic context in the learning environment.
- building relational trust, capacity and sustainability by consistent collaboration with colleagues.
- practicing humility with the broader community.
- authentic interactions with the stakeholders in the school, home, and the community.
- recognizing and avoiding bias.
- decision making by considering the cultural environment.
- leadership as a model of oneself.
- consistently connecting to the community to create sustainability, supporting improvement, and promoting positive educational change.

The principals who demonstrated ACL mirrored local, regional, and global citizens (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). ACL was individually related to the cultural identity of the school leader. Santamaría et al. (2014) revealed that educators who practiced ACL were ready to connect and network with others, sought professional development opportunities, and post-graduate education to access the knowledge to improve the students in their environments.

The Use of ACL in Previous Studies

After the establishment and development of the ACL framework, Santamaría and Santamaría employed it in various qualitative research studies by utilizing synthesis and interviews (2013). They supported ACL by alluding to the findings from previous studies conducted by Ah Nee-Benham and Cooper in 1998, Astin and Leland in 1991, Marshall and Oliver in 2006, Mckenzie et al. in 2008, Skrla and Scheurich in 2003, and Terrell and Lindsey in 2009. Santamaría and Santamaría showed that the authors of the previous studies, identified and moved away from deficit-based thinking and leadership practices toward the consideration of multiple voices and strength-based models. Santamaría and Santamaría hoped to input the perspectives of the colored leaders when using the ACL framework (2013).

The scholarly works of Santamaría and Santamaría in 2012 and 2013 culminated in the tenets of ACL. In both studies, Santamaría and Santamaría found that educational leaders mirrored their ethnicity, race, culture, language, class, gender, and experiences (2012; 2013). Santamaría and Santamaría revealed that leaders in schools could not separate past and personal experiences from the way they led. Santamaría and Santamaría indicated that the promotion of social justice and educational equity was significant for minority learners in schools. Santamaría and Santamaría further postulated that the voices of principals were necessary for the making of school policy and curriculum. Santamaría and Santamaría conducted a qualitative comparative case study of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, and the United States. and proffered that there was a

relationship between leadership conditions and behavior. This study supports a link between leadership practices and the principles of ACL.

The tenets of the ACL conceptual framework were relevant to indicate the culturally responsive leadership practices of principals. Santamaría and Jean-Marie (2014) proffered that there was a connection between transformative leadership within the ACL framework and the practices of school leaders. Santamaría and Jean-Marie utilized a case study with two subjects, further supported by additional participants, to discuss and verify their findings. Santamaría and Jean-Marie kept field notes and their outcomes from their investigation of relevant previous research to promote the effective use of the ACL framework. Santamaría and Jean-Marie referenced relevant examples of ACL, such as the need for leaders to build trust with the mainstream, engaging in critical conversations, leading by example, honoring constituents, and bringing people to consensus.

The findings of Santamaría and Santamaría (2016) were that demographic shifts in the United States contributed to increased levels of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social diversity and that educational leadership must become culturally relevant and sustain that relevance. In their studies, Santamaría and Santamaría emphasized the value of learning from diverse leadership, especially in situations where individual leaders with cultural identities could affect their administrative decisions. Santamaría and Santamaría findings indicated that demographic changes in the United States were responsible for the increase in cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and social diversity. The authors concluded that principals should be culturally relevant and consistently support that relevance.

Santamaría and Santamaría recommended that further research was necessary for educational leadership practices in cross-cultural, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual diverse contexts.

To further confirm that leadership necessitated cultural responsiveness within the tenets of the ACL framework, Santamaría et al. (2017) identified the applicable findings of a previously done study by Santamaría and Santamaría in 2014. Santamaría et al., in this qualitative single case study, addressed the reframing of transformative and culturally sustaining leadership for a diverse colored society in New Zealand. Santamaría et al. interviewed a colored immigrant experienced school leader several times in one year. The authors concluded that educational policy for immigrants should focus on improving the learning experiences of students. They emphasized that policy should also facilitate the professional development of leaders and teachers to include the cultural experiences and language of their students and their families.

The ACL conceptual framework promoted versatility, is transferable and could be used in different contexts. In a more contemporary study, Aho and Quaye (2018) employed the ACL framework of Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) among educational leaders in higher education in the United States. They focused on a leader's willingness to engage in critical conversations, to take the lead in non-traditional ways, contribute empirical evidence and authentic research-based information to academic discussions about minority groups. Aho and Quaye registered concerns that racism and colonization adversely affect students in higher education. In contrast, Jayavant (2016) completed a qualitative comparative case study in primary schools in Auckland, New Zealand, using a

theoretical framework of ACL. Theories of transformational leadership, critical pedagogy, and CRT informed the methodology. Jayavant examined the leadership practices of social justice and equity in a culturally and linguistically diverse educational environment. Jayavant unfolded several ACL characteristics, such as the leader's axiological philosophy, the values, beliefs, and morals, which underlined the extent of cultural responsiveness to diversity. The studies of Aho and Quaye and Jayayant showed that the ACL framework could be utilized in a broad educational context.

Social justice and educational equity in the ACL framework resulted from leaders' personal experiences, which projected and impacted their professional practice (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015). Santamaría and Santamaría emphasized the role of leaders in addressing intersectionality by being compassionate, generous, and responsible. Leaders in schools need to acknowledge, celebrate, consider and understand cultural, ethnic, racial, gender and class differences (see Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, 2014; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015; Santamaría, n.d.; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2016; Santamaría, Santamaría et al., 2014).

The principles of transformational leadership and critical pedagogy within the curriculum were viewed through the lens of the CRT to produce the applied critical leadership of principals. These interconnected indicators of ACL were relevant to the purpose of the study and determined the structure of the research questions to investigate the cultural responsiveness of middle school principals' leadership practices in the implementation of their curriculum. The individual interviews were chosen as the method to collect data from middle school principals who were given the opportunity to voice

their beliefs and experiences about the implementation of their curriculum culturally responsive leadership practices. The indicators of the modified ACL framework were applied in the formulation of the probing interview questions and were used to proffer findings in the data analysis which were displayed in tables and diagrams.

The Impact of Diversity

In the period 1960 to 1990, immigration demographics were primarily dominated by Whites to the United States. After 1990 the United States became an immigration country with an increase of Asian and Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, and Latinos, with 50 percent of all students in central city schools being non-White (see Bode et al., 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Students of school-age became diverse over the years. Easton-Brooks et al. (2018) highlighted that the enrollment of Hispanic students increased from 13.5% in 1995 to 25.8% in 2014. Taylor (2010) indicated that as a result of the projected continuous migration of Blacks, Hispanics, and Latinos, the demographic scales would tip favoring a radical change towards the majority of school graduates being non-White by 2030. Taylor postulated that the difference in the demographic outlook for the past fifty years would translate into schools in the 2030s.

In conducting statistical analysis on future racial composition of school population, Prescott and Dakota (2008) concurred that there could be a 15% decline in White graduates from 527,600 in 2012 to 445,800 by 2030. The authors highlighted that in the northeast, the White graduates could decline from 365,100 in 2013 to 271,500 in 2030. Prescott and Dakota expect a further downward trend with White graduates decreasing in the south and the west from 45% to 37%. Prescott and Dakota predicted a

contrast with the increase in the number of colored graduates as 150 colored high school graduates for every 100 decrease in White graduates revealing the new norm and channeling the future of a diverse demographic outlook. Prescott & Dakota singled out the Hispanic population as the "growth engine" in California, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas forecasting an increase exceeding 50% between 2014-2025, culminating in an increase of 230,000 from 2013 to 2025.

From 1954, there was segregation, desegregation, and re-segregation of schools (Knoester & Au, 2017). Segregation of non-White schools with a limited enrollment of white students at 0 to 10% tripled in 25 years (Kijakazi et al., 2016). Segregation was not only based on race but extended to social and economic status with inferior educational opportunities for non-Whites. Palardy et al. (2015) indicated that American school educators segregated by race/ethnicity, socio-economic, and English Language status. Since "Brown v the Board of Education" case in 1954, there was a short- term attempt at desegregation from 1988 until 1991 when the Supreme Court terminated the desegregation plans (Orfield et al., 2016). The United States educational policy and practice necessitated high-stakes testing, which also played a role in race and class segregation (Knoester & Au, 2017). The barriers to desegregation were evident in 1972 in "Rodriguez v. San Antonio" when the judge declared that equal expenditures in education were not a right; in1973 in North Carolina in "Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenborg" and Detroit in 1974 in "Milliken v. Bradley" against freedom of choice (Kirsch & Braun, 2016).

In the late 1990s, most leaders appeared to gradually sideline the efforts to end discrimination in years to come (Bode et al., 2012). Students who failed were usually from minority groups. Bode et al. revealed that they were moved to other schools, creating a division between Blacks and Whites with high-stakes tests' performance as the determinant. The ELLs were separated from their English-speaking peers and left behind because their teachers could not understand them (Bode et al., 2012). The White majority population in schools was more adequately supported than the minority students who were most likely to experience being taught by uncertified low-paid teachers with high attrition rates and had limited access to quality resources (see Darling-Hammond, 2000; Wagner, 2017). Scanlan et al. (2016) lamented that students who were culturally and linguistically diverse did not receive the same educational opportunities as their white counterparts. In 2000 in California, one hundred schools with minority students from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas were identified by the courts as unsafe, staffed with unqualified teachers, and having inadequate resources (Gándara et al., 2003). In the states of New York, Illinois, Michigan, California, New Jersey, and Texas, linguistic, racial, social, and economic segregation were prevalent (Orfield et al., 2016).

As ELLs increased in schools in the 1980s and 1990s, the debate emerged into two models, English as a second language (ESL) vs. the Bilingual model depending on the periodical political and economic priorities (see Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Murphy et al., 2019). Essentially, ESL meant the inclusion of ELLs into the regular classroom with certified ESL teachers who were not required to speak the native language of the ELL. In the Bilingual model, ELLs were in classes with a bilingual teacher where content

could be taught in their native language and learn English as a second language. This model was more relevant for ELLs because they could learn in their native language while also work towards acquiring their second language, which was usually English. Gándara and Escamilla highlighted that for one in every five students in the United States the primary language is not English. They further indicated that researchers recommended dual language and bilingual programs instead of English-only curriculum delivery. Gándara and Escamilla concurred that the obstacles to the implementation of bi or dual lingual models were the politicians' objectives, resulting in the shortage of highly qualified teachers.

From a study on the challenges faced by ELLs, Petrón et al. (2019) conceded with the findings of Gándara and Escamilla (2017) and Murphy et al. (2019). Petrón et al. postulated that high-stakes testing in English under NCLB hindered feasible attempts to implement bilingual education and ESL. They posited that leaders created barriers depending on their political mandate at the time. Petrón et al. revealed that there had been a shortage of Spanish/English educators in Texas, where large numbers of bilingual students resided in high poverty areas. ELLs had limited access to well-trained teachers and optimally funded schools, which lacked the relevant resources such as bilingual dictionaries. Petrón et al. proffered that both teachers and learners were seen as less intelligent, felt isolated from the school. There were controversies over the procedure and promotion of bilingual education for diverse students.

By conducting six interviews in Texas with Latino and Latina teachers Petrón et al. (2019), like Gándara and Escamilla (2017) and Murphy et al. (2019) highlighted

limited resources, marginalization, and educational practices, which made failure inevitable. They added that principals were limited in their knowledge of bilingual education, exacerbating the problem for these teachers and learners. Petrón et al. acknowledged that in Texas, leaders did not eliminate bilingual education, but the continuous revision of requirements such as a new Spanish proficiency exam implemented by the Texas Education Agency presented barriers for administrators to obtain qualified teachers. The authors of the three studies concluded that the most decisive factor impacting school effectiveness for ELLs was dependent on political objectives and principals who needed to transmit a positive school climate. Principals needed to be knowledgeable about bilingual programs and be willing to implement them to realize culturally relevant classroom pedagogy.

In a separate study, similar to that done by Prescott and Dakota in 2008, Easton-Brooks et al. (2018) believed that non-White students in U.S. Schools could become a 55% majority population in less than a decade. Easton-Brooks et al. also postulated that at the same time, four in every five teachers and principals would be White. Citing from the existing legislative framework where more leaders would hire more non-White individuals as teachers, Easton-Brooks et al. lamented the inadequate detailed plans for transitioning from the current status to the projected end goal. Easton-Brooks et al. conducted a qualitative case study research to investigate how the transition to a state where an adequate level of individuals of high-quality non-White teachers could enter into the service and contribute towards student and school success. Easton-Brooks et al. found that system, structural, cultural, and curriculum adjustments together with a clearly

defined workplace expectation policy were necessary if the desired increase of capable non-White teachers were to happen; sufficient to manage the expected increase in non-White student population and its attendant challenges. Easton-Brooks et al. posited that meaningful involvement of all relevant and critical stakeholders was required if the new diverse school setting were to be realized for schools to operate at optimal levels for student and organizational success. The stakeholders' interests identified in this study were teacher training arrangements, school management and standards, leadership development, community involvement, and governmental support.

Demographic shifts in the United States contributed to increased levels of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social diversity, implying that educational leadership should become culturally relevant and sustain that relevance (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2016; Smolcic & Katunich, 2017). Most leaders neglected to modify educational policies to make the curriculum in schools more appropriate for ELLs to help them integrate and succeed (Linan-Thompson et al., 2018). Diversity in U.S. schools paralleled the cultural and linguistic challenges for educators who misunderstood their ELLs (Minkos et al., 2017). Keehne et al. (2018) emphasized that most principals were not adequately prepared and led with limited experience in implementing culturally responsive leadership practices, critical for effective curriculum implementation. Keehne et al., Linan-Thompson et al. and Minkos et al. concurred that because of the rapidly increasing diversity in schools, it was essential to investigate the leadership practices of principals and how they implemented their curriculum to include the cultural experiences of ELLs. Researchers concurred that diversity of learners necessitated culturally relevant

innovative school leadership practices, which could foster a culturally responsive curriculum implementation (see Kraft et al., 2018; Ladd, 2017; Owens, 2018; Wang & Degol, 2016). There seemed to be a mismatch between the curriculum implementation of classroom practices by teachers and the culturally relevant needs of diverse students.

In the same way as Gándara and Escamilla (2017), Murphy et al. (2019) and Petrón et al. (2019), a selection of diverse minority students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds were studied by Ghattas and Carver (2017) to investigate the responsiveness of science education in the Western United States. As a result of this research, Ghattas and Carver highlighted those diverse minority students from different ethnic and racial moorings even if they were proficient in the English language, were underrepresented and therefore faced significant challenges and hurdles that prevented them from experiencing considerable success in science education. Ghattas and Carver confirmed that racially diverse and other minority students were now becoming a significant sector in the school population, and it was necessary for their success if the school were to become a successful organization. The No Child Left Behind Act in the United States provided legislative protection to students who were disabled, economically disadvantaged, or were from a minority or diverse grouping. Ghattas and Carver posited that teachers could influence student learning in science and language by adopting particular approaches that were inclusive for all students; supported ELLs in ways that were appealing to all; encouraged home involvement in the understanding and promotion of culture; and promoted home and community language support for minority students.

Principals exposed non-English speaking migrant children to a traditional curriculum delivered in English with classroom pedagogy laden with culturally irrelevant experiences (Scanlan et al., 2016). Scanlan et al. suggested that the facilitation of ongoing collaboration and cultural conversations with all stakeholders were relevant to obtain the information to guide students better to promote their social integration into the wider society. Khalifa et al. (2016) proffered that principals should create opportunities for the relevant professional development of teachers who depended on leadership guidance to implement culturally relevant pedagogical strategies appropriate to diverse learners. Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) agreed that it was essential for teachers to develop themselves professionally and usually depended on the principals' guidance to find ways to learn how to communicate with students whose home language and practices differed from the school experiences. Bryk (2018) emphasized that relational trust, coherence, and collaboration between principals and staff were necessary to encourage culturally responsive practices. Principals needed to create professional learning communities to promote the sharing of best curricula delivery practices. Seto and Sarros (2016) referred to servant leadership of principals to guide teachers to recognize and remove the cultural barriers within and across schools' boundaries through ongoing teamwork and collaboration. Researchers proffered that principals in schools needed to be innovative and take the initiative to adopt culturally responsive curriculum implementation to promote an understanding between teachers and students for positive learning outcomes (see Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Minkos et al., 2017; Sawchuk, 2018; Scanlan et al., 2016).

Leaders needed to become culturally responsive because of population changes in the United States according to Santamaría and Santamaría (2016), in their synthesis on educational leadership. Santamaría and Santamaría believed that the population change could lead to the increase in cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and social diversity. Kennedy et al. (2016) synthesized 133 articles on cultural responsiveness in middle schools, and proffered principals must link the school and the community to meet the needs of ELLs. Aronson and Laughter (2016) conceded that scholars needed to do further research on principals' culturally responsive leadership practices. Keehne et al., (2018), in their exploratory qualitative study, observed and interviewed teachers in Hawaiian chartered schools and concluded that the inclusion of cultural identity in the curriculum promoted the learning of English which contributed to better family life and a more positive social integration in the wider community.

In two separate studies on intersectionality, culturally linguistic challenges of learners and how curriculum decisions were made Carey et al. (2017) and Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) concurred that principals needed to implement a culturally relevant curriculum. Carey et al. described intersectionality as ability, class, gender, language, race, religion, and sexuality that may be linked to leadership styles that reflected different social forms of oppression. Carey et al. posited that it was necessary that educators and learners were aware of intersectionality for policies and practices among schools were to be beneficial and adequate for a diverse student population. Carey et al. and Linan-Thompson et al. were similar in their conclusions that there might be social, political, and organizational divisive factors on the broader society, but educators

needed to ensure that these educational disparities are not encouraged or practiced in schools.

Likewise, the conclusions of Keehne et al. (2018) corresponded to Minkos et al. (2017) who examined the culturally relevant curriculum implementation administrative setbacks, and highlighted the need for educators to recognize and address the cultural and linguistic challenges of diverse learners. Both group of authors acknowledged the accelerating problem of school population diversity for educational leaders to manage in U.S. schools. Minkos et al. postulated that educators must professionally prepare themselves to handle the diverse school population's changing multicultural needs who were culturally and linguistically different. Minkos et al. concluded that the responsibility was on school administrators to competently manage teachers who deliver the curriculum to this diverse school population.

From a synthesis on publications and studies, Bertrand and Rodela (2018) added valuable findings which substantiated the outcomes of other scholars such as Carey et al. (2017) and Khalifa et al. (2016). Bertrand and Rodela investigated marginalization in social constructs such as race, which can affect community organization, educational leadership, social justice, youth voice, and parent engagement. Bertrand and Rodela emphasized the need for catalysts of change in a re-envisioned educational leadership, promoting social justice for non-Whites who may be socially marginalized individuals in their communities. Similarly, Castillo and Maniss (2018) completed a synthesis on available publications and studies on educational leadership with a focus on stable social representation to understand social issues within the Latino group. The authors examined

how educational leaders encouraged and engaged Latino students' educational experiences. Castillo and Maniss highlighted that the effect of rapid demographic change resonated in a common Latino culture and group homogeneity, ethnic identity, marginalized educational backgrounds, personal experiences, the unique environment because of in-group behavior, and a desire to be accepted and belong to a collective ethnic group. These authors highlighted the social and educational disparities of the minority groups in U.S. society.

In two distinct reviews done, Carey et al. (2017) and Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) conceded that social integration should start in the educational environment. The findings also suggested that exclusionary practices and intersectionality created cultural and ethnic divisiveness, which originated in the school and extended into the mainstream of society where unprepared and alienated students who inevitably faced challenges with societal interaction with others. Likewise, Aronson and Laughter (2016) and Seto and Sarros (2016) concurred that because of the diverse demographic outlook, a culturally relevant education might help address the socio-cultural issues of learners. However, principals in the United States were not known to implement culturally responsive curriculum leadership practices.

On minority urban-based students, Khalifa (2018) corroborated the previous findings of Carey et al. (2017), Khalifa et al. (2016), and Santamaría and Santamaría (2016) by postulating that no leadership model existed for school principals and teachers to use, and to understand and guide them adequately. Khalifa conducted an ethnographic study in Michigan, of a Black African American school administrator, and at the same

time examined the education policies from different states in the United States. Khalifa explored housing, and other community-based facilities and amenities, and proffered ideas on amalgamating strategies for superior success for minority children. Khalifa posited that teachers should accept community uniqueness and realities, and to merge these into the school curriculum for student acceptance and success. Khalifa revealed that school leadership could employ strategies of inclusion, re-engineer assumptions, individual and group bias, and common stereotypes to implement programs that would fiercely support a new community influenced epistemology to augment pedagogies and curriculum that are set by state policies and federal regulation. In particular Carey et al., Khalifa and Khalifa et al. believed that by doing less, school leaders only supported existing arrangements that promote urban minority oppression.

School Reform

In the past decades, educational policy may have been one of the most popular subjects in United States election campaigns, penned in manifestos, and grounded in governance. It was one of the main focus of the electorate who expected equal opportunities and represented the watchdog of the government in power. In the education diaspora, encouraging opportunity for all resonated into “education for all” and quality education (Mathis & Trujillo, 2016). In the era of United States governance, there was the feeling that the public education system was broken and needed fixing because, in the hidden agenda of reform, there was an undermining of freedom, choice, and equality (see Ladd, 2017; Saultz et al., 2019).

