

A Content Analysis of the Career Paths and Cultural Capital of Mexican-American Male

Principals:

A Critical Race Discourse on the Journey Toward the Principalship

by

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A Dissertation

In

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
Of Texas Tech University in
Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for
The Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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August, 2012

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project would not have become a reality without the support of many individuals. I am thankful for the support of my wife and loving children. This work would not have been possible without the tremendous leadership and guidance of my dear friend, Dr. Fernando Valle. I am thankful for the encouragement and support that my mother provided me during this learning endeavor. I am indebted to Dr. Vanessa DeLeon for her guidance throughout this process. I am certain that I have failed to mention many others who have assisted me along the way. Your assistance was greatly appreciated and instrumental in the completion of this study.

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ABSTRACT

This is a content analysis of the career paths and cultural wealth of Mexican-American male principals. A Critical Race Theory (CRT) perspective on the journey toward the principalship was utilized to frame and ground the study. There is a critical need to identify and examine the perceptions of race, and racial barriers, in the principalship. This research utilized critical qualitative questioning, counter narratives, and content analysis as approaches to provide a deeper understanding on how race impacted the principal journey. Content analysis provided a research design method which allowed for the organization of the tremendous amount of data collected (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011). The context of the study was conducted from a critical race lens which is an intellectually and politically committed movement that studies race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The framework was used a strength-based approach utilizing cultural wealth, an array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression (Yosso, 2005). The aim of this analysis was to evaluate the career paths of seven Mexican-American male principals and their narratives about their experiences with race and ethnicity and the cultural wealth used in order to obtain the principalship. Procedures of data collection included the selection of the seven Mexican-American male principals, initial interviews, transcribing and analyzing interviews, member checks, and a reflexive journal. Three central themes were identified from the data analysis including impact of race, the role of gender, and cultural wealth harnessed. This study found: racial barriers were still in place, covertly practiced examples of deficit thinking by the dominant culture, and microaggressions by the racially dominate

group. Findings of this study regarding gender and Mexican-American male principal career paths included that 100% had a strong male role model(s) in their homes growing up. Cultural wealth findings of this study illustrated that all had extended family and community support and racial conversations highlighted obstacles and racial structures in place to challenge them as they became principals.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The principalship is the most important leadership position in United States schools. An expanding body of empirical knowledge illustrates that leadership attributes of the principal has an impact upon the school's overall academic performance (Marzano, 2006). The need for competent school leaders is of paramount importance if students are to be successful in post-secondary education and our information driven workforce. Leadership studies continue to focus on principals' skills and their ability to foster school improvement. The need to develop effective school principals must include and embrace a comprehensive population of ethnic and gender diversity. Balanced, authentic, and cultural leadership are needed mechanisms to build an inclusive educational community which will meet the expectations of an increasingly diverse student population.

Principals make up the largest group of educational leaders and make decisions that impact students on a daily basis. The role of the principal has evolved over time. Changing demands of the principalship are great and are in response to additional public accountability and the changing demographics of the United States. Principals impact the effectiveness of their schools and student success (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Principals are role models for teachers and students. They provide examples of behavior and character attributes to be aspired. The largest numbers of studies in educational leadership examine white males, their perspectives, leadership styles, and experiences in the principalship. It is important to examine school leadership experiences beyond that of the dominant culture of the white male. This study explores ethnic minorities in the

principalship, and their pathways in obtaining the position of principal in Texas, through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT).

School leadership research on the career paths of minority principals is limited. According to National Educational Statistics, Hispanics make up only about 20% of principals in the state of Texas (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 2008). In the state of Texas 95% of student population growth occurs among Hispanics, which is in disproportion to the percentage of Hispanic educational leaders. Hispanics are the fastest growing racial group in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2011). This growth in the Hispanic population will impact the pool of educators and principals in the educational pipeline and warrant the need for inclusive and cultural leadership. A small amount of scholarly research over the last two decades has emerged to discuss the impact of race and ethnicity impacting the career paths of Mexican-American principals.

To further understand the thought processes, decisions, and experiences of those who chose the principalship, the exploration of racial/ethnic experiences, dispositions, and perceptions of cultural identity of Mexican-American males is important to the body of knowledge in educational leadership. The future of a CRT agenda, and its place in educational leadership and policy, will partially depend on the efforts made by scholars/activists to explore its possible connections to life in schools and communities of color and to make that testimony a part of the legal and public record and discourse (Yamamoto, 1997).