The documented roots of reform in education may have originated from the leadership of President Ronald Reagan, who left a legacy that formed the theme for future governments. All stakeholders in education, including researchers, the media, businesses, administrators, teachers, parents, and students, adapted to a performance-driven system (Canagarajah, 2016). The significance of educational reform in President's Reagan Administration resonated in the recommendations of the "Nation at Risk Report" which caused him to transcend to different ideals of leadership from republicans to liberals and which remained relevant from the 1980s context to present-day America (Dennis, 2017). The impact of the Reagan Administration in the sphere of educational reform deserves further examination.

According to Peck (2015), President Reagan wanted to lessen the power of the Federal Department of Education during his tenure, so he mandated the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983 on educational reform that focused on choice and equality. President Reagan envisaged the private funding of education and thought the government was spending too much on schooling with a reflection of downward student achievement internationally. The commission produced the "Nation at Risk" report with a recommendation for "education for all" with the value of choice and accountability (Kosnik et al., 2016; Peck, 2015). It was noteworthy that both liberals and republicans supported him in the reform of education. After the Reagan Administration, the reform initiative was the "No Child Left Behind - NCLB" in 2001 and "Every Student Succeeds Act" in 2015 with both Republican and Democrat support (Duff & Wohlstetter, 2019; Shoffner, 2016).

NCLB and ESSA were described by Ladd (2017) and Mathis and Trujillo (2016) as “flawed” while Saultz et al. (2019) referred to ESSA as “reform without repair.” The primary objective of past presidents may have been to make education equitable and educators accountable. Despite this, NCLB resulted in doing what the initiative did not set out to do, leaving children behind (Mathis & Trujillo, 2016). The emphasis on students’ achievement to compete with global counterparts forced administrators to change the focus of school from student engagement to a high-stakes test-driven plant (Ladd, 2017). Leaders gave educators the ultimatum to produce high test scores or face the closure of their schools (Ladd, 2017; Mathis & Trujillo, 2016). The enactment of ESSA followed with a concentration on the ELL and released some flexibility to the States (Sugarman & Lee, 2017). Bridges (2018) lamented that apart from minor window dressing changes, which reflected a slant towards the ELL and special education, the focus of policymakers was on academic achievement. Research of educational policy indicated the assessment and evaluation of the implementation in schools to create a best practice database. For the development of effective education policy, leaders needed to link policy, evidence-based practices, and research to develop life-long learners (Bridges, 2018). Researchers of the implementation of the NCLB policy revealed substantial challenges that included “teaching to test, a narrowing curriculum,” and the determination that “one size does not fit all” with an escalating immigrant school population (Ladd, 2017).

The reauthorization of NCLB as ESSA, resulted in the implementation of mandates to ensure that educators followed the new Common Core Standards for English

and other assessments, one of which was formative (non-test). High-stakes tests were still in place, but these did not attract funding or were essential to administrators in states and districts who required evidence-based research results to support curriculum instruction, teacher education, and professional development and assessment (Polikoff, 2017; Saultz et al., 2019). Some school administrators at the district level tailored their curriculum for the ELL by redefining the already "narrow curriculum" (Hopkins, 2016).

Most educators concentrated on high stakes tests for the core curriculum in Math and English, altered teaching time-tables to reduce the time spent on other subjects (Polikoff, 2017). The narrowing of the curriculum reflected the cutting of subjects such as Art, Drama, Dance, and Gym, leaving both teachers and students behind (Levitt, 2017). Classroom pedagogy took a step backward from the thrust of learning theories, which supported that "one size did not fit all" (Kenney, 2018). Theorists demonstrated that individuals learned in different ways, so teachers needed to adapt various strategies to promote positive learning outcomes (see Kosnik et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2017). Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Piaget's, and Vygotsky's constructivist learning all concurred that teachers should tailor the curriculum to the needs of different learners (Kenney, 2018). The use of high-stakes tests, withholding funding from failing schools, closing schools, denying diplomas, transferring, and firing teachers have all been futile measures in the quest for high achievement. In the "Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)" from 2000-2012, U.S. student performance declined in all subject areas (Darling-Hammond, 2015).

Best practices were explored by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) supported previous findings from Darling-Hammond (2000) and Darling-Hammond (2015) in a study done on teacher recruitment and training in Ontario, Canada, and Singapore with a comparison to the United States. The size and demographics of the countries were similar to the United States, but the difference is that these countries employed a systematic approach to teacher recruitment and training. Darling-Hammond et al. highlighted that the government of Canada covered 60% of the cost of tuition and teacher training which spanned a two-year period. The program involved four practicums with experienced associate teachers who complete a formative and summative assessments of teacher candidates. Darling-Hammond et al. added that the government paid for professional learning so teachers were encouraged to participate in action research.

In Singapore where the tuition for teacher education was free, and there was a commitment to learning for all students, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found that teaching less and learning more was possible through project-based assessments. In preparing for the classroom, instructors train teachers in the way they were expected to teach, and they were ensured a job after training. Darling-Hammond et al. also proffered that all teachers could access the opportunity to participate in 100 hours of paid professional development which was equal to 20 non-teaching hours. The authors were impressed with the appraisal process which involved a career ladder and a leadership track system which was instructive with effective networking among schools. Principals who valued and implemented high-quality professional development was a factor in

positive student achievement, especially in high poverty schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The findings from previous research conducted by Ladd (2017), Mathis and Trujillo (2016), and Saultz et al. (2019), were similar to those of Chu (2019) after completing a synthesis of 52 approved state ESSA plans to investigate the application of equity in educational planning. The scholars who did their studies at different times concurred that despite several school reform initiatives, there existed disparities between the more privileged and the under-privileged marginalized groups. Chu concluded that 48 ESSA plans defined equity as equitable access to educational resources and less than half of these addressed equitable outcomes. Chu highlighted that the outcome-oriented plans used students' standardized test performance as the main indicator of achievement. Chu proffered that the incoherent policy principles, the vague and inconsistent definition of equity with a market-based oriented policy solution may further intensify the structural inequities.

By synthesizing literature on CRSL Khalifa et al. (2016) synchronized with findings from Lee (2001) and Santamaría and Santamaría (2012; 2013; 2015; 2016). Khalifa et al. investigated research questions on the characteristics of a culturally responsive school leader and the response to the minoritized school contexts. The authors hoped that the outcomes of this study would build on principals' leadership skills by encouraging culturally responsive school leadership behaviors to affect instruction and student achievement positively. Khalifa et al. concluded that CRSL behaviors were advocacy, equity, inclusion, and social justice. They added that CRSL was not limited

within the minority vs. majority context but should extend into other areas such as gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. Khalifa et al. recommended using a leadership framework with four principles of CRSL behaviors, which they obtained from the best practices in their research. These behaviors included cultural self-awareness, promoting and preparing teachers for a culturally responsive curriculum, enhancing culturally responsive and inclusive school climate, and engaging all stakeholders. Khalifa et al. concluded that principals prepared themselves by being knowledgeable and resourceful to implement reform with an emphasis on CRSL, which must be promoted by the principal for sustenance.

Discipline as a Strategy for Educators

As schools became more diverse, educators were overwhelmed with a mass of underperforming students who were not meeting the academic achievement requirements of leaders who were prescribing school policies that were not culturally relevant to these learners. DeMatthews (2016) and Dumas and Nelson (2016) agreed that Black and Hispanic middle school children were at risk of experiencing disciplinary problems and low academic achievement because of the limited use of culturally relevant classroom experiences. In their report on Texas, Johnson et al. (2016), revealed that from kindergarten, educators sent students to the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program for behavioral-type problems. Brown and Crippen (2017) and Johnson et al. (2016) highlighted that ELLs faced the challenge with an alien curriculum that was written and delivered in English by teachers who misunderstood them and were not qualified or certified to teach them. Johnson et al. revealed that in Texas, there were 102,610 missing

students from the public high school enrollment in the year 2015-2016 with one in three Hispanic students, and one in four Black students. Johnson et al. posited that the student attrition or drop-out rates showed an inability of educators to keep students in school to attain graduation. Johnson et al. publicized the high rates of suspensions and referrals to alternative programs, which led to the high attrition rate for Black and Hispanic students highlighting a problem with relevant curriculum implementation. Johnson et al. showed zero tolerance for minor school infractions by administrators, adding that annual student suspensions doubled with Blacks receiving nearly twice the number of suspensions compared to other ethnic groups.

In a report done in Texas, Johnson et al. (2016) recommended that it was critical for curricula reforms, and more effective school leadership actions to prevent disciplinary problems by providing quality education for every child and equal educational opportunities for all. Darling-Hammond (2017) and Ladd (2017) conceded that, by not effectively addressing culturally responsive curriculum implementation, diverse students with different and unique cultural differences would continue to experience low achievement. Craig et al. (2018) and James (2017) concluded, from their research in the United States, that increasing immigrant numbers have created a "melting pot" of diverse cultures in the schools with the inevitable reality that the "minority" would translate into the "majority." Carey et al. (2017) and Keehne et al. (2018) stressed that principals needed to establish close connections to stakeholders in their communities and promote culturally responsive instruction. Knight-Manuel et al. (2019) highlighted that principals and teachers must implement and deliver a curriculum with culturally relevant shared

goals and engage in collaborative conversations on academic proficiency, community advocacy, and cultural identity to build learning communities of practice.

The findings of DeMatthews (2016) and Dumas and Nelson (2016) corroborated with Hayden Williams et al. (2018) who did a case study on the challenges of educational leaders to manage discipline which affected delivery of the curriculum in schools. Hayden Williams et al. unfolded real-life dual roles in a small school, by reviewing school records, performed observations at the school, and had discussions with the principal on how to administer equal treatment to errant students. Hayden Williams et al. investigated a Central Atlanta school with 594 ethnically diverse Grades 6 to 12 students from the state of Georgia. It is a charter school that received federal funds and funding from a family that founded and governed the institution through philanthropic and charitable efforts. Hayden Williams et al. revealed that the administrator of this school was also the parent of an errant student who was academically underachieving but was a top basketballer at the school. The school superintendent was the student's godfather, and the teacher who raised a concern also taught the administrator. The administrator saw the teacher as challenging to understand when teaching the administrator's child. The principal administered prescribed penalties to the errant child, but the administrator overturned this decision, and the superintendent became involved. Other students, with less parental influence, were guilty of similar breaches. The principal was allowed to deal with these students according to the school procedures and operating codes.

In another case study involving a principal who was new to a middle school in a low-performing urban district, DeMatthews (2016) examined reasons why the school had

a history of high suspension rates of minority students, and how the principal worked towards making the school into one that was socially just. The findings from this study were that parents were frustrated with teachers who believed that intervention and behavioral systems were not sufficient; the community members acknowledged that students smoked marijuana, stashed guns and knives, fought one another, and were disrespectful. DeMatthews indicated that a new leadership direction was necessary for critical reflection and status quo change with racial sensitivity. Subsequently, Wun (2018) explored the relationship between violence and how school discipline shaped the lives of girls of color, especially those with disciplinary records, Wun focused on non-White girls with discipline records and conducted in-depth interviews to explore participants' experiences. The findings from this study showed that non-White girls, in addition to negative influences such as violence outside of school, viewed schools as controlling, which angered them and elicited resistance. Likewise, in a qualitative ethnography review, including 13 interviews and three focus groups of middle-class black Caribbean young people in south London, Wallace (2017) investigated Black students' encounters and experience with white middle-class teachers on classroom management and individual student performance. Wallace posited that middle-class Black students depended on black culture to benefit from, and enjoy advantages at school that was detrimental to working-class Blacks, including preferential White teacher attention. DeMatthews, Wun and Wallace concurred that it was essential for principals to guide a socially just school to produce positive learning outcomes.

In two different extant literature review studies conducted by Carter et al. (2017) Gregory and Fergus (2017) addressed inequities in the educational environment which can present challenges for minority learners. Gregory and Fergus completed a review of state and federal mandates to reduce punishments involving student removal from school, and how individual districts embraced social and emotional learning practices. Gregory and Fergus focused on federal and state policies, reforms, programs, and regulations on the reduction of suspensions at school augmented by specific efforts to handling disparities with social and emotional learning. The findings from this study suggested discipline reforms where social and emotional learning, and cultural practices provided opportunities for discipline disparity-reduction by supporting individual beliefs and structural arrangements which removed educator biases and encouraged an inclusive school climate. Carter et al. focused on how to address this challenging issue in U.S. schools. Carter et al. aimed to effectively understand how to handle disparities in school-based suspension and discipline of White students and non-White students. The findings from this study suggested the emergence of a sophisticated dynamic understanding of class and race evolved about school-based discipline: Black males were disproportionate when compared to different student groups; White teachers were not the only stereotypes. Middle-class colored teachers were just as likely to evaluate issues regarding students as White teachers subjectively. Most working-class teachers generally evaluated poor and minority students positively (Carter et al., 2017). Both studies were relevant for the confirmation of disparities in academic performance and the existence of discipline gaps

and the strategies to effectively address inequities, especially with the future outlook for the more diverse school population.

The findings of an independent qualitative review of school leadership styles by Dumas and Nelson (2016) were corroborated by Carter et al. (2017) and Gregory and Fergus (2017). Dumas and Nelson investigated a social phenomenon where educators conceptualized Black boyhood in unimaginable subjectivity with negative impact, vulnerability to racism and negative masculinity. The findings from this study were that prejudice and negative attitudes led to Black discrimination, Black children were most times dehumanized as apes and less trustworthy when compared to other U.S. children, and the issue of Black boyhood required focus as that could transform schools into unmanageable communities. Dumas and Nelson highlighted inconsistencies in the way leaders viewed and treated different ethnicities and races. Teacher biases compounded into complex, evolving situations regarding student academic performance and the future societal outlook.

Likewise, there was an acknowledgement of the discriminatory practice of teacher dispensation of school-based discipline in regards to minority students who were visibly, socially, and individually different in race, class, sexual oriented, and physical challenges (Carter-Andrews & Gutwein, 2020). The authors also purported that student-teacher interaction and relationships had a proportional impact on student success and performance. Positive influence resulted in significant successful outcomes. This study involved the deliberations of students who participated in five different focus groups facilitated by Carter-Andrews and Gutwein. These students were from 40 U.S. middle

schools in one district. One finding from this study was that students generally believed that teachers were unfair in their discipline against diverse minority individuals. Carter-Andrews and Gutwein found that teachers were acutely aware and adopted an approach that was reflective and able to remain conscious of the impact they had on student performance and development. Principals and teachers were also cognizant of the effects of their disposition, and unconscious action could have on shaping the student response to disciplinary proceedings and curriculum delivery (see Carter-Andrews & Gutwein, 2020; Carter et al., 2017; Dumas & Nelson, 2016; Gregory & Fergus, 2017).

Research in Texas

The statistics on education in Texas were documented in the Texas Education Agency (TEA) report (2019) which indicated that there were 380,263 teachers and principals with 5,431,910 students enrolled in schools in the 2018-2019 school year. The report further stated that the majority of the student population was non-White, comprising 52.6% Hispanics, 12.6% African Americans, 2.4% of two or more races, and 27.4% whites. The students in public schools were mostly from low-income households. The consistent lack of funding for public education in Texas adversely affected the ELLs and the socio-economically disadvantaged students. These students depended on public schools for resources such as books, computers, and internet access (Espinosa et al., 2018). The TEA report (2019) revealed that the government's theory of action was to recruit, support, and retain teachers and principals. Since 35% of low-income students were not able to read at their grade level, it was necessary to promote proven models of

culturally relevant curricular and instructional delivery, to ensure effective professional development, and to support coherent and aligned instruction (TEA, 2019).

High attrition of teachers resulted in the loss of human capital and the eradication of the social ties which were crucial for student achievement (Holme et al., 2017). This instability in staffing was prominent in Texas from 2004 to 2014, revealing that turnover rates were higher for poverty schools with large populations of minorities (Holme et al., 2017). They emphasized that rural schools experienced the highest rates of chronic instability. In Texas, schools lost 35 % of their teachers in two years, 59% in five years, and 72 % in eight years. According to Holme et al., high poverty, high minority, and low performing schools struggled with severe turnover challenges. Vescio (2016) substantiated that educators needed to know the difference between equity and equality, with equity meaning equal opportunity to be successful and in equality projecting that every child should get the same thing. Educators should meet students' needs in different ways. Vescio added that to promote equity, enacting culturally responsive practices that focus on relationships, relevance, and responsibility was significant.

In previous studies, Santamaría and Santamaría (2013; 2015) emphasized that as a result of the rapid increase in diversity in schools, educators needed to respond to racial change. In light of this, Ayscue (2016) interviewed administrators and teachers in 19 schools in six diversified suburban school districts in the United States to examine how they responded to racial differences. Ayscue indicated that some schools facilitated diverse students by modifying the curriculum and pedagogy, while others isolated the ELLs. Ayscue concluded that the administrators narrowed the curriculum to focus on

high stake tests. The actions of educators led to an exclusionary school climate, which resulted in the practice of intersectionality. Ayscue found that schools with the most significant racial change, and influential leaders with district support obtained positive outcomes.

Martinez and Everman (2017) and Tyler (2016) conducted qualitative studies on how diverse suburban schools conceptualized diversity. Tyler interviewed 40 teachers, 23 principals and assistant principals, and 16 other school staff in six suburban school districts in the United States. Tyler highlighted that prior experiences informed teachers' beliefs and knowledge in the classroom. Teachers may have limited exposure and interaction with people from different backgrounds to nurture a multicultural understanding of their students. Tyler added that teacher education programs did not facilitate this phenomenon and emphasized that there was a "theoretical commitment to diversity" but the practice may project differently. Tyler's recommendation was to diversify the education workforce so that non-White teachers will be able to understand and positively respond to diverse learners. Notwithstanding, in a qualitative descriptive case study, Martinez and Everman (2017) interviewed 25 participants, but also performed observations at a Texas school to determine if and how the principal influenced the school climate and students' college-focused intentions. Findings were that the principal was at the school for a long while and therefore used his familiarity with the staff and student populations to encourage students' college-centered focus by empowering staff and encouraging meaningful interactions with students. This study confirmed that it was possible for principals in Texas to successfully influence school culture. They could use

individual strategies by promoting excellent classroom instruction, establishing and maintaining core values, and encouraging stakeholders' trust.

By contrast, in a quantitative correlational study involving 11 southeastern Texas principals and 233 teachers, Dahlkamp et al. (2017) examined and analyzed the relationships among three variables; school climate, teacher retention, and a principal's self-efficacy. Dahlkamp et al. proffered that no correlation existed between teacher retention and principal self-efficacy, and no relationship existed between school climate and principal self-efficacy. However, the authors found that a relationship existed between school climate and teacher retention, and it was likely that teachers would remain at schools where the influences of vocal parents or other external groups were not dictating school performance.

In a qualitative phenomenological study, Davidson and Butcher (2019) investigated principle-centered leadership applications and experiences involving ten rural district superintendents from East Texas. Davidson and Butcher revealed that district superintendents could become effective leaders by applying principle-centered leadership. District superintendents, who practiced the tenets of principle-centered leadership, even if their personal beliefs and personalities influenced these actions, were effective as leaders. Principle-centered leadership was synonymous with empowerment and vision alignment, emphasized trust and trustworthiness. Further examination of educational leadership was presented by Goddard et al. (2017) who completed a mixed-methods study that postulated the significance of principals in supporting teacher collaboration and colleague observation to improve instruction. The leadership of

principals influenced policy, practice, and belief systems, which shaped the daily activities in the schools. Goddard et al. purported that school leadership, which fostered collective efficacy among staff members as directly linked to student achievement. The findings of Davidson and Butcher and Goddard et al. that effective school leadership promoted improved curriculum delivery were accentuated in previous works by Khalifa et al. (2016) and Khalifa (2018).

In another qualitative study done in Texas by conducting interviews and focus groups examination, DeMatthews et al. (2017) was similar to Davidson and Butcher (2019) by focusing on principals' attitudes and beliefs about race in a school–community and how that influenced decisions on discipline. The findings from this study were that principals were key decision-makers on school-based disciplinary action. They were the main link between teachers and the external school community, including families; therefore, racial neutrality, however challenging, was a critically crucial principal attribute and behavioral factor. This study was relevant as it confirmed that gaps existed in the way principals administered discipline in Texas and the effects of that inconsistency on student academic performance.

Defining Cultural Responsiveness

Many researchers may have studied and posited culturally responsive leadership practices, but few attempted a definition of cultural responsiveness. In describing cultural responsiveness, Santamaría (2009) highlighted that differentiated instruction was significant for educators teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Educational leaders needed to be culturally sensitive and willing to reshape the

curriculum. It was essential to incorporate students' cultures in the content of the curriculum. For teachers to understand their diverse students, they must themselves become learners by doing action research in their classrooms, collect information, and implement culturally responsive teaching strategies. The completion of family interviews and observations was significant for teachers to collaborate and reflect on their findings to tailor the appropriate, culturally relevant teaching practices. Santamaría emphasized that this cultural connection of students' families strengthened relationships that support educational excellence.