This qualitative content analysis examined the impact race and ethnicity has on the journey of the principalship and how race influences the experiences and narratives of

Mexican-American male principals. The study also looked at the self-perceived attributes, cultural capital, and support mechanisms that aided these men in the journey toward the principalship. The barriers, real or perceived, along with ethnic and cultural factors Mexican-American males had to overcome in their quest to become campus leaders were examined (Manuel & Slate, 2003).

Background of the Study

Examining the role of Latino educational leaders in the field of education has been an area of research which has gained greater attention in the last decade. Despite this effort, there is a significant gap in the research literature regarding Mexican-American male educational leaders. The documented leadership capital and exploration of principal career paths has not included the perspectives and voice of the Mexican-American male.

The largest populations in principal studies remain that of the white male, grounding the majority of obtainable information on this topic from their perspective. Leadership studies traditionally omit accounts of race structures, group identification, and how race and ethnicity impacts experiences in the principalship. Barriers faced by minority principal aspirants include lack of access to formal social networks that advance the careers of promising, young principal candidates (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). School leadership literature documents barriers faced by ethnic minorities. The limited amount of empirical work available fails to document the social and cultural wealth utilized by minority principals to overcome documented impediments.

Educational Leadership and Hispanics

The research conducted regarding the impact of ethnicity and race on career paths of Hispanic educational leaders has focused on the position of the superintendent. The last decade highlighted several qualitative studies that help shed light upon the plight of Hispanic educational leaders. Rueda (2002) documented the career paths of Mexican-American male superintendents in the state of Texas. This study found that Mexican-American male superintendent aspirants benefit from a support network in order to assist candidates during their quest to become superintendents (Rueda, 2002). Margaret Manuel and John Slate (2003) published a study recording the profile of Hispanic female superintendents in America. This study found very few Hispanic women superintendents compared to the number of teachers and recorded their demographics and the barriers that they faced in obtaining the superintendency. It traced the careers pathways of those women who had obtained the superintendency and illustrated the need to examine the career paths of those women who obtained a position in educational leadership (Manuel & Slate, 2003).

The career paths and documented struggles of Latina/Hispanic females in educational leadership have been well documented. Gonzales (2007) recorded the stories and experiences of Latinas aspiring to the superintendency in the Northwestern United States. Research discovered women seeking the superintendency experience discrimination and highlighted that Latinas seeking the superintendency relied upon the support of family, work ethic, determination, commitment, mentors, and preparation (Gonzales, 2007). Work by Carrion-Mendez (2009) on Arizona Latina school superintendents recorded the plight of aspiring Latina superintendents. Collected data and

findings were electronically recorded to further help others in their quest for this educational leadership position (Carrion-Mendez, 2009). The findings of these studies document areas of networking which assist in the recruitment of minority leadership, arguing for purposeful ethnic and gender inclusion, to bring balance to the current population of educational leaders.

Literature which examines the cultural leadership and impact of ethnicity and race upon student success is limited. In reference to Latino educational leadership, a quantitative study, conducted by Tresslar (2010), found there was no relationship between the ethnicity of the principal and the ethnicity of the students and their academic performance. Specifically the relationship between the Texas Education Agency's accountability rating system and the performance of students in predominantly Hispanic public high schools in Texas and the ethnicity of their principals was measured (Tresslar, 2010).

The rapid growth of the Hispanic population in Texas illustrates the need for continued studies of students, educators and educational leaders. A review of the literature reveals that Texas is second only to California in regard to the overall population among Hispanics in all states (Pew Research Center, 2011). According to analysis by the Pew Research Center, in 2010 there were 17.1 million Latino children ages 17 or younger in Texas, which represents 23% of this age group. The number of Latino children grew by 39% during the last decade. Hispanic student representation in the United States is largest in the geographic areas of the south and west. Thirty-seven percent of all students in the western United States were Hispanic. The leadership and cultural experiences of educational leaders in the southwestern states, as well as across

the nation, will be an important factor in engaging and leading the growing population of Hispanic students.

Leadership perspectives of white males and females and the experiences of African-American leaders, along with the Latina female principal, are recognized in leadership literature. The focus of this study is on Mexican-American male public school principals including their experiences with race, their narrative on the journey toward the principalship, and how social and cultural wealth was utilized in their quest to become principals in the state of Texas.