A multiple case study was conducted by Civitillo et al. (2018) with four ethnically different German teachers by using video observations and interviews in a diverse school. They revealed a definite link between culturally responsive teaching and cultural diversity beliefs. Teacher educators encouraged a culturally responsive curriculum, and they experienced reciprocal and bidirectional effects. Students' educational outcomes represent their response to the ways that teachers delivered the curriculum. Significantly Civitillo et al. posited that the more culturally responsive teachers tend to practice deep self-reflection and introspection on their teaching. Civitillo et al., like Santamaría (2009) referred to previous research by Gay in 2010, Ladson-Billings in 2014, in 1999 by Nieto, and in 2012 by Paris who all supported that the culturally responsive teaching (CRT) was relevant in engaging students' cultural experiences, connections with culture and unique identity from their environment. According to Civitillo et al., cultural responsiveness was the interconnection of CRT, cultural diversity beliefs, and teachers' self-reflection. It was also necessary that teachers addressed their personal beliefs on social justice and the

historical issue of the power and privileges of Whites versus other ethnic minority groups (Lopez, 2017). Students were motivated when their cultural experiences were included in their classroom experiences, enhancing autonomy, meaningfulness, relatedness, and competence (Kumar et al., 2018).

According to Santamaría (2009), multicultural, bilingual, and CRT was most suitable for cultural and linguistic diversified students. Santamaría posited that CRT was the use of best teaching practices to promote the academic achievement of culturally different teachers. Teachers engaged the cultural experiences of students to teach knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which empowered students intellectually, emotionally, socially, and politically. Santamaría referred to a 2005 study by Valene Ooka Pang, who defined CRT as an approach to instruction that responded to the socio-cultural context of the learners by integrating cultural content in the learning environment. Santamaría also referred to Abraham and Troike, who, in the early 1970s, encouraged classroom teachers to incorporate their students' language and culture as teaching strategies instead of barriers to learning. Researchers hoped that teachers would revisit their beliefs and understanding of the cultural differences of their students. Santamaría referenced the works of Banks, Forbes, and Gay, who recommended that schools could modify their existing curriculum practices to include cultural and linguistic diversity within the content of the curriculum. Santamaría posited that a socio-cultural foundation lay at the heart of the CRT. Santamaría emphasized that Latinos, Asian, African, and American learners succeeded when teachers employed socio-culturally centered teaching.

The culturally responsive instructional methods and factors were indicators of academic achievement, socio-political consciousness, and cultural competence. Santamaría (2009) referenced Ladson-Billings, who, in 2001, proffered the best teaching culturally responsive practices. For an increase in students' academic achievement, teachers needed to believe that all students can learn, their performance was in the context of the classrooms, the teachers knew the students, the culturally relevant content, and how to teach that content (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016; Lawson-Borders, 2019). Teachers supported and encouraged the development of students' critical conscience towards the curriculum. Indicators of cultural competence determined how teachers could improve their teaching practices. Santamaría posited that teachers' understanding of culture and the role of culture were crucial for teachers who learned about the culture of their students.

Social justice issues determined sociopolitical consciousness indicators and explained that teachers must have knowledge of the broader socio-political context and the connection of students' experiences to the wider social context (Santamaría, 2009). Teachers must understand the importance of students' success as the stepping stone to improve their socio-economically disadvantaged situation. Santamaría revealed that to ensure that the achievement of ELLs necessitated the inclusion of positive experiences with their families and interactive learning methods in a student-centered classroom where the teacher was a facilitator. Santamaría further supported heterogeneous cooperative grouping as a workable, culturally responsive teaching practice. Santamaría cited research by Ladson-Billings conducted in 1994, where a recommendation was that

cooperative learning was one of the best classroom pedagogies used successfully with African American students to improve academic achievement. The encouragement of collaboration enabled the development of critical social skills for the socio-economically disadvantaged ELLs and Latinos students

Although the CRT has been proven by researchers to increase student engagement and achievement, Abacioglu et al. (2019) revealed that teachers demonstrated limited practice in the classroom. In their quantitative study of 143 primary schools in the Netherlands, they found that teachers' perspectives taking abilities and multicultural attitudes were directly related to their CRT practices in the classroom. Abiacioglu et al. referred to Warren, who, in 2018, recommended that teacher education should include teachers' perspective-taking abilities in exposure to culturally and diverse texts to identify injustice and encourage the participation of teachers in different social and cultural worlds and collaboration with colleagues and on-going introspection.

In their study of 274 teachers in 18 schools in the United States, Larson et al. (2018) revealed the connection between culturally responsive teaching and proactive behavior management practices. These practices include making the curriculum culturally relevant to students by using their real-world context examples and using cultural artifacts to vary classroom teaching strategies and ways of communicating. Larson et al. defined culturally responsiveness or culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) as the understanding and inclusion of students' cultural experiences in the classroom. They added that it was essential that teachers have the required skills to teach in a diverse society.

By synthesizing literary works, Mayfield and Garrison-Wade (2015) formulated a framework for CRSL. They employed the outcomes of their synthesis into a qualitative study in a United States middle school where the school leaders addressed the achievement gap between White and Black students. Mayfield and Garrison-Wade produced a conceptual framework by developing CRSL success indicators for Black students in middle school. There were several students' leadership teams who focused on gender, race, and self-identification. Parents and retired grandparents volunteered as hall monitors and formed part of the professional development for teachers by engaging them to work with colored parents. Mayfield and Garrison-Wade highlighted that the learning environment included several cultural artifacts. Several languages were openly accepted and spoken by the multicultural staff, and expanded learning opportunities were available. Mayfield and Garrison-Wade found that administrators shared decision-making, power, leadership, and power, which positively affected the children, parents, and teachers in culturally responsive schools (CRS). The authors posited that CRS promoted welcoming environments with family inclusion, community engagement, and high teacher expectations. Mayfield and Garrison-Wade proffered that all stakeholders were accountable for learning and accepted students' differences in CRS. They concluded that acceptance and appreciation were possible in open, collaborative conversations between teachers and administrators with equitable opportunity and practice guidelines.

By addressing and supporting the use of equity evaluation in schools Bode et al. (2012) and Dupree (2016) revealed that some administrators employed equity tools as indicators to implement equity audits, which promoted transparency and accountability

for educators to demonstrate equity in their interactions with students. Dupree highlighted that in the United States, adherence to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prevented racial discrimination; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 forbid disability discrimination and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 disallowed disability and discrimination by public bodies. Bode et al. emphasized that these laws had crucial legal implications and should inform the school policy and operations in all schools to promote equity in measurable indicators such as achievement, programs, teacher quality, and available resources.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

As schools became more diverse from the traditional all-white classrooms, educators implemented CRP to reach learners with different cultural experiences (Lee, 2018). Some principals became collaborative leaders who supported school programs, which seemed to contradict the achievement-driven objectives of school policies (Seto & Sarros, 2016). There was the thrust of professional learning communities (PLC), which enhanced communities of practice with the best teaching strategies crossing school fences and the boundaries of districts and states (Bode et al., 2012; Davies, 2004; Takahashi, 2011). Bryk (2018) posited that collaboration in teamwork was significant in building “communities of practice” that promoted individual and collective efficacy. Bryk and Schneider (2003) and Seto and Sarros proffered that the servant leadership of principals was encouraged to develop the relational trust of teachers who depended on their guidance for professional development. Stosich (2018) highlighted that the principal was the “coherence crafter” responsible for collaborative decision-making and interactive

relationships within the school. Teachers seemed to trust their leaders, who exhibited equity and fairness. Boyce and Bower (2018) further concurred that principals needed to be servant leaders to guide and advise their teachers who faced fear and uncertainty in an environment, especially when they did not understand their students. Seto and Sarros emphasized that the principal, as the servant leader, should be the role model demonstrating transformative advocacy to empower teachers to contribute their best practices to the institution.

The efforts of educational leaders to promote CRSL was not new to the current scholarly literary works on culturally responsive curriculum implementation. Lee (2001) proposed relevant indicators of educators who demonstrated cultural diversity by accepting the differences between individuals of different ages, from various ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, religious affiliation, sexual orientations, physically disabled, and the socioeconomically disadvantaged. Lee posited that the culturally responsive school used cultural diversity to maintain academic achievement with a curriculum which reflected multiculturalism guided by a diverse staff who is encouraged to professionally develop themselves to obtain knowledge on various cultures. Lee concluded that within a culturally responsive school, there were intervention strategies to address social justice issues and there was an evident connection to the all stakeholders in the wider community. Furthermore, Martin and Dowson (2009) emphasized that diverse students required a daily connection to the school via a multicultural curriculum content, interpersonal relationships with teachers to encourage trustworthiness, and the use of culturally familiar pedagogical relationships. School programs included the use of

"Problem Based Learning -PBL", which proved to be useful in allowing students to advocate for themselves and their peers (Peterson et al., 2013).

The findings from past research by Johnson (2012) and Nieto (1999) were that it was crucial for administrators in a diverse educational setting to be guided by culturally responsive guidelines. These guidelines included encouraging a connection to the community; multiculturalism as an embedded part of school life with a curriculum reflecting several cultures; the voices of students in the school environment; dedicated, responsible, decisive, liable, understanding and mindful educators; a diverse staff with meaningful stakeholder engagement and a school which catered to the needs of ELLs and the differently-abled. In 2012, Bode et al. and Johnson highlighted, in separate studies, that the guiding principles of a culturally responsive school were grounded in cosmopolitanism which incorporated leaders who exhibited moral inclusion and mindfulness by being sensitive to cultural differences, practiced social justice, respected individual opinions in a process which emphasize a positive teacher-student relationship. Bode et al. and Johnson highlighted the importance of well qualified certified teachers who implement pedagogy to engage different ways of learning which include a motivational framework embedded in self-determined and self-directed relevant learning. Bode et al. and Johnson posited the relevance of school leaders collating empirical data to complete equity audits which provided accountability and transparency.

The Mexican American Studies (MAS) was implemented in 1998 by the Tucson United School District (TUSD) in Arizona as a solution in the schools' curriculum to integrate immigrants into the White-dominated society (Behbahani et al., 2019; Catone,

2012). The educators were assisted by the University of Arizona, which was working on this initiative since 1968 to develop and implement MAS (University of Arizona, 2017). Acosta and Mir (2012) highlighted that students' experiences and cultural backgrounds were used in the curriculum to enhance their critical thinking, which led to positive learning outcomes. Class activities consisted of research projects and open discussions based on social justice issues. Catone (2012) and Kunnie (2010) revealed an increase in students' achievement paralleled by a decrease in drop-outs. Orozco (2012) stated that educators in other districts would have replicated MAS, but controversies and the alleged intervention of government leaders led to its revocation in 2010. Noriega (2017) postulated that leaders might have banned MAS because of anti-American world views and anti-White ideas in curricula content. In 2018, the lobbying for MAS resurfaced in Texas, and leaders enacted it in Houston with an expansion of the curriculum to all ethnic groups (Swaby, 2018).

The Internal Coherence Program (ICP), which included survey indicators within interdependent domains could expand into the coherence of a whole school project (Elmore et al., 2014). Subsequently, Shaked and Schechter (2016) emphasized that it was relevant to view schools systematically as if there were individual parts that affected the workings of the whole school. Stosich et al. (2017) identified teamwork and collaboration as critical within the school supporting interdependence to promote the internal coherence factors which were relevant in creating consistency within the organization. On the other hand, Watson (2018) recommended that principals give teachers the independence to develop whole school coherence by experimenting with appropriate,

culturally responsive practices. The internal coherence rubric expanded by Watson from Elmore et al. measured the level of teachers' psychological safety, their involvement in instructional decisions, and the extent to which the principal supported teamwork. Both Elmore et al. (2014) and Watson (2018) purported the significance of instructional leadership, leadership for learning, organizational strategy, collaboration, individual, and collective efficacy.

The implementation of a theory of action, recommended by Lowenhaupt et al. (2016) included using effective drivers which were the strengths of the school to realize positive learning outcomes. Stosich (2017) indicated that administrators used theories of action to modify teachers' beliefs, values, norms, skills, practice, and relationships. Kraft et al. (2018) were the implementers of the in-school coaching programs that purported to build and sustain capacity in schools, and proved to analyze and evaluate teachers' classroom practices. It was not new as a strategy used by principals who highlighted that it allowed teachers to share best practices with their colleagues, encouraged teamwork, and built communities of practice (Edmondson, 2013; Stosich, 2017). By employing in-school coaching programs, school leaders were able to integrate external school policies with the schools' priorities to manage instruction and establish internal school coherence (Stosich, 2018).

Some school administrators were using improvement science to develop new knowledge to accelerate students' capacity by using a process to identify problems and set inquiry goals to find solutions (Gomez et al., 2016; Lewis, 2015). The improvement Science process was in a plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycle by Aguilar et al. (2017) who

advised educational leaders to indicate specific problems after a needs assessment: focused on essential participants; evaluated variations in performance; systems thinking; processes and outcomes measurement with consistent feedback to assess individual, and collective efficacy. They utilized the PDSA cycle to escalate improvement. Bryk (2018) highlighted that the School District of Menomonee Falls (SDMF) used improvement Science, which incorporated investing in all stakeholders, recognition of growth regularly, and allocating the resources to make it possible; preparation of principals and teacher leaders as coaches and facilitators of improvement. In California, districts were encouraged to engage in a continuous improvement process to develop strategies that leaders monitored for effectiveness (Aguilar et al., 2017). The Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) used the principles of improvement Science to increase their students' access to colleges.

The school climate initiative might have originated in 2007 with the work of the National School Climate Center, which promoted children's healthy social and emotional development, character in education, an increase in academic achievement, and a decrease in disciplinary problems, which resulted in suspensions and high attrition. Wang and Degol (2016) indicated that leaders approved the implementation of school climate in 24 states, including California, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Wisconsin, with school leaders demonstrating the relevance of diversity, multiculturalism, and cultural responsiveness as necessary in educational policy. Piscatelli and Lee (2011) posited that educational administrators in these states focused on the school climate initiative to improve the quality and good character of school life.

In a review of information available to school personnel to document the character and quality of school-life, Olsen et al. (2018) assessed previous research on school climate from relevant sources to understand the actual measures and strategies to maximize benefits from these efforts. The findings from this study included analysis and comparison of the technical features and characteristics of appropriate and useful measures on school climate. This study was critical as it showed school climate relevance as a positive direct impact on success indicators that could contribute to superior achievement by students, a reduction in dropouts, a marked increase in retention of teachers as well as reduced the advent of violence in schools.

In a quantitative study, Shure et al. (2020) the behavioral styles of students and how school counselors identified and recommended corrective remedial and advanced student-interventions using the Multicultural Counseling Theory (MCT) to guide this effort. Shure et al. supported the view that a cultural discontinuity, bias, socialization issues exist between the school and home experiences of low-income minority students, and posited that misalignment contributed towards matters such as disproportionality in teacher attention and chronic student underachievement because of that attention. Shure et al. concluded that MCT enhanced culture as an avenue and the perspective to establish normalcy and referencing on individual beliefs, personal behavior, and attitudes. The results of this assessment could be used by teachers to decide the type of intervention efforts and whether they are required. Appropriate teacher intervention could allow for student success while catering for the diverse backgrounds and individual abilities of each student.

In their study on the role of ethos and leadership in the integration of non-Catholic children, Faas et al. (2018) conducted nine semi-structured interviews with three principals and six teachers in one denominational Catholic and two multi-denominational schools in Ireland. Faas et al. found that school ethos could be formal or informal, including values and goals, and was necessary for positive, diverse school environments. They revealed that it was significant to understand how classroom pedagogical practice symbolized school ethos in students' preconceptions and student-teacher interactions. Similarly, Hammonds (2017) conducted focus group exercises with three early college high school principals, 45 teachers, students, and parents in North Carolina by employing a qualitative multi-site, multi-case study to assess principals' leadership in diverse schools. Hammonds concluded that each principal believed that they exemplified socially just and democratic attributes to lead culturally responsively.

In a qualitative study, Milner (2016) discussed a personal approach of a Black male middle school Science and Math teacher who experimented with and adopted culturally responsive practices in a classroom of students from an urban location. Milner indicated the usefulness of culturally responsive classroom pedagogy to address students' difficulties and diverse challenges. Further to this, in a qualitative collective case study with four voluntary teacher participants, Benegas (2019) assessed teacher learning and CRSL in the United States through different methods, which included field observation, journaling, interviews, and recordings of participant meetings. The findings concluded that teachers were aware of existing CRP disparities despite significant effort and investments in fixing these. Likewise, in a middle-level education qualitative synthesis,

Kennedy et al. (2016) assessed 133 cultural responsiveness type-research study articles conducted across the United States. The two main findings were that only 14 articles that met the criteria as described by the conceptual framework and the identification of a lack of shared definitions, theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, and foci made it challenging to synthesize information across articles. This study was relevant as Kennedy et al. (2016) were able to show that the 14 consistent articles revealed a focus on students of color, high poverty, immigrants, Latinos, and Hawaiians mostly in "urban" settings.

In a quantitative, multivariate multiple regression analysis to investigate the relationship between the two CRT components, social and cultural teaching sensitivity, and teachers' engagement. Abacioglu et al. (2019) conducted an online survey where participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale to 40 items about teacher practices in the curriculum, classroom management, student assessment, cultural enrichment, and teacher instruction. Findings revealed that significant relationships existed in cultural and social sensitive teaching and how these influenced the way that teachers engage CRT. The study was significant as incorporating teacher experiences and set exercises into teacher development and training could be beneficial for all students despite individual cultural mooring. In like manner, by doing a survey among Ontario K-12 practicing teachers who were either Canadian or internationally trained, comprising of 40-item, Vidwans and Faez (2019) used their responses to compare individual teacher's pedagogy and perceptions of self-efficacy and cultural responsiveness. Overall, Vidwans and Faez found that teachers' perceptions were consistent on self-efficacy and general pedagogy,

while internationally trained participants believed to a greater extent in their self-efficacy and how that helped in supporting CRP. The study was significant as teacher understanding, beliefs, and training could be beneficial for enhancing cultural responsiveness in a socially diverse school setting. In both studies, the researchers emphasized the importance of teacher professional development and culturally social sensitive awareness to engage diverse learners.

By focusing on theory postulated in existing research, Simpkins et al. (2017) explored the impact of culture on cultural responsiveness regarding after-school organized events and activities. The findings from this study showed that staff, when aware and responsive to youth concerns, could strategically guide to prevent inequality or strife, especially in after-school activities, and if rules and guidelines were in the language understood by all and not only in the English Language; to prevent possible racial profiling. This study was significant as it described how likely it was to manage cultural diversity in a complex environment, which was integral. Brown and Crippen (2017) posited similar findings when they conducted group interviews with six science teachers from five different high schools and performed classroom observations to appreciate participants' understanding of CRP and how they enacted what they learned. The findings from this study showed that teachers understood that students learned well from indirect experiences and supplemented that with classroom exercises that encouraged discussion and interaction to promote student learning, individual leadership, and student's voice. Simpkins et al. and Brown and Crippen found their findings

important and relevant as they highlighted how teachers must be aware of the unique needs of students from different ethnic and social backgrounds.

Researchers postulated that some principals felt that it was critical to employ and retain quality teachers to promote and increase in students' achievement (Berkowitz et al. (2017). Darling-Hammond (2017) emphasized that the United States needed to recruit new teachers through scholarships to provide adequate well-qualified teachers in the classrooms after analyzing and evaluating the recruitment and payment of teachers in Ontario, Canada, and Singapore. Darling-Hammond agreed that incentive grants to support certification were necessary for the United States, and suggested increased salaries to promote teacher retention. The author revealed that it was essential that the United States leaders look at the comprehensive internship programs in Canada and Singapore, which included extensive coaching and mentoring for new teachers, focusing on policies supporting equity in access to schools with well-qualified teachers. Darling-Hammond stressed that it was critical to include an anti-racist, and anti-biased multicultural education program with more intensive content and less window dressing frills limited to seasonal events. Johnson (2012) concurred that multicultural education should be part of the curriculum in schools where there is a connection between the home and school incorporating equity and social justice.

Equity audits were valuable practical tools for educational leaders to work together with other stakeholders to assess their programs to identify structural inequalities in their schools (Bode et al., 2012; Dupree, 2016). Equity audits were systemic methods used to determine and evaluate whether all students in schools were adequately and

equally receiving resources and were in programs relevant to their individual needs (Dupree, 2016). Equity audits ensured systemic equity, based on the principle that every learner receives a quality education with supporting optimum resources. Dupree assessed the equitable distribution of efficient programs, resources, student ethnic representation, and teacher quality by accumulating and analyzing data retrieved from schools and districts from a location in the United States. Bode et al. and Dupree emphasized that the results of equity audits should be positively accepted and initiated ongoing dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders to ensure that educational administrators were liable and responsible for improved achievement for all students and promoting equitable education.