Statement of the Problem

There is a critical need to identify and examine the perceptions of race and racial barriers in the principalship. One of the basic ways to start is to deal with the issue of trust/mistrust between education leaders and teachers/faculty and students of color and their families and communities because, in a very real sense, perception is reality, and whether education administrators agree with this or not, it cannot be ignored when trying to achieve racial equity in the context of increasing federal and state accountability (Parker & Villalpando, 2007). Leadership scholars have pushed the knowledge base with Transformational, Authentic, Distributive, and Cultural Leadership theories to transform schools. As part of that leadership transformation, education institutions work to increase the achievement of students and accomplish diversity goals. The reality of this goal remains elusive across the United States in classes, school settings, communities, and the principalship. This task is not impossible to achieve; evidence already exists documenting how schools can provide racial equity, high student performance, and school improvement through the current climate of accountability, if the focus is on changing the

culture of schools to meet the educational and emotional needs of the students, parents, and staff to create a different community based on love and caring for students of color (Scheurich, 1998).

Recruitment of community and adult role models for black male and Latino students, along with the development of enrichment and intervention programming for minority students, is an integral part of educational literature. With changing demographics and cultural shifts in schools and leadership as a catalyst, Dimmick and Walker (2005) argue the importance for the state of Texas to have a diverse group of principal candidates to meet the increased demands of diversity.

This study continues to explore the perceptions, resilience, and the needs and challenges of minority principals. The limited studies describing racial and career experiences of Mexican-American males, as well as those of other minorities, of the principalship removes ethnicity and race discourse from educational administration.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to conduct a content analysis of the (1) career paths of Mexican-American male principals, (2) how race and ethnicity impacted the journey toward the principalship, and (3) the social and cultural capital utilized to reach the position of principal in the state of Texas. An additional purpose of this study was to investigate the cultural wealth which influenced Mexican-American males to become principals. Tara Yosso (2006) identified six kinds of social and cultural wealth: aspirational capital, linguistic capital, social capital, familial capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital (Yosso, 2006).

This study sought to collect the counter narratives from public school principals of Mexican-American descent with at least two years of experience in the field. Finally, this study utilized the lens of CRT to identify and examine the perceptions of racial barriers Mexican-American principals faced in pursuit of the principalship.

Significance of the Study

In the United States, the Hispanic population is the fastest growing segment of our society. Regionally, the Hispanic population is the fastest growing population in the southwestern United States. In Texas, the Hispanic population is growing at a faster rate than any other ethnic group (Excelencia in Education, 2008). The cultural, racial, and ethnic leadership discourse in our schools, especially among Mexican-American principals in the leadership pipeline, will provide the necessary cultural competence needed to provide a more global and educated workforce for our economy. This study is important to the existing body of knowledge because it provides school districts, principal preparation programs, and policy-makers information necessary for the recruitment and retention of Mexican-American principals and to keep up with the demographics shift in Texas and the nation. The research is significant as it provides interpretation and insights into the racial experiences in the principal narrative. Examining race as a prominent issue, and documenting the experiences of Mexican-American males through a Critical Race Theory lens and counter narratives, allowed the researcher to provide a voice to these omitted stories. In addition, there are currently no studies that examine the existence of Mexican-American males' cultural capital. Examining these narratives make it possible for policy-makers and institutions of higher education to address issues in the Latino educational pipeline.

This study supports the proposition that race continues to be a significant issue in explaining inequality in the United States by examining the field of educational leadership recruitment and seeking ways to diversify educational leadership (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This research aids schools in engaging in and respecting Hispanic culture, which will, in turn, enable these schools to be more successful with Latino students (Garcia, 2000).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) guides the theoretical and conceptual discourse of this study. CRT emerged in the later 1970s as legal scholarship that examined how the law has been, and continues to be, complicit in upholding white supremacy (Yanow, 2007). This research examines how Mexican-American male principals experience and navigate a social structure dominated by white supremacy and racial power that is reproduced with the aid of the law. CRT focuses its examination in two different directions of inquiry, law and racial power. This investigation examined the possibility of transforming the relationship between the law and racial power to eliminate racial subordination (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1996). For decades, the racial conversations and experiences of Mexican-American males have been framed to promote the cultural stereotypes. To debunk this mindset, the professional journey toward the principalship must be studied in the light of critical scholarship, driving the need for further research. The Mexican-American male's counter narratives from a CRT discourse challenges the use of traditional leadership paradigms which omit cultural capital as a framework for leadership analysis.

A cultural capital framework provides the lens that shifts away from the deficit view of minority communities and instead it focuses on an array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed by marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged (Yosso, 2005). For this study, the work of Fukuyama (1999) is used to encompass the term cultural capital, which refers to the norms and networks that facilitate collective actions and work toward the mutual benefit of a particular group.

Yosso (2005) outlines forms of capital that comprise community cultural wealth that most often go unacknowledged. The six forms of cultural capital Yosso puts forth include aspiration capital, linguistic capital, social capital, familial capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital. These forms of capital provide a framework and avenue for the understanding of cultural competence in the principalship and further examine the career paths of Mexican-American males into the principalship.