Teachers feel psychologically safe and had trust in their principal in a supportive environment where they could build their individual and collective efficacy (Coburn et al., 2016). Likewise, King and McInerney (2014) and Kumar et al. (2018) underscored that motivated learners felt a sense of belonging in a culturally responsive, and supportive environment where they were safe and happy to develop the essential life skills to become productive members of society. The authors conceded that the indicators of the principles of motivation in a culturally responsive classroom included meaningfulness to students' culture, teachers' autonomy, and cultural competence with content and relatedness by communicating with and understanding the cultural diversity of students.

Summary and Conclusion

The planning of this literature review originated with the research of keywords, which I translated into concepts in a mind map. At first, I reviewed the abstracts in

articles within a three-year window but extended the time frame when there was limited information available primarily on the definition of cultural responsiveness and culturally responsive pedagogy. I employed a literature matrix to record, track, and quickly accessed peer-reviewed articles and books written by experts in the field. Inserting descriptive paraphrases into the matrix proved to be most helpful in completing this chapter. Also, my notes on references created an audit trail to identify the strengths and setbacks of articles. The evaluation of scholarly works for the alignment of the research problem, purpose, questions, the research methodology, and analysis was valuable for me to determine the quality of the articles and to identify an appropriate conceptual framework and research design (see Burkholder et al., 2016). I identified the ACL framework within a basic qualitative approach, with a focus on individual in-depth interviews (see Patton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2013). Most importantly, the location of the literary gap enabled my focus on southern Texas.

The information in chapter two established the foundation of my study by obtaining valuable information that was similar to my topic from scholarly works, books, and periodicals. Most of these credible works were peer-reviewed and within the current academic conversations. Significantly, the accumulated literature enabled me to see through a broader context lens. It was relevant for me to utilize seminal works and past research on cultural responsiveness to ground my study within the literature to establish a gap. It was also essential to track culturally responsive pedagogy, which time lined the implementation of a culturally responsive curriculum. The primary intent was to

accumulate quality articles and to present an unbiased interpretation of the information while at the same time structuring the pathway for my research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas. In this chapter, I explain the basic qualitative research design with a constructivist philosophy and an accompanying rationale for the approach. My role as the researcher and the instrument of data collection and analysis are also discussed. I give special consideration to the issues of trustworthiness and ethics.

Research Design and Rationale

I selected a basic qualitative design because I needed to obtain the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in one location in southern Texas. Their experiences regarding culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices were essential to this study. This study was exploratory, so the research questions could not be answered using the quantitative paradigm, which required a positivist philosophical orientation within a theoretical framework and numerically relevant data collection depicting a statistical analysis to respond to a stated hypothesis with yes or no responses to research questions (see Babbie, 2016). Instead, I opted for the basic qualitative design employing individual interviews as the data collection method to answer the research questions.

The following were the two research questions addressed in this study:

RQ1: What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about implementing a culturally responsive curriculum in southern Texas?

RQ2: What do middle school principals consider as they develop and implement culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?

I contemplated other methods within the qualitative approach that proved to be inappropriate for this study. I examined the Delphi methodology, where the data would provide best practices but not explain what is happening and what influences principals' actions (see Linstone & Turoff, 2011). I did not consider the case study because I focused on principals' actions and attitudes. This study did not lend itself to a case study, which builds on multiple sources to gain a snapshot of all aspects of a given phenomenon in a given setting (see Yin, 2017). Instead, I opted for a basic qualitative study design employing individual interviews as the data collection method to answer the research questions. This study was amenable to the basic qualitative approach because I aimed to obtain the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals. Their experiences about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices were relevant to this study. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) posited that the generic qualitative research, which is exploratory, seeks to understand a phenomenon or the experiences of people. As a qualitative researcher, I adopted the ACL conceptual framework within the interpretive or constructivist paradigm in social science, which resonates research answers to the why and how questions (see Patton, 2015). The philosophical orientation for this study was constructivist because of the emphasis on the individual interview process to obtain the principals' experiences (ontology) to contribute new knowledge (epistemology) to the education field (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015). The framework, within the interpretive or

constructivist paradigm, dictated research answers to the why and how questions within the qualitative design. I wanted to discover what the middle school principals thought about culturally responsive curriculum implementation and what they were doing in their schools.

Role of the Researcher

I was the instrument of participant recruitment and data collection, and I transcribed the data and reported the results. I used purposeful sampling to recruit and interview middle school principals in southern Texas. By focusing on Texas where I never worked and knew no individuals, I avoided any preconceived biases about the location and any relationship conflicts within the group I studied. Because I used the qualitative approach, I worked to mitigate any research bias I had by employing member-checking, peer debriefing, peer review, audit trails, and bracketing (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I kept a reflective journal that included memos and the audit trail disclosing any biases or discrepancies for the duration of the study. The continuous collaboration with my committee at Walden subjected this study to a consistent review process to address bias and the employment of a systematic approach to data collection and analysis.

Methodology

This section includes the procedures for the recruitment of participants, participant logic, and instrumentation details. The inclusion of the data analysis plan outlining processes for transcription, coding, categories, and themes are familiar to qualitative researchers who might address this differently. Credibility, confirmability,

dependability, transferability, and ethical considerations are all discussed under the umbrella of trustworthiness.

Participant Selection Logic

After obtaining IRB approval (Walden IRB #12-16-20-0975138**)**, I purposefully selected 10 middle school principals as participants. The logic for participant selection included public middle school principals in southern Texas with 2 to 5 years' experience as a middle school principal and a diverse school population with a self-reported presence of minority ethnic groups in middle Grades 6, 7, and\or 8 with 300 to 1,200 enrolled students. Middle school principals with 2 to 5 years' experience in their field were competent in understanding the leadership issues in schools and were more open to establishing the beginning of trust in the interviewer-interviewee relationship. Although southern Texas is described as diverse, the research questions for this study were predetermined and were relevant to a diverse environment, hence the fulfillment of a criterion to ensure the presence of minority groups in the schools. Most middle schools in the chosen location housed Grades 6 and 7 or 8 with an average population of 300 to 1,200 students. Santamaría and Santamaría (2016) and Santamaría et al. (2014) used three to nine interviews, which were adequate to add new knowledge on the cultural responsiveness of leaders. From previous research conducted by Yob and Brewer (2016), nine to 12 interviews result in saturation. The possibility for saturation occurred if sufficient participants provided similar or exact information and nothing new was forthcoming to add to the collected data (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Instrumentation

I used the ACL conceptual framework indicators as a guide in structuring the semi-structured open-ended questions to appropriately derive information to answer the research questions as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research questions	Main interview questions—Probes will follow based on responses
RQ1 What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas?	1. What do you believe is the meaning of culturally responsiveness? Can you give examples? 2. In what ways do you implement a culturally responsive curriculum in your school? Describe these ways and say how important they were to you. 3. Describe how you lead your staff and students. What are your strategies? 4. Describe your best leadership practices for a diverse school population. In what ways would you say you are a transformative leader?
RQ2 What do middle school principals consider as they develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?	5. Describe your experiences in developing and implementing a culturally responsive curriculum. Give examples of how you support your teachers in the delivery of the curriculum. 6. How do you approach issues of race and social injustice? Can you give examples. 7. In what ways do all stakeholders have a voice in your school? Can you give examples? 8. What are your beliefs on leadership? How do you think your beliefs help or hinder your leadership role? 9. Describe the issues you believe affect your students and teachers in and out of school. Can you give examples and say how you support them when they experience issues?

The interviews were approximately 30 to 45 minutes long and were audio recorded via Zoom. I developed an interview guide form to inform participants of the process as seen in Appendix B. I created a scaffolding of questions from simple recall information to open-ended questions.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

After obtaining IRB approval, I reached out to recruit participants by using the search link on LinkedIn to find middle school principals from southern Texas (Appendix A) and sent requests to connect with them and their emails. As my invitations to connect were accepted, I sent an invitation email that included the criteria for participation. If they showed interest, I emailed them the consent form and requested that they responded with "I consent," as well as the times they would be available for a Zoom interview. I emailed them a confirmation of the interview date and time as well as the interview guide so they had time to consider the questions before the interview. I selected middle school principals based on their LinkedIn profile, the criteria selection, and their consent to the terms of the research. I accessed sufficient participants, so there was no need to enable snowballing as previously planned. Each interview was limited to one participant at a time conducted via Zoom convenient to the participant. There was no need to reschedule follow-up interviews in case of cancellation or to clarify responses.

Before commencing the interview, as the interviewer, I did a technology check on Zoom to ensure that the tool was working to remove issues that could affect the conducting and recording of the interview. I also used my IPad with the application to voice record in case there were unforeseen challenges in recording on Zoom. I included in my scheduling time a confirmation email to the participants that they should check with me 5 minutes before the start of the session in case there were setbacks such as equipment failure, computer hardware failure, or internet connectivity problems. It would have been necessary to request a phone number before the interview to contact the

participant if an unforeseen cancellation occurred. If the participant was willing, the interview could have proceeded over the phone, or I would have rescheduled for another time at their convenience. These events did not materialize, and there were no variations in the data collection plans and procedures.

I conducted a comprehensive introduction by using the interview guide to explain the study, address any questions or concerns, and review the rules and time management to establish a rapport of trust, respect, and confidentiality. I engaged the principals by using responsive probes within the structure of the interview questions to extend the narrative and past experiences, if necessary, without leading their responses. I followed the interview guide and refrained from sharing personal opinions with the interviewee or making conclusions on the topic or reactions during the interview. The process was about the participants voicing their experiences. After conducting the interviews, I manually transcribed the interviews to return them to the participant principals for member-checking and assurance via email that the transcripts were accurate. I amended the transcripts appropriately.

Data Analysis Plan

I was reflective and reflexive when doing the data collection and analysis within the qualitative approach. As a result of the qualitative research process being interpretive, I ensured that there was credibility and trustworthiness in outcomes (see Patton,2015). I transcribed the data from interviews to replicate the data collection as the participants intended. I used a data management plan to include an iterative process that

promoted a working knowledge of the data, a formative data analysis, identification of gaps, analysis of the data on a timely basis, and an on-going review of data by peers.

Transcription, Coding, Categories and Themes. Coding, categories, and themes were familiar terms within the data analysis process. Coding was relevant in qualitative research and was the labeling of words or phrases which represent the contribution of participants' experiences to the research process (see Saldaña, 2016). I opted for the codes to emerge from the transcript to generate "fresh and rich" information instead of precoding or pre-theming before starting the data collection (see Patton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Codes derived from participants had similarities and differences, which allowed grouping into identified categories. I transcribed each interview in this study, and this was an accurate representation and interpretation of data. I returned the transcriptions to the participants for member checking. I employed open coding to extract codes in the participants' words on an Excel spreadsheet, put similar codes into categories, and then assigned themes to answer the research questions (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The process was iterative, and I needed to revisit the data several times to ensure confirmability, credibility, and dependability. I engaged dialogic engagement, by collaborating with my dissertation committee to review the data analysis for greater reflexivity (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016).

I promoted rigor in this study by having a data analysis journal to reflect and document decisions, aha moments, new ideas, change, complications and setbacks (see Patton, 2015). It was important for me to be reflective and reflexive in monitoring my

assumptions, biases, fears, constraints, blinders, pressures, limitations, beliefs, and values, emphasizing that member checking, dialogic engagement, and peer review were relevant in promoting confirmability, dependability, credibility, and trustworthiness in findings (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I disclosed discrepant cases when there were meanings related to this study, but not shared among participants.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I established an iterative research process that revealed believable findings. For iteration, I fulfilled the requirements of alignment among the research question and the data collection method, analysis, and conclusions. The use of the qualitative approach in the study reflected an iterative process supported by a conceptual framework and a comprehensive literature review indicative of current scholarly works with the majority of articles within a three-year window (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I employed a purposeful sampling of participants who met the criteria for selection. As evident in other successful scholarly works, the interview data collection method enhanced the credibility of the study. The use of individual interviews, followed by a comprehensive data analysis produced convincing findings (see Shenton, 2015). The data analysis employed by researchers such as Santamaría and Santamaría (2015) provided relevant guidance for application in this study. The consistent involvement and instructive feedback from peers and colleagues' dialogic engagement promoted the process's credibility and trustworthiness. A reflective journal, an audit trail, and adopting the bracketing method allowed my participants to contribute and express their responses

freely, which was essential for credibility (see Burkholder et al., 2016). I was familiar with bracketing my personal beliefs and past experiences during my tenure for over thirty (30) years as a leader in education.

Confirmability

My reflective memos, member checks, audit trails documented in a journal, and accurate referencing of participants' quotes with detailed and relevant descriptions were crucial for confirmability in this study (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Shenton, 2015). I minimized my bias by using a proven practical model, the ACL conceptual framework employed by other researchers in the education field. This framework's indicators were used to frame the interview questions. Members of my committee at Walden University and who were not part of the study further ensured confirmability. My transcriptions of the interviews confirmed by member checking supported by manual coding in the participants' exact words substantiated confirmability. The intention to preserve collected data, the keeping of a research journal, memo notes, and an audit trail endorsed the research process.

Dependability

Dependability was evident in my basic qualitative research design that included an operationally complete data collection with a consistent and on-going reflective journal appraisal (see Patton, 2015). I efficiently recorded the iterative process by demonstrating a comprehensive data collection and analysis. The emphasis on rigor was apparent in the research's trustworthiness by the use of a proven conceptual framework, research design, data collection, and analysis mirroring exemplary research ethics to

enhance dependability (Anderson, 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). There was documentation of an audit trail that recorded and explained all the steps and decisions taken in the research process (Anderson, 2017). The study "hung" around the research question with a purposeful sampling strategy projecting adequate participant size and a comprehensive data presentation, reflecting a range of evidence to promote dependability (Anderson, 2017). As an interviewer and data analyzer, my role as a researcher-instrument of data collection indicated the necessary depth and details to proffer reliable findings.

Transferability

My research study employed the proven data collection method of individual interviews within a basic qualitative design, which were transferable to different environments or settings. Coding, categorizing, and theming exemplified by experts in the field, such as Patton (2015) and Saldaña (2016), set the standards to replicate this study to broader contexts. Transferability should be possible in other settings because of the location for this study in an environment with the participants leading schools where there was a diverse population. The use of rich, meaningful, detailed descriptions of the setting, the participants and their responses, and continuous self and peer assessment of the research process enhanced transferability.

Ethical Considerations

I demonstrated ethical behavior at all times to protect the participants by keeping identities confidential. For this reason, there are stringent arrangements in research institutions to protect participants. At Walden University, the IRB set the standards for

the protection of participants in this study. The IRB scrutinizes qualitative studies because it is a people-centered process with the researcher most times the instrument of data collection. I showed detailed proof that no one can identify the participants, and there was no breach of their privacy or confidentiality. As a qualitative researcher, I maintained that the participants were only known to me and ensured that responses were kept confidential. I have evidence that respondents gave informed consent and that they were aware of all the research details, including the benefits and setbacks to them (Roth & von Unger, 2018).

There was no reciprocity or offering of any reward, gifts, or money to individuals taking part in this study. I planned to share the findings of the study with participants. As mentioned in the interview process, a research consent form was acknowledged by the participants for their consent, confidentiality, recording of the interviews and the use of some of their exact words in the data analysis. I embraced the ethical and moral research standards of Walden. I began data collection after obtaining the approval from the IRB. For this process to be approved, a participation consent form, the interview questions, and the assurance of privacy and confidentiality of participants were submitted. Qualitative studies' subjective nature necessitates a rigid self and peer assessment of the researcher's ethics, which I reflected in a journal.

The ethical challenges of protecting privacy, minimizing harm, and respecting others' shared experiences were personal to me as the researcher. The revelation of the assumptions and limitations of this study indicated that there was no intent to direct responses to shape the findings to suit the researcher (see Patton, 2015). I introspected on

my bias about the topic for the duration of the research process by keeping a journal with discrepant notes. Information gathered was second to the privacy of the participants. I aimed to shelve rich, detailed description to minimize harm and respected the experiences of others. I chose morality and integrity by intending to disclose if data was compromised. I stored the transcribed information on my computer hard drive and thereafter locked in a bank safety deposit box at Scotia Bank for five years before destruction.

It was essential that I consistently revisited ethical considerations during the research process. I remained cognizant of the reflections of authors who realized that the participants' contributions would be compromised during the research process and either aborted the project or just omitted the contributions from the study (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Honesty, trustworthiness, and ethical morality were my watchwords. In this study, participants could have withdrawn at any time, and I revealed discrepant findings. Ravitch and Carl (2016) posited that there is bias in all research, but it is the researcher's ethical responsibility to reflect on biases, assumptions, and beliefs to produce an honest representation of outcomes.

Summary

This study's focus was on the experiences of middle school principals in southern Texas. The constructivist philosophical orientation with an emphasis on the individual’s experiences was real and informed new knowledge to promote social change. The qualitative approach was embedded in the researcher’s interpretation of people’s experiences to contribute solutions to a problem for social change. The highly

interpretive aspect of the paradigm with the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection necessitated an investigative process wrapped around continuous self-assessment, awareness of possible pitfalls, and responsiveness. The choice of a qualitative approach for my study led me to evaluate credibility, ethics, and trustworthiness in the research process. I hoped that by using a conceptual framework embedded in the individual interview process with a rigorous data collection and analysis, the findings on a culturally responsive curriculum implementation will be meaningful for policymakers and leaders in diverse middle schools.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas.

The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas?

RQ2: What do middle school principals consider as they develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?

In this chapter, I present the setting of the study, the demographics of the location, the details of the data collection process, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results displayed in tables and figures.

Research Setting

The educational system in south Texas exemplifies a diverse society in the United States. In the 2017-18 school year, 27.8% of the student population in Texas were White, a decrease from 43% in 2000 (TEA, 2019). In 2017-18, there were 55.2% Hispanics, 12.6% Blacks, and 4.4 % Asians, with a projection that the Hispanic population would continue to increase up to the year 2022 (TEA, 2019). Barraza and Martinez (2018) indicated that the focus of educators for their learners was on literacy and advanced Math, which starts in elementary school. That focus set the foundation for middle school students to take the Texas Success Initiative exams in Reading and Math in Grade 8

(Barraza & Martinez, 2018). The expectation was that in order to realize improved middle school students' performance, educators should engage in problem solving, academic discourse, and critical analysis, especially if they hoped to realize high performance in state assessments. It was relevant that the middle school principals in this region of the United States managed schools with a diverse student population that might be 70% at risk and 99% economically disadvantaged (TEA, 2019). The middle school principals who served as participants in my study were from that catchment area.

Description of the School Population

The demographic breakdown of the information, including the range of variations, that participants described about their respective school populations regarding teachers and students are listed in Table 2, Figure 2, and Table 3.

Table 2

Student Population at Interviewee Schools

Participant response	Students			
	% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Other
P01	3	10	85	2
P02	10	10	80	0
P03	5	7	83	5
P04	7	6	87	0
P05	1	1	97	1
P06	2	5	92	1
P07	13	7	80	0
P08	8	17	75	0
P09	7	10	80	3
P10	18	1	78	3

The significant majority among the students was Hispanics when compared to Blacks, with an underrepresentation of Whites and persons of different origins. The student populations for schools managed by the participants were between the study criterion of 300 and 1,200. Participants roughly estimated their school population as shown in Table 42 as 75% to 97% Hispanic, 1% to 18% White, 1% to 17% Black, and 1% to 5% other students. In each school, there were ELLs and students who required ESL and special education assistance. Among the teaching staff, the majority was Hispanic, and there were more White teachers in two schools. In nine of the schools, there was a small compliment of up to 10% Black teachers as shown in Table 3. There were no Black teachers at one school.

Table 3

Teacher Population at Interviewee Schools

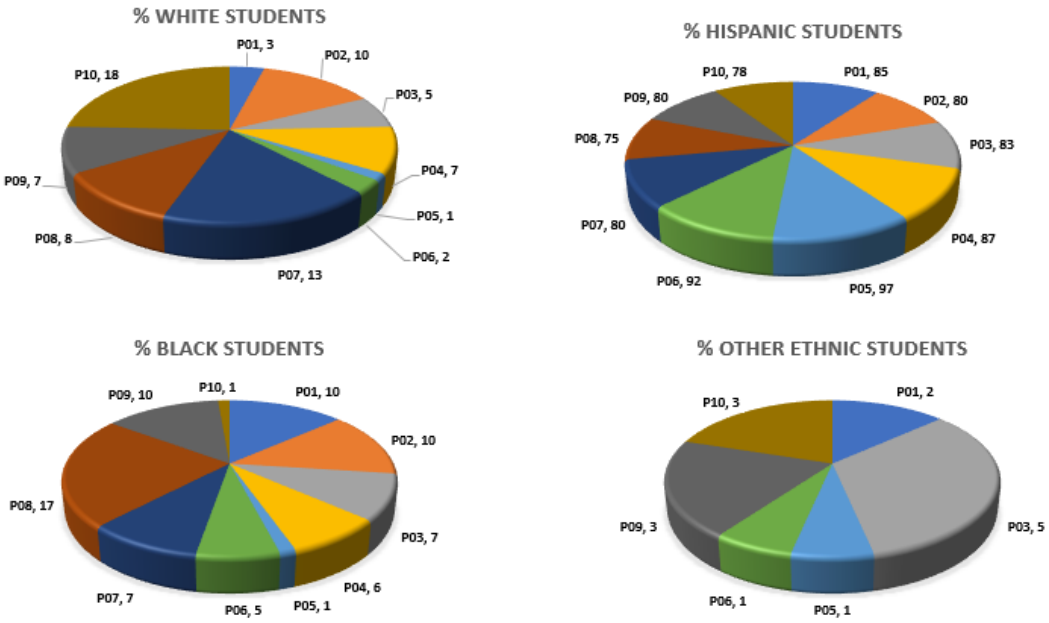
Principal response	Teachers		
	% Whites	% Blacks	% Hispanics
P01	25	3	72
P02	20	5	75
P03	30	8	62
P04	10	10	80
P05	10	10	80
P06	15	10	75
P07	10	5	85
P08	55	5	40
P09	72	6	22
P10	30	0	70

There was a sprinkling of Asians at six of these schools (shown in Table 2 as the % Other). The breakdown of teacher demographics is shown in Table 3. The diverse

population reflected in the schools has cultural influences of mainly Mexicans and Whites and to a lesser extent, Blacks and Asians.