Overview of the Methodology

This study utilized qualitative methods to allow the researcher to uncover and understand conditions in society about which little is known. Qualitative researchers seek to discover how individuals place themselves within their environments and how they discover meaning from their surroundings using “symbols, rituals, social structures and so forth” (Berg, 2001). A qualitative methodology was used to understand racial conversations, social occurrences, and cultural wealth from the perspectives of Mexican-American principals. Qualitative researchers pursue the discovery of meaning and interpret how the different participants in a social construct see the world around them (Glesne, 2006).

This study also utilized critical qualitative research, counter narratives, and content analysis as approaches to provide a rich, thick description and a deeper understanding of how race impacted the principal journey. Critical qualitative research examines the questions and challenging power relationships, consisting of those linked to race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc., as well as the junction of those social constructs (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Counter narratives was selected as a method of sharing the lived experiences and stories of those who are on the margins of our society. Counter narratives challenge the malaise of dominant thought, contest the prevailing discourse on race, and seek to advance the cause of social reform. If these stories are ignored then, as a society, we let the dominate group in our country define the norm entirely (Ikemoto, 1997).

Data and content analysis provided a research design method which allowed for the organization of a tremendous amount of data to create useful files for the researcher (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011). Interview questions were designed to collect specific data because the amount of information gathered can be enormous and the limitations enable the researcher the capability to answer the sought after information in a more efficient manner (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011).

Research Questions

The following three research questions were central to the study and guided the interview process and the data gathered from Mexican-American male principals. The research question puts forth a question about a topic to be investigated (Johnson, 2003) and the qualitative methodology allowed for an open, flowing discourse. The research study focused on the following three questions:

1. In what ways were Mexican-American males influenced to become school principals?
2. How does race and ethnicity structure the career path and journey toward the principalship for Mexican-American males?
3. What forms of cultural wealth impact the Mexican-American male experience to become school principals?

Research Assumptions

The following research assumptions were made in regard to this study. A first assumption for this study is that Mexican-American principals continue to face racial barriers to the principalship. Second, in the near future, the state of Texas will require culturally competent principals to understand and relate to the growing population of Latino students and parents in schools. Lastly, cultural competencies and valuing cultural wealth and diversity play a major role in the success of a school and school climate. The support of Mexican-American male principals will facilitate communication between Mexican-American students and their parents (Garcia, 2000).

Delimitations

Data collected was limited to seven public school districts in the state of Texas. These districts ranged from mid to small size districts and rural and suburban areas as this homogeneous collection created improved findings. This study incorporated research participants with both negligible and large amounts of leadership experience but restricted research to participants who were employed or had been employed by public school districts in the state of Texas. This study did not include principals from Charter and private schools due to the fact that they operate in a dissimilar context and engage in

operational flexibility not similar to public schools; therefore, this research was done explicitly with principals in public schools. Mexican-American male principals with at least two years of experience were selected to participate.

Definition of Terms

Critical Race Theory (CRT) – Critical Race Theory is an intellectually and politically committed movement that studies race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Cultural Capital – Used in sociological and cultural studies, Bourdieu identifies individuals as possessing cultural capital if they have acquired competence in society's high-status culture (Maher et al., 1990) intertwined with social capital. Cultural capital exists in three forms: in an embodied state (long lasting disposition of the individual's mind and body), objectified state (cultural capital as cultural good-books, pictures), and institutionalized state (cultural capital as academic credential) (Bourdieu, 1986).

Cultural Wealth – An array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression (Yosso, 2005).

Counter Narrative – Use of narrative storytelling, provides an effective qualitative, rather than quantitative, means of challenging oppressive social structures (Maytok, 2003).

Ethnicity – Refers to an individual's ancestral heritage consisting of six main features: a common proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, elements of a common culture, a link with a homeland, and a sense of solidarity (Baumann, 2004).

Hispanic or Latino – A member of an ethnic group that traces its roots to twenty Spanish speaking nations from Latin America and Spain itself but not Portugal or Portuguese-speaking Brazil (Pew Research Center, 2009).

Mexican-American – An American citizen of Mexican ancestry (Dowling, 2003). The term is used to refer to the principal participants in this study since South Americans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans were purposefully excluded from this study.

Race – Classification system used to categorize humans into large distinct populations or groups by heritable phenotypic characteristics, geographic ancestry, physical appearance, and ethnicity (Gordon, 1964).