Figure 2

Demographic Representation of Student Population by Race at Interviewee Schools



Demographics

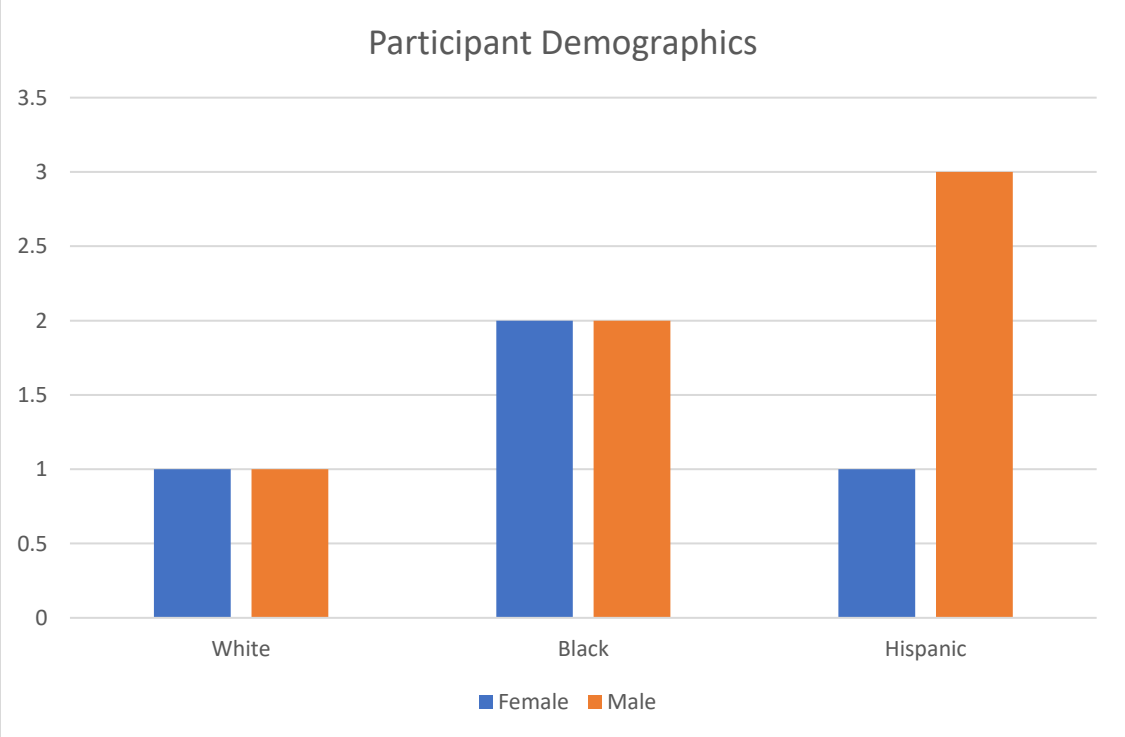
The purposeful selection of middle school principals as participants for this study were set within a multicultural demographic outlook in southern Texas. These principals fulfilled the criteria for this study. Four of the participants were females. There were two Whites, four Blacks, and four Hispanics. Figure 3 captures the demographic spread in full, based on the gender and race of the participants. Each of the 10 participants provided data for my study. The participants were from middle school in educational districts that

span a large geographical area in southern Texas. Participants were anonymous to one another and were unaware that other interviews were conducted.

From Figure 3 on participant demographics, the mutually exclusive spread of Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics are highlighted for comparison. Culturally responsive catalysts, individual abilities, and possible responses of each of the interviewees were highly likely to deal with similar sociotechnical issues including curriculum management, racial harmony, resource management, discipline, school performance, and student success.

Figure 3

Participant Gender and Race Demographics



Data Collection

After the IRB's approval, the LinkedIn platform was used to search for middle school principals in southern Texas. From that search, a total of 35 invitations were sent, and 10 of the invitees responded favorably and became participants in this study. I examined their LinkedIn profiles to confirm that they were from southern Texas and practicing as middle school principals. The selection criteria, as approved by the IRB, were that the participants should all have a minimum of 2 years' experience managing a school with 300 to 1,200 students in Grades 6, 7, and 8 and with a self-reported minority presence.

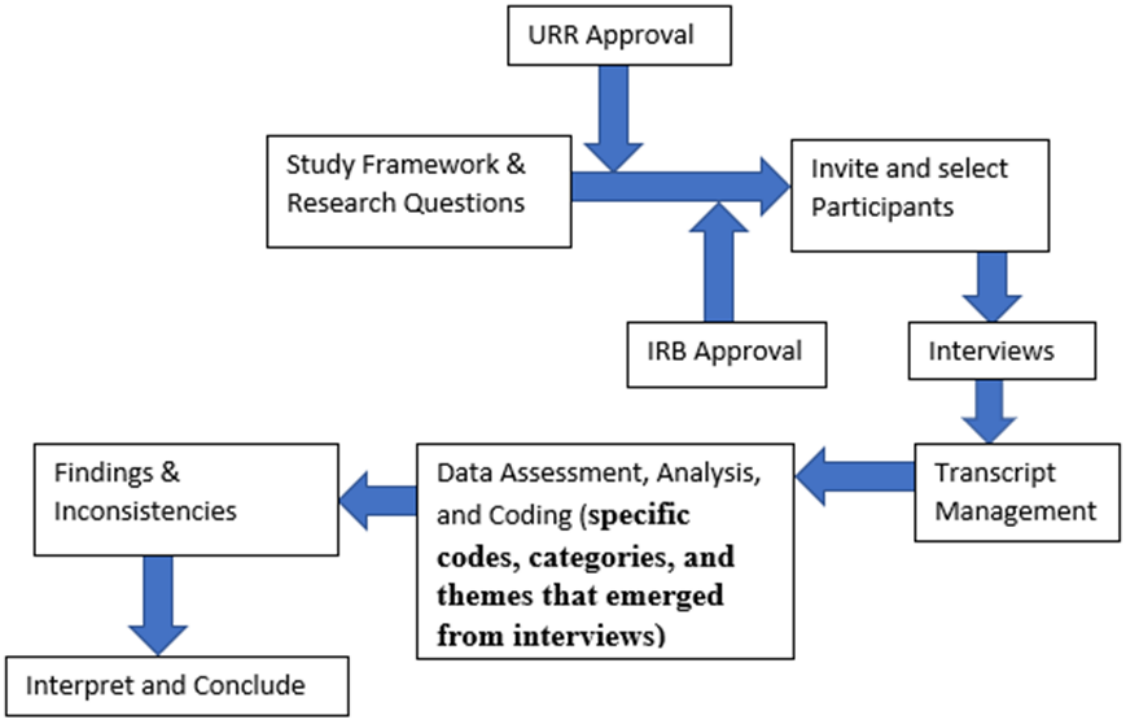
I depended on the accuracy of the information on their LinkedIn profiles and a base expectation that the invitees were honest in their response to confirm their LinkedIn status. Invitees who confirmed their status when they sent their email response and satisfied the requirements were selected as participants for this study. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the resultant international travel restrictions, and the enforcement of social distancing requirements, I conducted the individual face-to-face video interviews on a licensed Zoom platform as approved by the IRB. Interviews were conducted over a period from December 2020 to January 2021.

After reaching out to middle school principals in a semiurban area in southern Texas, I connected with the individuals who showed interest, fulfilled the criteria of the study, and consented voluntarily. Each of the 10 participants indicated a convenient time for the interviews, which were facilitated on Zoom Video Conferencing Platform.

Figure 4 shows the logical flow of activities I followed in the data acquisition, analysis, and management trail for this study. Data assessment and coding were done after the interview transcripts were de-identified and participants agreed that the information was correct.

Figure 4

Stepwise Logical Flow for This Study



Findings and inconsistencies are described in further details provided in Figure 5 in this chapter. Interpretations and conclusions follow in Chapter 5.

Interviews were set to fit the schedules and time preferences of the individual participants who were sent a Zoom link to access the session. These interviews were all conducted via the Zoom platform where they saw me and interacted in two-way communication during the session that took place in the privacy of my home.

The face-to-face Zoom interviews that I conducted were recorded on my computer and manually transcribed by me. I followed my interview guide, which included scaffolded open-ended questions aligned to the research questions and the ACL conceptual framework. There was no need for follow up interviews, and there were no technological challenges or unmanageable issues during the interview and transcript phase. I asked each participant to review and update the information they had provided during the interviews to ensure that they had shared the information they wished and could add any additional thoughts to their interview responses. After receiving the checked transcripts and feedback from the participants, the transcripts were stored in my password protected computer and external hard drive for the duration of the data analysis process. There were no variations in the data collection plan presented in Chapter 3.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The choice of the qualitative approach characterized the researcher as the instrument of data collection and data analysis. I ensured full confidentiality in the data collection and data analysis exercise throughout this study. Trustworthiness was maintained in the areas of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

The rigid adherence to the selection criteria to purposefully select the ten participants promoted credibility in this study. The use of the basic qualitive research method and approach as well as the use of interviews to collect data were employed in previous research enhancing the credibility in my study (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015). The creation of an interview protocol which included an interview guide

that was peer reviewed by my dissertation committee further endorsed credibility in this study (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I conducted the interviews, manually transcribed, coded, categorized and themed the data to ensure credibility of findings (see Saldaña, 2016). I met the requirements for alignment with the problem, purpose, research questions, the conceptual framework, data collection, and data analysis. I interpreted the findings by referencing previous studies and works from the literature which were peer reviewed and mostly current.

I removed bias by practicing bracketing when conducting the face-to-face individual interviews on Zoom (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The use of a journal to pen my reflective notes caused me to become my biggest critique (see Patton, 2015). The use of LinkedIn in the recruitment process to identify participants was a strategic decision to gain the trust among invitees and eventually the selected interviewees (see Shenton, 2004). They were not inhibited in any way and revealed their beliefs and experiences about curriculum implementation leadership practices. There was no withdrawal of participants once the interview date was confirmed. All the consenting participants remained interested in the study.

The systematic method to data analysis by previous scholars such as Santamaría and Santamaría, guided my approach to promote credibility in this study. Each interview was verified by the participant after my transcription (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The participants were given the opportunity to confirm or edit their responses. The use of the ACL framework added integrity by referencing indicators which were used in previous

peer reviewed scholarly works (Ayscue, 2016; Jayavant, 2016; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015).

A step-by-step data analysis plan was followed, and the information was inserted in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the listed questions and the relevant corresponding responses of all participants (see Saldaña, 2016). Dialogic engagement was enabled by my research committee members who consistently gave feedback throughout the research process to ensure credibility.

Transferability

The basic qualitative approach employing the ACL conceptual framework supported by individual interviews and a data analysis plan utilized by experts in the field are transferable to other contexts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016; Santamaría & Santamaría ,2015). Scholars could transfer the recruitment strategy and process from my study and use LinkedIn to perform other research and studies within the United States and elsewhere in the world. It was significant that this research occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic and internet connectivity was necessary and beneficial to collect the data. Face-to-face interviews (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012) proved to be effective on Zoom as a prescriptive social distancing method to collect data, especially in the unpredictable times such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While this study was conducted in southern Texas, the findings could be relevant and true for other diverse middle schools in the United States. The outcomes of this study could extend to and be applicable in Canada and the Caribbean where I worked, and experienced similar issues of diverse populations such as drugs, crime and socio-

technical and socio-economic challenges as highlighted by the participants in this study. The research process with the ACL conceptual framework adopted in this study could be used in other K-12 grade levels and possibly in higher education (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015).

Dependability

The interview guide and questions used in this study were purposefully selected based on a criteria list. I manually transcribed, member-checked, hand-coded, categorized, and themed the participants' responses to realize findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Saldaña, 2016; Shenton, 2004). To enhance dependability, the findings were developed by including ideas forwarded by participants and supported by, in some cases, the exact words they used (see Saldaña, 2016). Rigor was evident by using an iterative process with the qualitative paradigm and conceptual framework, data collection and analysis with the participants' exact words supported dependable findings (Anderson, 2017; Camfield, 2019). I kept a journal to document my reflections during this process. Rigor was further augmented by my Walden University committee members who advised and ensured that there was adherence to all facets of the research process (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The IRB at Walden University was a significant influence in ensuring the protection of participants in this study.

Confirmability

The research process was documented by keeping an audit trail and journal (see Patton, 2015) which were relevant during the data collection and analysis process. The findings were not influenced by my predispositions because I practiced bracketing by

consistently documenting reflective notes which was a significant reminder for me to remove bias (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I established rapport and trust with my participants by ensuring their confidentiality and preserving their identities which were known only to me as the instrument of data collection and analysis (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The interviews were conducted at the participants' convenience in a comfortable environment which preserved privacy, confidentiality, and trust to uphold the ethical procedures in this study (see Shenton, 2004). The use of the ACL conceptual framework enhanced confirmability in the findings of the study. The outcomes of this study corroborated the findings of other scholars such as Khalifa et al. (2016), and Santamaría & Santamaría (2016) in their previous works. The indicators of the ACL conceptual framework guided the data collection, coding, categorizing and the development of emergent themes resonating into a comprehensive data analysis to confirm outcomes. The use of tables and figures to display the data analysis process underlined confirmability in this study.

Data Analysis

After I transcribed the interviews in Microsoft Word, I sent them to the participants for their review. When participants verified the accuracy of their responses and returned them to me, I reread each transcript to strike out the unnecessary information and then read again to highlight relevant data.

I used the information from the interview questions, in Table 4, and the relevant data in each participant response to these questions to identify emerging codes. The indicators from the ACL conceptual framework were also significant aligning factors that

I considered and then did open coding. Similar emergent codes were then placed into emerging categories to answer the research questions which are aligned to the interview questions as shown in Table 4.

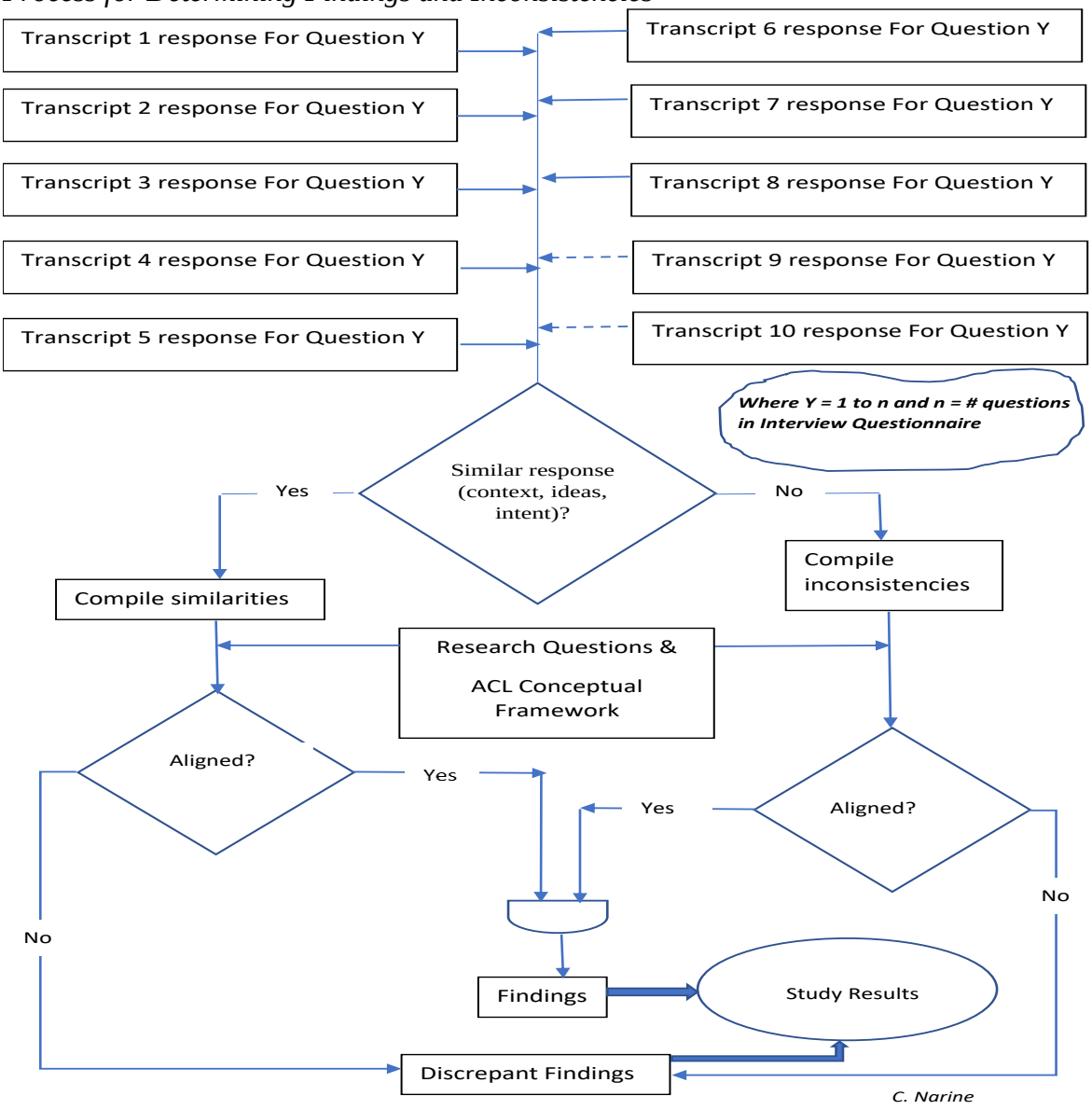
The responses from each transcript for question 1 were grouped together on a table with each response entered in a different cell. That allowed for maintenance of the data integrity and exclusivity from the other responses for the same question. A similar table was done for question 2. Tables were done for each question on the interview. Each table was kept separate and afterwards coded by identification of emerging and relevant information. Following that, the codes were reviewed to highlight categories and to show similarities and differences among the responses. Finally, the data were analyzed to identify similar categories for evolving and emerging themes.

The strategy, as shown in Figure 5 guided the compilation of findings built from the similar codes, categories, and themes that evolved from my analysis of the participant provided responses. The context, intent and ideas they provided were assessed against the research questions and the ACL conceptual framework that overarched this study and found to be aligned. Findings from this focus were kept in line with the intent of the study.

The interview questions were aligned with the research questions and the indicators of the ACL conceptual framework. Discrepant findings, also shown in Figure 5, evolved when all other information provided by participants were not aligned with the research questions and the ACL conceptual framework.

Figure 5

Process for Determining Findings and Inconsistencies



Description of Coding, Categories, and Themes

As detailed in Table 4, for Research Question 1 (RQ1), the following four themes emerged: The meaning of cultural responsiveness, culturally responsive curriculum

implementation, strategic leadership, and transformative culturally responsive leadership practices. Each of these themes comprised categories associated with them. One category that emerged was creating a culturally responsive curriculum (CRC) and another was curriculum implementation challenges. Other categories included student needs, cultural appreciation and belongingness, building collaborative cultures, leadership strategies, leadership behaviors for diversity, and transformative leadership practices.

The meaning of cultural responsiveness emerged with identified categories which focused on student needs and cultural appreciation and belongingness. These categories were built from codes which evolved from and were based on participant responses. Participants approached this question by indicating the need for students to "belong" and feel "welcomed," "safe" and culturally "appreciated" in an "inclusive environment."

The theme culturally responsive curriculum implementation emerged from the categories, creating a CRC and curriculum implementation challenges. Participants voiced the importance of "collaborative professional learning" and ensuring that "every child can see themselves" in the curriculum. Participants also highlighted that a "culturally responsive theme is not on the district mandated curriculum."

The theme strategic leadership emerged from the categories of building collaborative cultures and leadership strategies. Respondents revealed that "building a positive culture and climate" by collaborating with stakeholders was necessary to "build capacity" in their schools.

Table 4

Categories and Themes

Research questions	Interview questions	Categories	Themes
What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas?	What do you believe is the meaning of culturally responsiveness? Can you give examples?	Student needs Cultural appreciation and belongingness	The meaning of cultural responsiveness
	In what ways do you implement a culturally responsive curriculum in your school? Describe these ways and say how important they were to you.	Creating a culturally responsive curriculum (CRC) Curriculum implementation challenges	Culturally responsive curriculum (CRC) implementation
	Describe how you lead your staff and students. What are your strategies?	Building collaborative cultures Leadership strategies	Strategic leadership
	Describe your best leadership practices for a diverse school population. In what ways would you say you are a transformative leader?	Leadership behaviors for diversity Transformative leadership practices	Transformative culturally responsive leadership practices
What do middle school principals consider as they develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?	Describe your experiences in developing and implementing a culturally responsive curriculum. Give examples of how you support your teachers in the delivery of the curriculum.	. Exemplars of culturally responsive curriculum implementation	Experiencing culturally responsive curriculum (CRC) implementation
	How do you approach issues of race and social injustice? Can you give examples.	Approach to issues	Leadership approaches to racial and social injustice
	In what ways do all stakeholders have a voice in your school? Can you give examples?	"Collectiveness of everyone" Students' voice Teachers' voice Parents' voice Community voice	Stakeholders' voice
	What are your beliefs on leadership? How do you think your beliefs help or hinder your leadership role?	Beliefs Hindrances	The effect of beliefs on principals' leadership role
	Describe the issues you believe affect your students and teachers in and out of school. Can you give examples and say how you support them when they experience issues?	Students' struggles Teachers' issues School support	Supporting student and teacher issues

The theme transformative culturally responsive leadership practices linked with leadership behaviors for diversity and transformative leadership practices as categories. Participants identified “building trust” by “being collaborative” and “having those courageous conversations.”

As shown in Table 4 for RQ2, the following five themes emerged: experiencing culturally responsive curriculum implementation, leadership approaches to racial and social injustice, stakeholders’ voice, the effect of beliefs on principals’ leadership role, and supporting student and teacher issues. One category that emerged was exemplars of culturally responsive curriculum implementation. Other categories were approach to issues, collectiveness of everyone, students’ voice, teachers’ voice, parents’ voice, community voice, beliefs, hindrances, students’ struggles, teachers’ issues, and school support.

The theme, experiencing culturally responsive curriculum implementation, was linked to the category, exemplars of culturally responsive curriculum implementation. Participants indicated the usefulness of “equity teams,” “student cabinets,” and “professional learning communities.” Another emerging theme was leadership approaches to racial and social injustice defined by the category, approach to issues. Participants outlined the relevance of being “proactive” and “restorative” with a “learning approach” to these issues.

The emerging theme of stakeholders’ voice factored within the categories of “collectiveness of everyone,” “students’ voice,” “teachers’ voice,” “parents’ voice” and the “community voice.” Participants reiterated a “collaborative culture” and highlighted

the contributions of stakeholders in “student councils,” “community circles,” “instructional leadership teams,” and “parent involvement” as necessary for culturally responsive schools.

The effect of beliefs on principals’ leadership role theme aligned with the categories of “beliefs” and “hindrances.” Interviewees emphasized “good values” and “core beliefs” which reflected “transformative and inclusive leadership.” By contrast, they revealed that if the leader does not believe in a “climate” which is “conducive to fostering collaboration” and “collegiality,” then that's going to “hinder” effective leadership.

The final emerging theme was supporting student and teacher issues with the categories, “students’ struggles,” “teachers’ issues” and “school support.” Participants voiced their concerns about students not having a “structure” at home like in the school, emphasizing that “the culture in our school has to be stronger than culture in the streets.” One participant commented on teacher “disconnect” with the culture of their students while all participants spoke about limited “parental involvement.” Notwithstanding, some participants revealed that there is “educational assistance and support in special education” and “equity strategies” for students and teachers.

Results

RQ1: What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas?

The beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices were embedded in their

meaning of cultural responsiveness, their experiences in implementing a culturally responsive curriculum, strategic leadership, and culturally responsive transformative leadership.

Theme 1 RQ1: Meaning of Cultural Responsiveness

Meaning of cultural responsiveness was the beliefs and experiences of participants about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices and how that evolved from their understanding and appreciation of the students' needs. Participants voiced that cultural responsiveness is being "sensitive to everybody" and who should feel "a sense of belonging." They revealed the significance of culturally responsive "classroom pedagogy" where students learn about "specific cultures" while enabling the creation of "cultural appreciation and belongingness."

Category on Students' Needs

Participants concurred that meeting the needs of their students was synonymous to cultural responsiveness. P03 felt that the meaning of cultural responsiveness resonated in students feeling "welcomed, safe, accepted and inspired to be successful" by promoting equitable access to learning opportunities and by removing all the barriers to learning while P06 and P07 concurred that it was recognizing the "unique background…skills and interests" of students in what P08 termed an "inclusive environment."

Category on Cultural Appreciation and Belongingness

Participants specified the importance of appreciating diversity and creating that sense of belongingness in their schools. This was reflected in P09's "cultural

appreciation and belongingness" which is not limited to students but also to teachers. In like manner, P05 emphasized that cultural responsiveness was being "sensitive to everyone…ensuring everyone's voice is heard" while P07 thought that it was "building off people's strengths, their skills, and their talents by looking at the curriculum." P04 revealed that curricula "topics and issues are relevant and meaningful." P07 concurred that including language "because most of our students are not native English speakers, and usually speak Spanish" adding that the usefulness of the "appreciation of food from different races and cultures."

Theme 2 RQ1: Culturally Responsive Curriculum Implementation

Culturally Responsive Curriculum Implementation was the principal's ideas and strategies for inclusive teaching so that all students identify with the curriculum. The implementation of a CRC emanated from participants creating strategic ways to meet the diverse needs of their students despite inherent challenges.

Category on Creating a Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Notwithstanding a mandated curriculum administered by the school districts and an identified deficiency "without any theme on cultural responsiveness", middle school principals who participated in this study promoted "creating a culturally responsive curriculum." P02 emphasized that "we have a mandated curriculum but what we have to think of in terms of taking that curriculum and make sure every child can see themselves in it." In "creating the curriculum," P03 considered "packing the data" which indicated the needs of students from questions such as, "are there students that are at risk? Are there students that are struggling? Who are they and why are they struggling?" P01

depended on the teacher librarian for culturally relevant books depicting characters, pictures, scenes to be used as resources while P10 took the "opportunity to educate students and allow them to celebrate as well" by using "project-based learning" for students to incorporate "cultural events that originated in Mexico" and "Martin Luther King Holiday."

Category on Curriculum Implementation Challenges

Participants had and continued to experience curriculum implementation challenges. For participants P02 and P09, a major setback in implementing a culturally responsive curriculum was the non-existence of the theme in the mandated school curriculum. P09 accentuated that "I can't say that there's anything specific that is district wide or even on our campus that is really geared at making sure we are being responsive culturally…We don't even have like in our schools…from the District reach out and asked about the Blacks or African cultural studies." It is significant that P08 stressed a need for standardized workable solutions to "address gay, transgender students, children who have speech deficiencies, language difficulties, cultural differences, and physical differences."

Theme 3 RQ1: Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership was the planned management focus of the principal for the implementation of CRC at their school. For participants, building collaborative cultures and practicing effective management behaviors resulted from and represented strategic leadership.

Category on Building Collaborative Cultures

Participants agreed that collaboration among school administration, teachers and students were significant positives for effective leadership. P05 spoke about "building collaborative cultures" by "building those relationships with the students" while P06 and P10 promoted "building a positive culture and climate." That collaboration was beneficial to P02 who greeted "parents and students at the door" and a P09 preference for a presence in the "classroom all the time." P07 and P05 conceded that "building capacity" and "building leadership culture" within their staff by having an "administrative team" that was given consistent feedback and coached by the principal.

Category on Leadership Strategies

Participants proffered certain behaviors which were beneficial for strategic leadership. This was apparent in P03's response that it was "good to be present" adding that there should be "clear expectations" because "you are an example of what you want." Furthermore, P01 endorsed that "you talk the talk and walk the walk" similar to comments by P02 on "walking the talk and being very transparent about…expectations…as a leader prioritizing initiative." P10 supported also supported "honesty," "transparency" and "maintaining a positive climate." P01 advocated that "students always come first" corroborating with P06 that "I will always have their backs once it is in the best interests of the students." Participants disclosed their approaches to discipline as part of their leadership strategies. P05 adopted a "zero tolerance" because "drugs were kind of a big thing" while P10 also adopted a "zero tolerance" but instead of

drugs there were “racial slurs” and “disrespect.” It is noteworthy that the majority of the participants adopted the “restorative approach to discipline.”

Theme 4 RQ1: Transformative Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices

Transformative culturally responsive leadership practices were the adopted proactive, collaborative, and solution-oriented leadership strategies that principals employ to achieve CRC initiatives. They honed ideas and input from all stakeholders including, parents, teachers, members of the community, and the school district.

They reported that with this involvement, student behavior and attitudes were shaped by parents and the community. That way, there was a synchronism that auger well for students' success and improved school performance and outcomes. Participants were out front communicating with staff and students by assuming duties as hall monitors regularly, “breaking up fights,” and maintaining order and discipline. Participants practiced leadership behaviors for diverse students and inculcated transformative leadership practices.

Category on Leadership Behaviors for Diversity

Participants revealed several leadership behaviors which they thought were necessary for managing and leading a diverse school population. P01 and P08 espoused new and out-of-the-box strategies. P01 does not believe in “traditionalism” similar to P10 who saw the need to “change with the times, to transform our instruction…transformation is that we don't stay stagnant.” P08 believed in “taking a lot of risk, changing things constantly and having these high expectations and holding people accountable to meeting those expectations.” P03 advocated for “leadership practices as a

lead learner, instructional leader with a focus on distributed leadership to building trust in relationships and sharing those common beliefs and understandings."

Category on Transformative Leadership Practices

According to P08, "A transformative leader doesn't just happen because of me. It happens because all people are in place and doing what they need to do." The leadership focus is platformed on a belief that students and their parents are "customers" of the school. "Customer service" then became an obligatory compulsion that required active attention by the school leader. Participants reflected the view of P03 who highlighted "leadership practices as a lead learner, instructional leader" and the objectives of P05 "to involve teacher voice, community voice and student voice."

Fundamental requirements of good leadership, according to participants, were for individuals to be aware of their personal biases, strengths, level of understanding, and to use these to build trust and to encourage followers to superior performance and success. P10 highlighted the significance of encouraging understanding of others by providing "knowledge through instruction" and referred to "respecting the Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics" by providing knowledge on the contribution of cultures so that "they have a superior understanding then they can help to prevent some of the situations." Participants recognized that each student is unique and each situation where attention becomes necessary is similarly distinctive. Participants also voiced and indicated their commitment to doing right with self-respect and integrity.

Principals believed that a culture of inclusiveness can result from being a person of integrity, honest, and by building relationships with students and staff, and being

mindful of personal biases. That way, the likelihood of improved student performance and results can be enhanced. As P05 mentioned, “it is questioning and looking at everything with a new lens.”

Participants felt that leadership styles should show how being a good example can transform students' outlook and encourage them to meet stretched expectations and to be responsible for their own actions once there was consistent guidance from the principal, teachers, community and parents. Principals felt that leading by example would generate student responses that were aligned with the strategic, culturally responsive, transformation goals of the school. They alluded to walking the corridors, and entering classrooms to interact with and to guide students. P10 implemented some projects to buy Christmas greeting cards for “incarcerated parents” and gifts for their children, and a “blanket drive” for the “homeless shelters” to inculcate “self-gratification” in students when they fulfill the needs of the less fortunate. P03 emphasized that it “is important to be proactive before anything else. If you have a school that is inclusive, is equitable and being proactive also in terms of building relationships with a focus on collaboration and communication.”

Similarly, the results for research question 2 (RQ2) included the ways that participants addressed CRC to reveal exemplars of curriculum implementation. The leadership approaches to racial issues and social injustice, together with the voice of stakeholders including students, parents, teachers and the wider school community are highlighted in these results. RQ2: What do middle school principals consider as they

develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?

Participants had no standard ways of addressing CRC. They adapted to their specific school environment and culture from situational responses which became the procedure within the distinct school environment. Middle school principals considered their experiences, proven CRC exemplars, their approaches to racial and social injustice, their beliefs which could affect their role, stakeholders' voice and how they could support students and teachers as they developed and implemented a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas.

Theme 5 RQ2: Experiencing Culturally Responsive Curriculum (CRC) Implementation

Experiencing CRC implementation was the realization of expected responses and reactions by the students, teachers, and the school district to CRC initiatives. P09 reiterated that "there is no School District or standard way of addressing social and cultural uniqueness and differences; we don't have necessarily a curriculum that surround you know culture responsiveness" Despite this, all participants considered the talents and abilities of their staff and students as they developed and implemented a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas. P01 advised that "it's part of our vision and part of our direction… to know where we're going… so embedded right in our school action plan is the theme in the topics of equity and inclusion." P03 benefitted from having "courageous conversations with staff and with teachers…during classroom walkthroughs, an opportunity to ask what are you teaching,

why are you teaching this? You get a real feel…. if they know their kids and know what their kids need. Do you know your students? What are you teaching and why...is just that implementing the integrated inquiry and effective questioning into our professional learning?" Similarly, P08 added that "it is important to look at the curriculum with a particular focus, not only to satisfy the school district requirements, but more importantly to make learning meaningful for each and every student."

Category on Exemplars of CRC Implementation

Participants were proud to speak about examples when considering their staff and students in promoting the implementation of a CRC. P05 reflected all participants' in acknowledging that "It's a group effort," in referencing the significant PLCs of the regular teachers and the ESL teachers with the assistance of an "instruction coach for English Language" to discuss alternative materials in the classroom for non-English speakers. P10 was elated about providing the knowledge of different cultures by including the development of different cultures in Texas and extending this to people from different parts of the world while P02, P03, P04 and P09 considered the strengths within their staff and students to develop groups with a focus on cultural responsiveness in the curriculum and to create leadership opportunities.

Theme 6 RQ2: Leadership Approaches to Racial and Social Injustice

Leadership approaches to racial and social injustice represented the ways that principals addressed issues of ethnicity and inequity. Participants stressed equal treatment for all despite how challenging the situation might be and even if the consequences were severe. Being proactive, dealing with the issues immediately, using a restorative approach

and not leaving issues open-ended were relevant in the approaches to racial and social injustice.

Category on Approach to Issues

P01, P02, P05 and P06 highlighted situations which necessitated a "restorative approach." There were situations where parents and kids from the same race as the principal would make accusation of racism towards the principal. P05 commented, "I'm Hispanic and I've been told by other Hispanics that I am racist towards Hispanics. So… that didn't make sense to me. But, you know….. it's treating everybody the same."

P01 explained the procedure to be followed if "something racialized happen, first of all, take it as very serious. collect your information carefully. …Don't let anything sit and fester… not to leave something like this open ended…have a restorative approach…that one person can understand the feelings of the other…everybody learns the best way so it is never repeated again."

P03 highlighted that "we had some new students that came in and unacceptable, terrible language .. we worked on microaggressions and also blatant racism with the staff and then they brought that back into the classroom as a learning opportunity."

Theme 7 RQ2: Stakeholders' Voice

Stakeholders' voice was the principal ideas about how to include and involve students, teachers, parents, and the wider community for positive CRC implementation and outcomes at school. A collaborative culture extended to having open positive communication supported by an open-door policy when working directly with a staff, for a clear way forward. There were opportunities to voice concerns formally or informally.

Participants termed inclusion as a collectiveness of everyone when all the stakeholders have voice and building relationships. P07 indicated that “we have an anonymous way that students or parents can send us feedback or any concerns that they have about anything.”

There were efforts to involve student leaders when handling more difficult issues such as drug use but that involvement, at this stage, is limited to bringing anonymous information for principal attention. Student Councils allowed for student involvement in school leadership and the building of future leaders among the student population. Participants unanimously acknowledged that drugs and gang crimes remain a big challenge. Student leaders could guide fellow students and helped them to negotiate issues, lessen sensitivity, and lowering risks in challenging situations such as discipline and drug use. With parent support, there was less concerns or complaints registered with the principal. Therefore, a greater amount of the principal’s time can be for focusing on students’ performances. Also, teachers knew that they had the support of the principal and parents.

Category on Collectiveness of Everyone

P02, P03 and P06 summarized stakeholders’ voice as a “collectiveness of everyone” practicing an “open door policy” referring to a “collaborative culture” P06 experienced the positive effects of this collaboration last year “we were able to reduce the advent of and even prevent some student fights and also to reduce the incidence of drug use in the toilets and in the school compound.”

Category on Students' Voice

P10 had their student council planning events and a National Junior Honors' Society participating in social work. P04 indicated that their "English Language Learners voiced their concerns" while P03 formed a "community circle for kids to voice any concerns." Correspondingly, P09 revealed that a student was "kneeling for the anthem because… the rights of his people are being trampled on and his people are not being treated well in our country…and I said to let him kneel. That's his rights… that's student voice in action. They are taking a stand that we are not comfortable with but that doesn't mean they are wrong."

Category on Teachers' Voice

P07 incorporated a "suggestion box, is digital though and our teachers can at any time put concerns on there." Conversely, P03 engaged "informal meetings and staff meetings, to voice any concerns." P05 underscored a campus "instructional leadership team" and "leadership meetings" while P01 spoke about "a staff member who is our equitable and include, equity and inclusion lead." P08 added that "I know for example I have a teacher who decides to kneel during the pledge …. she's making her voice heard."

Category on Parents' Voice

Participants revealed that parent meetings were especially important for positive communication but sometimes it is difficult since the families that they, principals, cannot reach are the ones that they need to. P04 praised "teachers would invite any new parents or new families coming into our community." P09 revealed that "one of the things that we want to do better at is parent involvement" and implemented "patience

with the principal" but "we have a core group of maybe 12 parents, and we have 1150 kids." Similarly, P03 is concerned that "the school council does not really reflect the community. …. 70% of my kids speaking another language. I would say 98% of school council made up of English-speaking parents." By contrast, P10 said that parents and teachers were engaged at their school within the Parent Teacher Organization.

Category on Community Voice

P05 encouraged reaching out to a "business partner from the area to make decisions on what kind of resources to purchase for the school." while P06 involved the "community, through positive minded individuals who help us to keep our kids away from negative influences." P10 held successful career days which reflect a diverse group of presenters in the past years.

Theme 8 RQ2: The Effect of Beliefs on Principals' Leadership Role

The effect of beliefs on principals' leadership role represented the individual perspectives on best leadership skills and competencies necessary for CRC implementation. Participants considered their leadership beliefs, stakeholders' voice and support when developing and implementing a CRC.

Category on Beliefs

It was relevant that the beliefs of principals might affect their leadership role. Principals believed in a leadership based on "inclusion," "representation" and "transparency" with a positive intent that supported inclusion for overall student success. Shared beliefs and understandings about cultural responsiveness were important to fulfill the "vision" and "direction" which should be embedded in the school "action plan".

A belief of “talking the talk and walking the talk” was common among several participants who reflected on this to symbolize transparency in the leader’s expectations. P10 concurred about transparency and added “honesty, high morals and strong ethics.” Most participants believed in meeting and greeting with students and parents, walking school corridors, and visiting classrooms. That thinking informed their beliefs on “distributed leadership,” “transformative focused leadership,” “collective efficacy,” “collaboration,” and “inclusion.” The participants saw that knowing their school community and to become actively involved in the learning as vital and necessary. P01 concluded that “if you have good core values and good core beliefs, then that is the foundation of who you are and that's how people will look at you and define you and know what you're about.”

Participants thought that by involving other individuals, with expertise, management of the school population becomes doable and result in successful outcomes. P07 said that “leadership is only second to teacher effectiveness and has a critical impact on student achievement” and emphasized the need to “continually revisit practices” and “cannot lead with our feelings. We need to lead being data informed.” P01, P03, P05, and P06 concurred that beliefs in leadership were essential for learning together with the active involvement and support from all the stakeholders at the school.

Category on Hindrances

P08 revealed that “if the climate is not conducive to fostering collaboration, collegiality, then that's going to hinder my leadership.” P08 also saw the significance of obtaining feedback, “once you feel like you know it all or you as a leader don't need any

feedback is when nobody needs you anymore." P04 added that a hindrance can be getting "impatient" and "wanting things done right away" without realizing the associated time factor. P09 indicated that "it's also very hard to lead a school when you as a leader don't necessarily always have the same support that you're trying to offer others…they at the district office or the upper leadership, if you don't have support from them, that can be a hindrance."

Theme 9 RQ2: Supporting Student and Teacher Issues

Supporting student and teacher issues was the individual's understanding of the best ways to address challenges experienced by students and teachers. Participants spoke to social issues such as poverty, crime, absent parents, single parents, and challenges of the LGBTQ community as typically requiring school leadership understanding, appreciation, and support, especially the strategy for negotiating and addressing the best way forward.

Category on Students' Struggles

There is an admission that no possible solution on the part of the school district is envisaged. Participants voiced that the school community, therefore, will evolve only based on the involvement, commitment, and persistence of strong-willed stakeholders and the principal's leadership and active involvement.