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation contains five chapters. Chapter one discussed the background of the study, the research problem, the purpose, and the significance of the study. Additionally, the conceptual framework was introduced along with an overview of the methodology. The research questions and assumptions were put forth along with a rationale of the research design. The chapter finished with a discussion of the delimitations of the study and terms specific to the study were defined and made clear. Chapter two contains the literature review related to the evolution of the principalship, role of the principal, the Mexican-American's role in educational leadership, changing demands of the principalship, globalization demands, Hispanic population growth and its impact on the principalship, Critical Race Theory in education, and the framework of cultural capital. The methodological approach used for the study, delineating participant identification, and data collection required to examine the research questions, will be explained in Chapter three. The qualitative findings for this study are presented and

displayed in Chapter four, and concluding analysis and implications are explained in Chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The evaluation of research and scholarship presented in this review of the literature is organized into three main sections. The first section discussed the principalship including its history, the role of the principal, and the changing demand of the principalship. The next section focused on Latinos in educational leadership, which examined how Hispanic population growth is impacting the principalship and the historical research that has been completed on Mexican-Americans regarding educational leadership. The third section provides theoretical insight through the examination of Critical Race Theory in education and educational leadership, the cultural wealth framework, and counter narratives.

The study of the career perspectives and racial experiences of Mexican-American male principals in determining what led them to pursue the position of principal in the state of Texas requires an understanding of historical perspectives of the principalship. An understanding of the qualifications and roles and responsibilities of the principalship is important in order to fully understand how to fill the position. The changing demographics of the growing Hispanic population are another key piece of information that must be understood to fully appreciate the current and future aspects of the principalship. In order to gain a historical perspective of the field of educational leadership, a historical review of the investigations involving Latinos in educational leadership was conducted in K-12 public school settings. Critical Race Theory was examined at the end of the review to provide the post modern platform needed for the

discourse utilizing the framework of cultural capital in order to bring about reform in this crucial area of minority principal recruitment and retention.

Merriam Webster's Dictionary (2011) defines a Hispanic as a person of Latin-American descent living in the United States. Webster's dictionary defines a Latino as a person of Latin-American origin living in the United States. In this study, a Mexican-American will be defined as an American whose heritage is from Mexico. For the purpose of clarity in this study, the terms Hispanic, Mexican-American, and Latino will be respectfully cited as they are presented in research; they will be used interchangeably.

Historical Perspective/Evolution of the Principalship

Education in the United States has a long history. Soon after English colonists established settlements in the New World, schools were created in order to educate the young. Religion was a key reason that these colonists set up schools in the New World. The colonists felt knowledge of religion was of paramount importance. Due in a large part to these religious attributes of education, the colony of Massachusetts enacted the first law requiring that parents send their children to school. This structure of school organization and mandatory attendance set the pattern for the rest of the educational system in the United States (Danzeberger, 1992).

The position of the principal was added in the early 1800s as schools became larger and grade levels were created. This position was almost always a male who completed the required paperwork and kept up the facilities. As the century progressed this position lost the teaching duties and primarily became a manager. During the 19th and 20th centuries, principals worked to expand their influence and gain autonomy over their own schools. In the mid 1800s nearly 30 grammar school principals resisted the

attempt by the superintendent to impose examinations upon the pupils saying that tests were unjust to students and teachers (Pierce, 1935). During the early 20th century, as principals strived to be seen as professionals, they formed national associations. The National Association of Secondary School Principals was established in 1916 and the National Association of Elementary School Principals was formed in 1921.

According to Danzeberger (1992), the position of principal continued to evolve during the 20th century. In the 1920s, the principalship began to evolve into the job that it is today. Principals were expected to be in the classroom helping teachers improve instruction. By the 1930s, seventy percent of urban principals had no teaching duties at all (Danzeberger, 1992). During the 1940s, the principal was seen as a person who advocated the virtues of democracy. Educational leaders advocating democratic virtues were a response to the overseas threat of fascism. During the 1950s, the ability of the principal to be efficient was valued over other attributes. During this decade principals spent time on such particulars as how to introduce custodians to the students (Danzeberger, 1992). During the decade of the 1960s, the scientific knowledge of the principal was emphasized in order to make schools run with upmost efficiency. During the 1970s, principals were expected not only to manage all aspects of the school but to oversee new federal programs being introduced (Kafka, 2009). During the 1970s, principals were forced to deal with more diverse student populations as society became more diverse. During the 1980s, with the writing of *A Nation At-Risk*, school principals were forced to deal with accountability testing of students in order to prove that students were mastering the basic academic skills (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). During the 1990s, school reform efforts forced principals to deal with

additional standardized testing in order to prove that their students had mastered government mandated learning objectives. This movement toward increased student accountability has increased over the last two decades, redefining the job of principal.