Participants managed arrangements for promoting an understanding of Spanish, Mexican American and Mexican cultural heritage, food, customs and dress. However, this awareness was not compulsory but an elective course. Also, it was not all inclusive as similar arrangements for understanding African American, African, and Black culture

or other minority culture were non-existent. P01 proffered that more than 10% of the student population could become alienated from the wider school community. P01 further indicated that alienation could be even more of a challenge as these students learn and were influenced by societal norms. P07 revealed that their "school is nearly 80% low socioeconomic status….so almost 80% of our students come from high poverty."

P01, P05, P07 and P09 lamented about parents' work schedules, their socioeconomic status, and inability to help with schoolwork because they were mostly absentee. P09 reiterated that "we have a core group of maybe 12 parents, and we have 1150 kids." P03 highlighted "access to uncensored Internet or Vaping was a big problem …experimentation with drugs," and P06 emphasized that "children learn bad habits, about gangs, drugs, and fights outside of the school and bring those behavior and attributes into the campus." P08 was alarmed about non-attendance, "we struggle getting our students in school right now and with the remote learning, more than ever."

Category on Teachers' Issues

P04 was concerned that "one teacher had a very hard time with some of the customs and traditions and beliefs of a particular faith." P06 focused on teachers' challenges in appreciating culture, the changes to curriculum, tenure, use of new technologies to deliver teachings" and added that "they come from the same environment as the school community, so drugs and crime remain a major issue." Furthermore, P09 lamented that "teachers' backgrounds kind of handicap them because most of our teachers are from middle class background and our students are not…there is a disconnect…level of uncertainty and fear."

Category on School Support

Participants indicated that they gave educational assistance support to students and enabled equity strategies for the entire school population. P10 reached out to meet with individual students on their next steps because of failure. P05 disclosed that "we're a Title One School so every student gets free and reduced lunch; we buy them food because they may not have; they may not have dinner." P07 stressed on an objective to ensure that the "culture in our school has to be stronger than culture in the streets." P10 thought that teachers were now doing "double the work" in meeting the needs of the students because of the pandemic, so it was befitting to motivate their teachers by personally appreciating them, "I do my best to show appreciation."

Discrepant Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas. One discrepant finding was the experiences of P06 and P08 and how they led their schools during the abnormal circumstances of the pandemic. They revealed the struggles of students and teachers with remote learning and the delivery of the curriculum respectively. P08 highlighted that "we struggle getting our students in school right now and with the remote learning, more than ever." P06 was concerned about the "2020 pandemic and suitable and available technology for teaching them…parents support and ability to help them with schoolwork and to maintain a learning environment." P08 explained that in trying to reach the large school population, "we do home visits, we call, and you know we try our best….we have given out over 500 Chromebooks and iPad to

students. We have given out hot spots…we're trying to do to make sure that no student goes unserved." P06 highlighted teachers' "uncertainty and fears about the pandemic, focus, appreciation for culture, the changes to curriculum, tenure, use of new technologies to deliver teachings."

Another discrepant finding was highlighted as the individual effect of working from home. P10 spoke about students experiencing "loneliness" and "depression" and becoming addicted to online games since the change to remote learning.

A third discrepant finding was the evidence of the challenges for the LGBTQ community and the special requirements for that group of individuals in and out of school as it was different to the orthodox understanding of the minority-majority cultural context as ethnicity, race, and religion, for example. These findings are opportunities for further research as these are beyond the focus of this study.

Combined Results on Cultural Responsiveness Factors

Participants highlighted the certain factors which they thought influenced and, in some ways may hinder the implementation of cultural responsiveness in their school. They highlighted student issues such as socio-economic, which led to poverty, and other challenges such as drugs, crime, gangs, lack of structure at home, not having sufficient food and absenteeism from school. Their concern was that although they were implementing a culturally responsive curriculum, they were not always supported by parents, the majority of whom were notably absent. Notwithstanding, the participants acknowledged that the school district needed to be more supportive and actively involved in promoting a more culturally responsive curriculum. P05 expressed that "students were

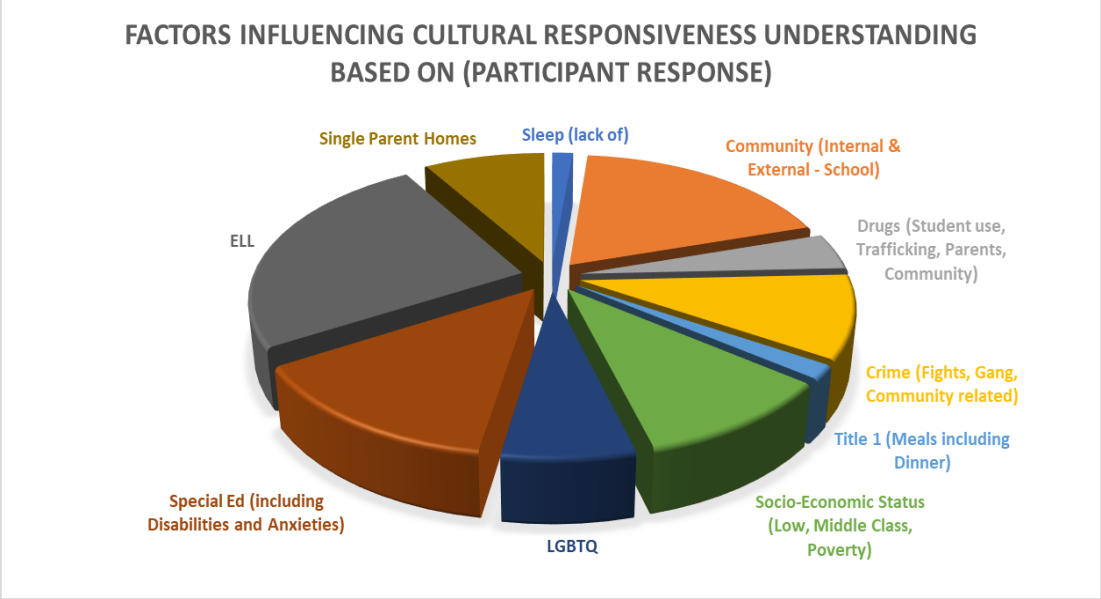
getting little sleep and were in need of breakfast, lunch, and dinner" while P10 was concerned about the increase in the "addiction to online gaming" and "loneliness" because of students being at home since the school closure in March 2020 because of the pandemic.

Factors influencing Cultural Responsiveness understanding and appreciation are highlighted in Figure 6. The common factors and social realities, that prompted principals, as participants in this study were the

- socioeconomic status of the families of students who attended these schools
- communities where the schools were located
- level of crime and drug use or abuse in these communities
- prevalence of gang activities
- single-parent homes, the level of education of parents, lonely and depressed students
- presence of these and whether were able to help students and create a stable environment for their children to focus on schoolwork, online gaming
- presence of self-identified language learners, special ed recipients and LGBTQs and the different levels of attention and support these individuals needed

Figure 6

Cumulative Factors That Affect Cultural Responsiveness Among Participants



Summary

The results in this chapter were premised on the study's purpose which was to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas. The research questions were, RQ1: What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas? and RQ2: What do middle school principals consider as they develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas? The research questions

were aligned to the interview questions which reflected the indicators of the ACL conceptual framework. Ten middle school principals were recruited on LinkedIn and interviewed via Zoom. The setting, the demographics for the study and the data analysis process were explained and depicted in the different tables and figures in this chapter. The researcher transcribed the interviews and analyzed the data by identifying emerging codes, categories and themes. The results were explained within the following emerging themes for RQ 1: Defining cultural responsiveness, culturally responsive curriculum implementation, strategic leadership, transformative culturally responsive leadership practices. For RQ 2, the emerging themes were experiencing culturally responsive curriculum implementation, leadership approaches to racial and social injustice, stakeholders' voice, the effect of beliefs on principals' leadership role and supporting student and teacher issues. These themes were supported by codes from the participants' transcripts which were verified by them. Discrepant findings were disclosed and explained as possible opportunities for future research. There was the reassurance for trustworthiness by presenting evidence for credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability while conducting this study.

The following chapter includes the interpretation and discussion of the results in relation to the ACL conceptual framework and the literature review. The limitations, recommendations and the social implications are also addressed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this chapter, I summarized and interpreted the findings, listed and discussed the limitations, describe the social change implications, and concluded the study. The purpose of this study was to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals in southern Texas. The research focus was to identify possible ways for principals to support their teachers to implement a culturally responsive curriculum to promote achievement, social acceptance, and integration of a diverse population.

The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas?

RQ2**:** What do middle school principals consider as they develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?

I conducted 10 individual interviews on Zoom for this study and asked about the experiences of the 10 participants, who were middle school principals, on their beliefs, understanding, and culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices proved to be essential. These evolved into the findings of this study. I used the indicators of the applied critical framework (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015) as a guide to formulate the research approach.

Summary of Findings

The participating middle school principals were aware of the meaning of cultural responsiveness and used that to develop and implement workable curriculum

implementation leadership practices at their campuses. The principals did not limit their definition of cultural responsiveness to the acceptance and inclusion of diverse ethnic cultures but extended the concept to the socioeconomically disadvantaged, special education, and LGBTQ communities. Tables 5 and 6 show the findings for RQ1 and RQ2. The associated findings and ACL indicators are entered in the corresponding cell for that row of the table. The ACL indicators were developed from Santamaría and Santamaría, (2015).

Interpretation of Findings

My study extended on previous works by scholars who employed the ACL conceptual framework. Santamaría and Jean-Marie (2014) and Santamaría and Santamaría (2014) focused on female and non-White principals. Aho and Quaye (2018) applied the ACL framework to higher education. Jayavant (2016) concentrated on primary schools. In my study, results were informed by the ACL indicators, the critical race theory (CRT), the use of empirical data by servant leaders to make informed decisions, supported group consensus, conversations on race and social injustice, and the participants saw themselves as role models and builders of trust and encouraged the voice of all stakeholders.

My study, with the focus on middle school, expanded on current knowledge by exploring the cultural responsiveness curriculum implementation leadership practices of 10 White, non-Whites, male, and female principals in southern Texas. The findings supported Santamaría and Santamaría's (2013) strategies that reflecting critical pedagogy in the school curriculum could be adopted in the classroom. These results build on

previous knowledge to include whole school restorative approaches as resolutions to racial and social injustice, and these solutions can be translated into learning opportunities in the classroom. Furthermore, my study indicated that leaders had an ability to promote collaboration and collective efficacy, which were critical for effective culturally responsive curriculum implementation practices. These findings endorsde the promotion of racial and social justice and educational equity, which is significant for minority learners in schools (see Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012, 2013). Apart from emphasizing the importance of stakeholders' voice, the participating principals accepted that there was a disconnection between school policy and the curriculum.

For RQ1, four themes emerged: the meaning of cultural responsiveness, CRC implementation, strategic leadership, and transformative culturally responsive leadership practices. A key finding was that the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices were embedded in their understanding of the meaning of cultural responsiveness, their experiences in implementing a culturally responsive curriculum, strategic leadership, and culturally responsive transformative leadership.

The meaning of cultural responsiveness (CR) symbolized the principal's understanding of students' needs, and the different ways that students could integrate with others at school. A finding was that personal values, confidence, and preferences of individual principals guided this thinking, especially when the principal believed that, for each child at the school, the CR focus was integral to generate a sense of belongingness to the school community as an equal member. This finding was in agreement with the

work of Civitillo et al. (2018) and Khalifa et al. (2016) on the interconnection of CR teaching, cultural diversity beliefs, and teachers' self-reflection.

The significant finding on CRC implementation was that the implementation emanated from participants creating strategic ways to meet the diverse needs of their students and the associated challenges. Implementation of a CRC was dependent on that meaning of CR, if the principal recognized curriculum shortcomings, if that recognition required proactive intervention or response action, and the possible difficulties and challenges that could evolve from any resultant remedial action. Principals agreed that CR implementation was necessary for school and student success. This result was in consensus with Santamaría (2009) and Tyler (2016) who proffered that teachers' understanding of the culture of their students was necessary for positive learning outcomes. The benefits of promoting a culturally relevant curriculum content and encouraging culturally responsive pedagogy were consistent with teamwork and collaboration that enabled professional learning communities and communities of practice (Bode et al., 2012; Davies, 2004; Stosich et al., 2017).

Strategic leadership as Theme 3 translated into the finding revealed that for participants, building collaborative cultures and practicing effective management behaviors resulted from and represented strategic leadership. Participants signaled that they collaborated, guided, and were present with their teachers. They stressed that when their teachers were on duty or supervising students, being there with them was most important to promote collective efficacy and built relational trust. Bryk (2018) and

Coburn et al. (2016) endorsed collaboration and building trust between principals and their staff.

The conclusion of this study that servant leadership as an ACL indicator was manifested in the strategic leadership of participants was related to articles by Aho and Quaye (2018), Santamaría and Santamaría (2014, 2015, 2016), and Seto and Sarros (2016). These authors underlined that school principals as leaders should be role models demonstrating consistent behaviors that reflected and referenced the expectations of their teachers. My study extended on the findings of these scholars by identifying that participants in my study displayed servant leadership behavior that was synonymous with principals foregoing their self-interest and beliefs to achieve the objectives of the school.

Participants in this study confirmed that they initiated professional development for teachers, which resonated as the extra effort teachers make to understand their students. There was a synchronism that augers well for students' success and improved school performance and outcomes. Fundamental requirements of good leadership for participants were to be aware of their personal biases, strengths, and level of understanding and to use this to build trust and to encourage followers to superior performance and success. Participants in this study recognized that each student was unique, and each situation, where attention became necessary, was similarly distinctive. Participants were committed to doing right with self-respect and integrity. The responses from interviewees in my study extended the work of Civitillo (2018) and Santamaría (2009) conclusion from teachers to middle school principals as being individuals who

were interested in the learning needs of their students and were very reflective and introspected on their practice.

While all principals in this study collected data, some of them stressed the importance of empirical data more than others, and thus there was no unanimity or consensus on the importance of data use (Appendix D). They emphasized, however, that data drove their response action to school issues. Their data were relevant for planning because it indicated whether their students were at risk, struggling, or displaying behavioral challenges. Articles by Bode et al. (2012) and Santamaría and Santamaría (2015) endorsed the value of a principal making planning-type decisions based on empirical data as one of the ACL indicators.

RQ2, which examined what middle school principals considered as they developed and implemented a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas, resulted in five emerging themes: experiencing CRC implementation, leadership approaches to racial and social injustice, stakeholders' voice, the effect of beliefs on principals' leadership role, and supporting student and teacher issues (Appendix D).

Experiencing CRC implementation emerged as an important theme. The finding was that participants had no standard ways of addressing CRC. They adapted to their specific school environment and culture from situational responses, which became the procedure within the distinct school environment. This conclusion coincided with Carey et al. (2017), Khalifa (2018), Khalifa et al. (2016), and Santamaría and Santamaría (2016) that no leadership model existed for school principals and teachers to use and to

understand and guide them adequately in developing and implementing a culturally responsive curriculum.

Limitations of the Study

A possible limitation was the use of LinkedIn to recruit middle school principals. I accessed the intended 10 participants for this study via LinkedIn which could be replicated as a platform to access participants for future studies. Before the data collection phase, there was a possibility that the decision to only seek participants using LinkedIn, could have led to the exclusion of other middle school principals whose curriculum implementation leadership practices may have been valuable to this study. The individual principals who agreed to be participants, proved that a high-quality field of participants contributed to the study. The risk of sufficient and suitable participants being unavailable or not willing to contribute did not materialize. The study's strategy and approach were effective when the existing Covid-19 Pandemic situation and impact are considered.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The findings of this study indicated that the ACL conceptual framework can be used for research to affirm whether the culturally responsive curriculum implementation and practices of middle school principals are relevant at the elementary and secondary schools in southern Texas. The ACL conceptual framework was relevant for this study and is versatile and transferable as was proffered by Jayavant (2016) who used ACL to explore primary school principals in New Zealand. It is recommended that further

research in the United States and other countries can address the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of middle school principals and other critical leaders such as supervisors and district superintendents who may influence curriculum implementation. Employing the ACL framework in these other locations can add valuable findings for principals to support teachers in the delivery of a culturally responsive curriculum for improved students' success, and to foster a sense of belongingness in diverse settings.

Recommendation 2

The scope of this study can be extended to determine how effective principals' curriculum culturally responsive approaches have been in the schools where these have been adapted with the official sanction of the district. Furthermore, how culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practice influence and impact on student performance or school success is recommended for further research. Further research is essential to examine abnormal curriculum issues which depict exceptions to the norm. Participants adapted to the curriculum by utilizing different strategies. Although the NCLB and ESSA have been addressed by scholars in previous works, this study's findings revealed that there is non-standardized procedure in navigating a culturally responsive curriculum. Ladd (2017), Mathis and Trujillo (2016) and Saultz et al. (2019) corroborated that the history of school reform was "flawed" and in need of "repair." Carey et al. (2017), Khalifa (2018) and Khalifa et al. (2016) concurred that there was no culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership model for principals and teachers.

Recommendation 3

As a result of low socio-economic status of students being identified by nine participants as affecting a culturally responsive curriculum implementation there is prospect for future studies focusing on this issue. This study supported the findings of DeMathews (2016) and Wun (2018) that societal issues can negatively affect school discipline and delivery of a culturally responsive curriculum. The link between the school and home was reinforced by Carey et al. (2017) and Knight-Manuel et al. (2019). Participants linked the lack of parental involvement to students coming from socio-economic disadvantaged households.

It will be useful for researchers to consider whether culturally responsiveness strategies can be a vehicle for parental support which can positively impact students. It is recommended and relevant to further examine if low socio-economic status shaped the cultural responsiveness in schools and if so, would communities that are susceptible to crime, drugs and poverty have a similar impact. Of particular importance is whether the Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbated and adversely affected the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices regarding socio-economically disadvantaged students.

Implications

Non-standard or inconsistent application of cultural responsiveness knowledge and skills by principals may negatively influence, and contribute to the exclusion of students from enjoying acceptance and belongingness at school. Cultural responsiveness as it relates to curriculum implementation, today, means the principal's understanding of

the evolving needs of an individual or group of different race, religion, class, gender, personal preferences, experiences, performance, and community which is indicative of positive social change. The ability of the principal, with that understanding, to address these needs, consistently catalyze positive and meaningful social change will likely be different in the advent of a leadership change at the school. If that happens, the impact can be unexpected and unwanted by the school population.

Participants' proactive, collaborative, solution oriented, and transformative leadership strategy generated ideas and input from all stakeholders including, parents, students, teachers, members of the community, and the school district to reflect positive social change. That leadership approach allowed for sharing of ideas, buy-in and support for new initiatives and enhanced efforts for addressing relevant issues and to maintain a presence and measure of social control. Principals elsewhere in the United States, especially in areas where there is an acute cultural influence, can benefit from a deliberate focus on a culturally responsive curriculum implementation approach to address the situational needs of students at school.

The implications for policymaking, social integration, inclusionary culturally responsive practices and limiting intersectionality were evident in this study and augur for positive social change for the individual, the school and the wider society. The awareness for school policy and curricula changes imply action for educational policymakers to connect with the individual and the organizational needs to consider the implementation of a culturally responsive curriculum. Social integration emanates from educational leaders who may not encourage exclusionary practices and intersectionality.

These leadership behaviors positively affect students, teachers and parents translating from the mainstream of the school into the wider society, resulting in positive social change.

Conclusion

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices of ten (10) middle school principals in southern Texas. All the participants acknowledged cultural responsiveness as important for curriculum implementation and they tailored it to allow the school population to associate it with the lessons being taught in the classroom. It was important that participants identified situational cultural responses whereby they addressed issues in and out of the classroom and shaped curriculum cultural responsiveness accordingly. Principals were strategically proactive and transformative, but this was initiated by previous events.

The downside effect of non-standard application of these principles were not fully explored and should be the subject of further and more focused research. There were unanswered questions on how to make curriculum culturally relevant to a continuously changing society based upon the knowledge educators envisaged should be imparted to children by the end of a particular school level. If that knowledge was not being aligned to the existing social reality, then the principal's effort might be futile in influencing and enabling students to attain and maintain sufficient understanding and feel that they belong at the school. Crime, drugs, gang violence and the unique familial circumstances were the major concerns of principals whose responsibilities were to try to support teachers in

developing and implementing a curriculum to be delivered to students in that environment. The racial composition of certain communities and schools was continuously changing resulting in different cultural influences. Apart from race, there was the LGBTQ presence, which was not new, but the emphasis and elevated awareness were evident and likely to influence further changes to the cultural landscape in schools. Their inalienable right to equity, to be seen, heard, and desire to be accepted were inescapable. The curriculum cannot be culturally responsive to or limited to Blacks, Hispanics, Whites, Others, or LGBTQ but should be inclusive; with learners having choices among a myriad of cultural knowledge. Collaboration emerged as strategic leadership in this study, but the non-standard ways these principals employed to implement a culturally responsive curriculum might be unique to their school culture and not transferable to other school environments. The need for a standardized policy to address a culturally responsive curriculum is inevitable.