A complete examination of the history of the principalship includes an investigation of the methods by which principals have obtained their positions. Examining historical pathways to the principalship sheds light upon how principals are selected for the position and have included several methods over time (Baltzell & Dentler, 1983). History illustrates that early principals were chosen or appointed by school boards based on politics. As time progressed, numerous principals in many communities have been selected based upon merit. Whatever method of principal recruitment is chosen it is important to include equity so that women and minorities are included in the process. In order to be sure that minorities are included in the process, many procedures have been formulated in the selection of principals. In order to promote greater diversity, districts have implemented the use of assessment centers, internship programs, and minority nominating processes (Baltzell & Dentler, 1983). Those who advocate Critical Race Theory think that affirmative action methods and procedures should be used as well to level the hiring field and promote social justice (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

This history of the principalship provides insight into how the position has evolved over time. The principalship in the United States has evolved from a position serving homogenous student groups into a position that must serve a constantly evolving group of diverse stakeholders. The history of career pathways to the principalship has also changed over time, setting the stage for more diverse educational leaders.

Role of the Principal

Those engaged in research and policymakers increasingly realize the important role that principals can play in generating high quality schools. The principal serves as the educational leader responsible for managing the policies and procedures to ensure that all students are supervised in a safe learning environment that meets the approved curricula and mission of the school. Mike Schmoker states that school leadership should focus teachers on three factors: implementing a common core curriculum, empowering teams of teachers to assist one another in improving instruction, and leaders meeting with teams of teachers to discuss the results of common assessments given to students (Schmoker, 2011).

Fenwick English is correct in ascertaining that educational leadership is composed of both science and art. The science part of the leadership equation is taught much more easily and tested in an empirical manner. The art part of leadership is much more difficult to quantify because it must be seen and demonstrated if an educational leader is to be deemed successful (English, 2008). The role of the principal involves combining both of these factors if a principal is going to create and sustain a high quality school. This argument is part of the catalyst to further research the softer, artistic, and cultural coherence side of school leadership which impacts school leaders and their communities.

To better understand the key role of the principal, it is important to look at the performance areas that define the role of the principal. There are several studies and publications that have defined or listed the roles and areas of expertise needed by the public school principal. Examinations of state and national standards of skills and

performance areas will illuminate the abilities and knowledge needed by school educational leaders.

The role and duties of the principal as defined by the state of Texas provide one example of the qualities that the public expects of principals. These standards required for educator certification in the state of Texas are defined by Texas Education Code 241.15. According to this section of the code, the principal is the educational leader of a school. Following are the listed duties of the principal in the state of Texas:

1. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity and fairness and in an ethical manner.
2. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students and shapes campus culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
3. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by implementing a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members, selects and implements appropriate models for supervision and staff development, and applies the legal requirements for personnel management.
4. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

5. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students through leadership and management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
6. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the design and implementation of curricula and strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning: alignment of curriculum, curriculum resources, and assessment; and the use of various forms of assessment to measure student performance.
7. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a campus culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

A national perspective of the abilities needed for the principalship can provide insight into the skills needed by educational leaders. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's standards for school leaders provide a basic set of standards or guiding principles for school leaders. Thirty five states have adopted these standards, and tens of thousands of candidates have taken the ISLLC licensing exam. The standards that this exam is based upon are:

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth.
3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members and mobilizing community resources.
5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social economic, legal, and cultural context.

This review of the qualifications of the certification requirements and skills necessary to become a principal gives one an idea of the scope and nature of the job. Principals are required to meet state requirements for certification, which includes being an advocate for the success of all students. National standards for the principalship have also been established, which place the bar of achievement very high requiring the success of all students as a major goal.

Mexican-Americans in Educational Leadership: Historical Research

A historical examination of the literature shows that events in American history have impacted the number of Latino administrators in the United States. The Supreme

Court ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* affected the number of minority principals employed in our public schools at the end of the 20th century and the start of the 21st century. *Brown v. Board of Education* reduced the number of minorities and women in the position of principal and increased the number of white males in the position (Kafka, 2009).

Many studies have scrutinized educational leadership over the past three decades. Despite this large number of studies, there are very few empirical studies on Latino administrators. Most of the studies reviewing Latino administrators were qualitative in nature seeking to understand the story behind the story.

After examining the literature, studies regarding Latino educational leaders can be split into four groups. One theme found in this review uncovered studies that focused on statistics in order to illustrate the inequities found regarding Hispanics and school leadership in society today (Tourkin et al., 2007; U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Schools and Staffing Survey*, 2008; PEW Research Center, 2011). A second group of findings in this research include studies advancing the ideas of mentoring programs for Latino educational leaders (Office of Educational Research, Research Unit, Board of Education of the City of New York, 1994; Magdaleno, 2006). A third category of studies found in this review of publications examined Hispanic school administrators and their individual and on the job struggles with racism and other social prejudices (Mendez-Morse, 1997; Rueda, 2002; Manuel & Slate, 2003; Gonzalez, 2007; Carrion-Mendez, 2009). The final theme uncovered articles that attempted to connect student ethnicity performance to the ethnicity of the principal (Tillman, 2004; Tresslar, 2010).

Studies found in this review of the literature used statistics to highlight the inequities. Many of these research projects highlight the divergences between Hispanic principals and the stereotypical principal in the United States at the current time. A study performed by Tourkin et al. (2007) noted that in 2004, only 17.6% of principals in this country were from minority groups with over 80% being white. According to National Educational Statistics, Hispanics make up only about 20% of principals in the state of Texas (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 2008). Conversely, 95% of the student population growth in the state of Texas occurred among Hispanics. According to Pew Research Center five states, including both Texas and California, now have minority white populations (Pew Research Center, 2011).

A second category of studies found in this review involved advancing the idea of mentoring programs for Latino educational leaders. An analysis of publications found that some studies regarding Latino administrators discussed the establishment of mentoring programs for increasing the number of minority educational leaders. A complete examination of the literature reveals that there are few programs to increase the number of minority principals. Only one study or program was found in the New York City public school system. The study was created to identify people who were talented educators with demonstrated leadership ability and to provide pathways for minorities to become educational administrators (Office of Educational Research, Research Unit, Board of Education of the City of New York, 1994). In 2006 Magdaleno researched the mentoring of Latino leaders. This study put forth the idea that Latino and Latina students perceive Hispanic educational leaders as role models (Magdaleno, 2006). In 2008, a

study that documented the characteristics of Hispanic school administrators who have obtained administrative positions in the public sector was completed. This study examined patterns or characteristics and perceptions of Hispanic educational leaders. This study sought patterns that may help identify areas of networking to assist in the recruitment of future Hispanic educational leaders.

A large number of studies found in the literature examining Hispanic school administrators focused on individuals and their struggles with racism and other social prejudices on the job. These studies are written from the perspectives of Hispanic leaders regarding their experiences in the field of educational leadership. The majority of the studies found during this literature review focused on Latino school administrators who used social justice as an angle to bring about reform.

The studies of racism along the career paths of Latino educational leadership is documented as early as thirty years ago. This review examined this literature in a chronological manner. One early qualitative study completed in 1981 by Ortiz investigated the career paths of women, men, and minorities in educational leadership. This study found that women and minorities were underrepresented in the field of educational leadership. This study was one of the first studies to document the inequities that women and minorities face in the field of educational leadership. A phenomenological study on the meaning of becoming a Latina superintendent, based upon the struggle of Latina leaders, was conducted by Mendez-Morse in 1997. Mendez-Morse helped to highlight the lack of information that existed in the knowledge base regarding Latina women pursuing the superintendency. Mendez-Morse found that studies on Hispanic women superintendents was almost nonexistent and that this lack of

information was causing a “serious deficiency” in the amount known about Latinas in obtaining the superintendency. These pioneering studies, which examine the struggles of Latino educational leaders, helped to lay the groundwork for future explorations advancing the cause of adding Hispanics to the ranks of educational leaders.

The last decade highlighted several qualitative studies that documented the struggles along the career paths of Hispanic educational leaders. In 2002, Rueda studied Latino educational leaders by examining the career perspectives of Mexican-American males in obtaining the position of superintendent in the state of Texas. This study found that Mexican-American males obtained the superintendency due to several factors. Rueda found that support was a crucial factor in enabling these men to obtain the position of superintendent. It was also found in this study that mentors were fundamental in allowing these men to reach the superintendency. Rueda found that these Mexican-American males experienced prejudice along the career path that could have easily prevented them from becoming superintendents. It was found in this study that networking and Anglo mentors were an important factor in assisting these Mexican-American males to reach the position of superintendent. Rueda also identified that Mexican-American males possessed skills that were important factors in helping them gain a superintendent position in the state of Texas.