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Appendix A: Linked Message and Invitation Emails

LinkedIn Reaching out Message

Thank you for accepting my invitation. I live in Ontario, Canada. Presently, I am doing my PhD at Walden University and at the dissertation stage. My topic is ***Culturally Responsive Curriculum Implementation of Middle School Principals in Southern Texas*** which represents one of the most diverse states in the U.S. There is not much available information on middle schools, so this study may be a valuable contribution. Your information and identity will be kept confidential and the name of your city, schools or district will not be mentioned. If you are interested, kindly send me your email address. Thank you for assisting. Stay safe.
Caroline

Email 1

I live in Ontario, Canada. Presently, I am doing my PhD at Walden University and at the dissertation stage. My research study title is: ***Culturally Responsive Curriculum Implementation of Middle School Principals in Southern Texas***. I aim to explore participant experiences by conducting individual interviews via zoom at your convenience. Each interview is set for 30-45 minutes. If you are interested in taking part in this study, the criteria selection for this study are as follows:

1. You must be a middle school principal for 2-5 years.
2. The school population comprise 300 to 1200 students.
3. Your middle school includes grades 6, 7 and/or 8.
4. A diverse school population is present.

Your contribution to the success of my study will likely prove helpful to school administrators and leaders who have to manage diverse learners in southern Texas. I will be sharing the research results with you via email upon completion of this study. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. Your information will be kept confidential and the name of your city or school will not be mentioned in this study. Thank you for assisting. Stay safe.
Regards,
Caroline Narine
(Walden #A00975138)

Email 2

If you meet the selection criteria, kindly review the attached consent form and indicate your willingness to participate by responding "I consent."
Regards,
Caroline Narine
(Walden #A00975138)

Email 3 Interview Scheduling

The attached interview guide includes the interview process and the questions. Let me know when you are available to conduct this interview for 30-45 minutes on zoom at a time convenient to you. Remember I will be recording the interview which I will transcribe and forward to you for review to ensure accuracy of your responses. I am reassuring you that your name, city or school will be kept confidential and your responses will be stored on a hard drive and kept for five years in a safety deposit box at my local bank. It will be destroyed thereafter. Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study.

Regards,

Caroline Narine

(Walden #A00975138)

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Date:
Time:
Interview Code#:
Location of Interview

Parts of Interview	**Interview Questions**
Introduction	Hello, so nice to see you in person, I am Caroline. Thank you very much for participating and agreeing to do this interview. As you know, the purpose of this interview is to hear your experiences on your curriculum implementation leadership practices at your school. This should last about 30-45 minutes. After the interview, I will be transcribing your responses which will be sent to you for confirmation. I will also be analyzing your answers to posit findings which will be shared with you. However, I will not identify you, your city or your school in my documents, and no one will be able to identify you with your answers. You can choose to stop this interview at any time. I need to let you know that this interview will be recorded for transcription purposes. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to begin?
Question 1	Describe the diversity of your school population.
Question 2	What do you believe is the meaning of culturally responsiveness? Can you give examples?
Question 3	In what ways do you implement a culturally responsive curriculum in your school? Describe these ways and say how important they were to you.
Question 4	Describe your experiences in developing and implementing a culturally responsive curriculum. Give examples of how you

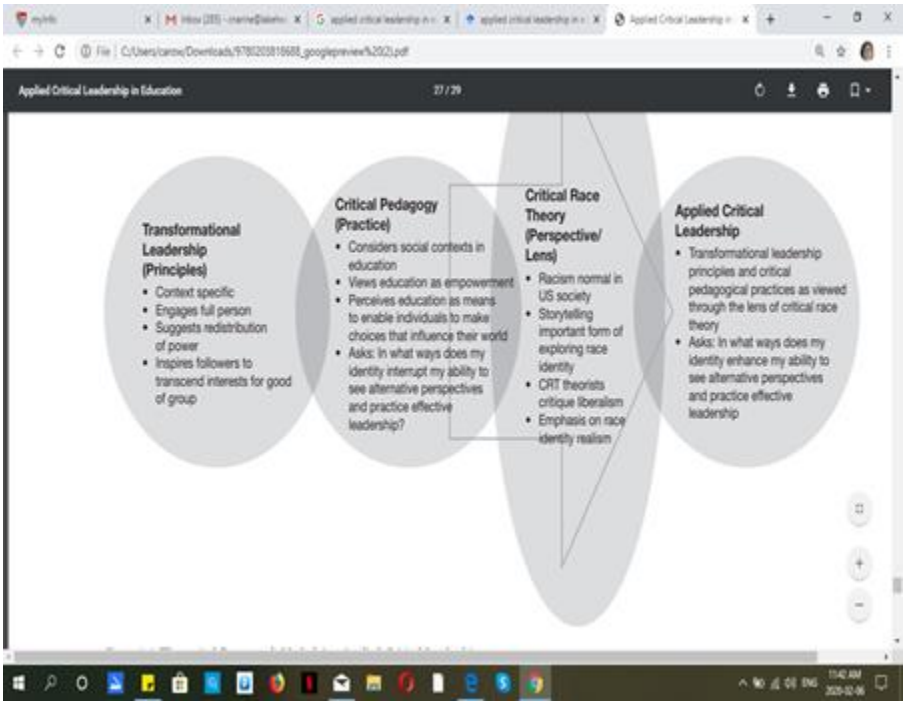
	support your teachers in the delivery of the curriculum.
Question 5	How do you approach issues of race and social injustice? Can you give examples.
Question 6	In what ways do all stakeholders have a voice in your school? Can you give examples?
Question 7	Describe how you lead your staff and students. What are your strategies?
Question 8	What are your beliefs on leadership? How do you think your beliefs help or hinder your leadership role?
Question 9	Describe the issues you believe affect your students and teachers in and out of school. Can you give examples?
Question 10	Describe your best leadership practices for a diverse school population. In what ways would you say you are a transformative leader?
Close	Thank you for your answers. Do you have anything else you'd like to share? Do you have any questions for me? **Thank you for your time. Goodbye.**

Appendix C: Permission From Santamaría and Santamaría

18-02-2020

Greetings,
I am presently a doctoral student at Walden University completing a PhD in Educational Policy, Leadership and Management. My research is on the culturally responsive curriculum implementation of Middle School principals in Southern Texas. I request your permission to use the Applied Critical Leadership framework in my study (attached below).
I assure you that all formal and necessary citations and recognition will be afforded. I look forward to your positive response.
Caroline Wendy Narine
STUDENT ID: A00975138

My request is specifically for permission to reproduce your diagram:



Santamaría **&** Santamaría **(p. 27, 2013)**
Source Document:

Santamaría, L. J., & Santamaría, A. P. (2013). *Applied critical leadership in education: Choosing change*. Routledge.

19-02-2020
Hello Caroline,

Congratulations on your studies and thank you for your request to use the diagram.

We are encouraged to know educational leaders are finding the theoretical framework for Applied Critical Leadership useful in research and practice.

May we ask how about the nature of the proposed context for use?

Please advise so that I may further consider your request.

With gratitude,
Dr. Santamaría

Lorri M. R. J. Santamaría, PhD
Director/ Principal Researcher - *Directora/ Investigadora Principal*
Healing the Soul Project - *Proyecto Curando el Alma - Na Sánaeé Inié*
http://mixteco.org/programs/research-evaluation/healing-the-soul/
Director - *Directora*
Access Project - *Proyecto Acceso*
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l.santamaria@mixteco.org

19-02-2020
Hello Dr. Santamaria,
I am using ACL as the conceptual framework for my study. I will be employing a qualitative approach to interview ten (10) middle school principals on their experiences in implementing a culturally responsive curriculum implementation in southern Texas. Why southern Texas? It is one of the most diverse places within the U.S. The tenets of ACL will be used to frame and analyze the interview questions in this study. My research questions are:

RQ 1-Qualitative: How do middle school principals conceptualize and implement culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?
RQ 2-Qualitative: What are the experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas?
Looking forward to a positive response.
Caroline

19-02-2020
Hello Caroline,

Thank you for your quick reply.

You have our permission and support for your good work.

In defining cultural responsivity, please refer to my Teacher's College Record article on Culturally Responsive Differentiated Instruction. You can pick it up for free on Academia.edu.

Go well.

With gratitude,
Dr. LMRSx

20-2-2020
Hello Dr. Santamaria,
Thank you so much. I am impressed with all of your scholarly works and looking forward to the outcomes of this study. Thanks for the additional reference.
Regards,
Caroline

Appendix D: Additional Interpretation of Findings

RQ 1 Theme four emerged as Transformative Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices with a finding that participants adopted a proactive, collaborative, solution oriented, and leadership strategy to obtain ideas and input from all stakeholders including, parents, teachers, members of the community, and the school district. Principals were guided by the micro details and situational specificity of any CR issue when deciding on how best to drive CRC. Transformative leadership, for participants, was established and supported a foundation built from the ACL framework. Participants reported that, with this involvement, student behavior and attitudes were shaped by parents and the community. This finding extended knowledge to the works of Santamaría and Santamaría on their ACL conceptual framework.

Participants felt that leadership styles should show how being a good example could transform students' outlook and encouraged them to meet stretched expectations and to be responsible for their own actions once there was consistent guidance from the principal, teachers, community and parents. Principals in this study challenged their teachers who they felt were "good people who really cared about their students." This finding was related to an article by Catone et al. (2017) who posited the promotion of teachers as changemakers.

RQ2 The findings in my study endorsed a Khalifa (2018) view that curriculum was a whole school effort, identifying consensus with Goddard et al. (2017) that policy, individual and group beliefs, and practice guided the daily activities at their schools. Like Khalifa and Goddard et al., this study's conclusions reveled the need to augment

mandated educational policy by using innovative school leadership practices to implement a culturally responsive curriculum.

Table 5

Summary of RQ1 Findings

Research Question (RQ1)	Themes	Findings	ACL Indicators
What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas?	**The Meaning of Cultural Responsiveness**	The beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices are embedded in their meaning of cultural responsiveness	a leader who is a role model; builds trust; demonstrates servant leadership; transformative leadership
	Culturally Responsive Curriculum (CRC) Implementation	The implementation of a culturally responsive curriculum emanated from participants creating strategic ways to meet the diverse needs of their students despite inherent challenges.	the use of empirical data by leaders to make informed academic decisions; critical pedagogy
	Strategic Leadership	Building collaborative cultures and practising effective management behaviors resulted from and represented strategic leadership.	encouraging a group consensus; builds trust; demonstrates servant leadership
	Transformative Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices	Participants adopted a proactive, collaborative, solution-oriented leadership strategy to hone ideas and input from all stakeholders including, parents, teachers, members of the community, and the school district.	Transformative leadership; encouraging a group consensus; encourages the voice of all stakeholders

The conclusion of this study was in agreement with Saultz et al. (2019), Benegas (2019), and Ladd (2017) that school policy might pose challenges in curriculum delivery but as leaders they must effectively link policy to the best culturally relevant pedagogy to promote academic achievement. The findings corrobarated Hopkins (2016) that principals must work together to amend the curriculum, to render it as more relevant and appropriate, especially for the ELL.

Respondents stressed that they allowed teachers to collaborate with each other and the ESL teacher to deliver the culturally relevant content in their lessons. This

finding was in contradiction to Minkos et al. (2017) and Keehne et al. (2018) who indicated that educators misunderstood their learners, particularly those with cultural and linguistic challenges. However, consensus was found with Mayfield and Garrison-Wade (2015), who posited that empowering teachers' suggestions and activities led to culturally relevant representation for students.

Table 6

Summary of RQ2 Findings

Research Question (RQ2)	Themes	Findings	ACL Indicators
What do middle school principals consider as they develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?	**Experiencing Culturally Responsive Curriculum (CRC) Implementation**	Participants had no standard ways of addressing CRC. They adapted to their specific school environment and culture from situational responses which became the procedure within the distinct school environment.	Transformative leadership; encouraging a group consensus; builds trust; demonstrates servant leadership
	Leadership Approaches to Racial and Social Injustice	Being proactive, dealing with the issues immediately, using a restorative approach and not leaving issues open-ended were relevant in the approaches to racial and social injustice.	Having conversations on race and social injustice; Critical Race Theory (CRT) to guide the analysis of issues
	Stakeholders' Voice	Participants termed inclusion as a collectiveness of everyone when all the stakeholders have voice and building relationships.	encourages the voice of all stakeholders; encouraging a group consensus; builds trust; demonstrates servant leadership
	The Effect of Beliefs on Principals' Leadership Role	Participants considered their leadership beliefs, stakeholders' voice and support in developing and implementing a CRC.	a leader who is a role model; builds trust; demonstrates servant leadership; and encourages the voice of all stakeholders
	Supporting Student and Teacher Issues	Participants spoke to social issues such as poverty, crime, absent parents, single parents, and challenges of the LGBTQ community as typically requiring school leadership understanding, appreciation, and support	a leader who is a role model; builds trust; demonstrates servant leadership; and encourages the voice of all stakeholders; Critical Race Theory (CRT) to guide the analysis of issues

The implementation of CRC was dependent on adequate teaching compliment, the availability of sufficient instructing resources, teacher training and professional development, individual teacher and student familiarity with arrangements and

technologies, parent involvement and support, and student acceptance. This was also concluded by Khalifa et al. (2016), on the creation of opportunities for teachers to professionally develop themselves, which resulted in a more effective delivery of the curriculum. Further endorsement could be found in Santamaría (2009) who proffered that teachers must accumulate knowledge of their students' cultural experiences to translate into positive learning outcomes. The findings in my study matched the Vescio (2016) posit on utilizing the leadership responsibility to focus on building positive relationships was relevant in a diverse environment. My study indicated, like Khalifa (2018), that educators should connect to the uniqueness of the community, internal and external, and merge this into curriculum delivery.

The theme, Leadership Approaches to Racial and Social Injustice revealed a key finding that participants stressed equal treatment for all despite how challenging the situation might be and even if the consequences were severe. Being proactive, dealing with the issues immediately, using a restorative method, and not leaving issues open-ended were relevant in the approaches to racial and social injustice. In concurrence with Castillo and Maniss (2018), the principals recognized that when students from a particular ethnic group were regarded as not behaving, they were, instead, exhibiting a desire to be accepted and belong. The participating principals reflected on discipline issues originating from social justice and racial cues. Respondents believed that indiscipline emanated from societal challenges which were compounded by negative cues within the school environment.

Like Carter-Andrews and Gutwein (2020) and Gregory and Fergus (2017), the participants conceded that they actively focused on discipline reforms within their schools. To support diverse learners, they employed strategies that embraced an inclusive school climate and acknowledged addressing educators' concerns. Respondents concurred with DeMatthews et al. (2017) that a leader's attitudes and individual beliefs about race could influence decisions on discipline. They were unanimous in their conclusion that to manage discipline at school, they tried to connect the teachers and their students to the community; confirming the findings of Gregory and Fergus (2017) that a school culture opened to social and emotional learning occasioned reduced levels of disparity on discipline related decisions.

Although Carter et al. (2017), Dumas and Nelson (2016), and Gregory and Fergus (2017) revealed discipline gaps, prejudice, negative attitudes, and inconsistencies in the way leaders viewed and treated minorities, participants in this study disclosed that they adopted a cautious and proactive tactic when addressing issues that involved race and social justice. Matthews (2016) highlighted the importance of a racial sensitive leadership in schools. Adherence to the Critical Race Theory as purported in the ACL framework by Santamaría and Santamaría (2015) was pertinent in principals' use of restorative approaches and the creation of learning opportunities to resolve allegations of racism and social injustice. The interviewees emphasized that, as educators, they were proactive in addressing concerns on racism and social injustice.

This finding endorsed Carey et al. (2017) who emphasized that educational leaders reinforced their commitment to discourage social injustice and bias when making

decisions. This reinforced commitment was also significant as a CRT tenet in the ACL framework and was identified in the participants who preferred the adoption of open collaboration when addressing emerging and evolving issues. For them, listening skills and restorative practices were key to solving these problems. They found that individuals, as victims and perpetrators, introspected when revealing their feelings openly. They also highlighted that issues were exacerbated when prolonged and left unaddressed. They believed that avoiding or deliberately staying away from difficult conversations never ended well. This was in agreement with previous works by Bertrand and Rodela (2018) and Dumas and Nelson (2016).

For theme three, Stakeholders' Voice, the finding was participants' identification of their collaborative culture which extended to having open positive communication and an open-door policy that enabled going forward working directly with a staff. There were opportunities for individuals to voice concerns formally or informally. Participants termed inclusion as a "collectiveness of everyone" when all the stakeholders had voice and opportunities to build relationships. Principals' leadership of the CRC initiatives depended on their active support, commitment, and encouragement for and management of stakeholder initiatives. This finding found consensus in the works of Bode et al. (2012), Johnson (2012) and Nieto (1999) who highlighted that it was critical that administrators in diverse schools were guided by culturally responsive guidelines which were focused on a connection to the community. In agreement with Mayfield & Garrison-Wade (2015), this study indicated that innovative principals who collaborated and included stakeholders in shared decision-making fostered a culturally responsive

curriculum implementation. All participants revealed that accommodating the ACL indicator where stakeholders' voice in their schools promoted students' excellence. In like manner, Martinez and Everman (2017) also confirmed that principals in Texas could produce a successful school by encouraging the trust of stakeholders.

Theme four projected the Effect of Beliefs on Principals' Leadership Role evolving into the key finding that participants considered their leadership beliefs to develop and implement a CRC. Principals believed that their good leadership, a co-operation from major stakeholders, and a consistent and genuine involvement of students, supported the implementation of CRC and created the facilitating environment at school. This conclusion was related to Kennedy et al. (2016) who proffered that the connection between the school and the community was critical and that resonated in their experiences. This study may have extended knowledge when participants highlighted that there existed a dilemma between the lack of structure at home, and the organized school structure. They further attributed that resolving this dilemma was essential for students' academic achievement. They underlined the importance of connecting to the ELL and considered home and parental support as essential. Notwithstanding, they had concerns that the representation of the stakeholders' groups was not a true reflection of the community and, like Martinez and Everman (2017) believed, that it was necessary to encourage stakeholder's trust and to influence school culture.

Supporting Student and Teacher Issues emerged as theme five with an associated finding that participants spoke to social issues such as poverty, crime, absent parents, single parents, and challenges of the LGBTQ community contributing to the setbacks that

diversity and cultural awareness and practices present for school leadership. Despite the setbacks, participants recognized the need for necessitating school support to these students. This finding was in agreement with a Khalifa et al. (2016) posit that CRSL behaviors of advocacy, equity, inclusion, and social justice were not only applicable in the minority vs. majority context but extended to gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. Like Carter-Andrews and Gutwein (2020), my study's findings acknowledged that students may come from challenging situations at home and these issues required different attention to other CR elements such as race, class and sexual orientation. The participants displayed knowledge of cultural diversity as purported by Lee (2001), which was used to describe educators who accepted the individual differences among their students. Despite the concerns of Ayscue (2016), Carey et al. (2017) and Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) about exclusionary and intersectionality practices in schools, participants did not identify or expressed these attitudes, but instead all of them were initiating inclusive practices for minorities.

Appendix E: RQ, IQ, Categories, and Themes

Table: *Research Questions and Interview Questions*

Research Questions	**Main Interview Questions**
RQ 1: What are the beliefs and experiences of middle school principals about culturally responsive curriculum implementation leadership practices in southern Texas?	1. What do you believe is the meaning of culturally responsiveness? Can you give examples? Theme: The Meaning of Cultural Responsiveness Categories: Student Needs Cultural Appreciation and Belongingness 2. In what ways do you implement a culturally responsive curriculum in your school? Describe these ways and say how important they were to you. Theme: Culturally Responsive Curriculum Implementation Categories: Creating a Culturally Responsive Curriculum (CRC) Curriculum Implementation Challenges 3. Describe how you lead your staff and students. What are your strategies? Theme: Strategic Leadership Categories: Building Collaborative Cultures Leadership Strategies 4. Describe your best leadership practices for a diverse school population. In what ways would you say you are a transformative leader? Theme: Transformative Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices Categories:

	Leadership Behaviors for Diversity Transformative Leadership Practices
RQ 2: What do middle school principals consider as they develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum as part of their leadership practices in southern Texas?	5. Describe your experiences in developing and implementing a culturally responsive curriculum. Give examples of how you support your teachers in the delivery of the curriculum. Theme: Experiencing Culturally Responsive Curriculum Implementation Category: Exemplars of Culturally Responsive Curriculum Implementation 6. How do you approach issues of race and social injustice? Can you give examples. Theme: Leadership Approaches to Racial and Social Injustice Category: Approach to Issues 7. In what ways do all stakeholders have a voice in your school? Can you give examples? Theme: Stakeholders' Voice Categories: "Collectiveness of Everyone" Students' Voice Teachers' Voice Parents' Voice Community Voice 8. What are your beliefs on leadership? How do you think your beliefs help or hinder your leadership role? Theme: The Effect of Beliefs on Principals' Leadership Role Categories: Beliefs Hindrances 9. Describe the issues you believe affect your students and teachers in and out of school.

	Can you give examples and say how you support them when they experience issues? Theme: Supporting Student and Teacher Issues Categories: Students' Struggles Teachers' Issues School Support