Margaret Manuel and John Slate (2003) published a study recording the profile of Hispanic female superintendents in America. They found that there were very few women superintendents compared to the number of teachers and recorded demographics and the barriers that they faced in obtaining the superintendency. The research traced the career pathways of those women who had obtained positions in educational

administration and illustrated the need to examine the career paths of those who have obtained a post in educational leadership. Their study identified 12 barriers to the superintendency that minority women had to overcome in their quest for educational leadership's highest position.

Gonzalez completed a study that recorded the stories of Latinas aspiring to the superintendency in the Northwestern United States. (Gonzalez, 2007). She found that those women still experience discrimination in their ability to compete for these positions. The study highlighted the fact that those Latinas seeking the superintendency rely upon the support of family, work ethic, determination, commitment, mentors, and preparation. A study completed in New Mexico in 2007 investigated and associated the viewpoints and lived experiences of Latinas who became superintendents and aspiring Latina administrators who were not selected for the position. This study highlighted the importance of mentors and the mentoring relationship in helping Hispanics to obtain these positions in educational leadership (Couch, 2007). A similar study was prepared by Carrion-Mendez (2009) on Latinas as school superintendents in Arizona. This study was conducted as a resource for Latinas to examine while pursuing the superintendency. This study sought to inspire, assist, and promote Latinas aspiring to the superintendency. This study led to the creation of a website that chronicled the five Latina superintendents in Arizona who chose to participate. This study resulted in a tool kit that assists other Latinas pursuing the superintendency. The perception of the glass ceiling, and adobe ceiling, was still strongly in place in becoming a minority superintendent in the state of Texas.

The final theme uncovered in the literature was that of connecting student performance to the ethnicity of the principal. Tillman found that minority school leaders are critical to student achievement. The researcher explained that African-American principals “led on the basis of their same race/cultural affiliation and their desire to positively affect the lives of black students. In most cases, their ‘why’ was closely linked to their identities: black and male, and black and female” (Tillman, 2004, p.140). The study found that relationships between black principal leadership and black student achievement did exist. This is a direct contradiction to a quantitative research study conducted by Tresslar in Texas regarding Hispanic student achievement and Hispanic principals. This study dealt with the relationship between principal ethnicity and student achievement as measured by the Texas Education Agency’s accountability rating system in predominantly Hispanic public high schools in Texas. This study came to the conclusion that the ethnicity of the principal had no impact on the performance of students in predominately Hispanic high schools in the state of Texas as measured by the Texas Education Agency’s accountability rating system (Tresslar, 2010). This study was one of the few quantitative studies found in this research regarding Latinos and educational leadership.

There are significant gaps in the publications regarding the perspectives of Mexican-American males and their struggle to reach the principalship. Since the largest portion of school administrators are white males, most of the research studies found in the literature is grounded from their perspective and it does not cover the perspectives of ethnic minority school administrators and the extra racial and cultural hurdles they encounter when pursuing roles in school administration. Latino males are disappearing

from the American higher education system. Latino males are more likely to drop out of school and seek full-time employment rather than finish school and graduate (Solórzano, Villalpando & Oseguera, 2005). A number of studies illustrate the barriers that are faced by Latinos in achieving the principalship including the limited number of Hispanic educational leaders and the lack of access to formal networks that advance the careers of majority ethnic groups (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). An examination of publications shows that there are a small number of programs to increase the number of minority principals (Magdaleno, 2006). Few studies exist regarding recruitment programs for Latino educational leadership and the plight of experienced male Latino educational leaders.

Many more queries were uncovered regarding the plight of Latina educational leaders (Ortiz, 1981; Mendez-Morse, 1997; Manuel & Slate, 2003; Gonzalez, 2007; Carrion-Mendez, 2009). In reviewing existing research it was found that fewer studies were prepared on the recruitment and career paths of principals as compared to the larger number of studies conducted on superintendents (Mendez-Morse, 1997; Rueda, 2002; Manuel & Slate, 2003; Gonzalez, 2007; Carrion-Mendez, 2009). An examination of the literature illustrates that there are very few studies on Hispanic male school administrators. Only a limited number of studies exist that examine Hispanic male leaders and their struggles with racism. These studies are generally qualitative in nature and focus on the lived experiences of Latino leaders and serve as counter stories to mainstream educational research (Rueda, 2002). There are gaps in the literature illuminating the way that Latino males view leadership. Research shows that Latinos view leadership differently than white males (Armendariz-Housen, 1995). The majority

of research studies reviewed on Latino educational leaders were conducted in the southwestern United States. The literature revealed that studies specifically on Latino leaders were conducted in only the states with the largest Latino populations, Florida, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Texas. This study revealed that there needs to be more studies conducted on Latino male educational leaders on a nationwide basis. The literature regarding educational leadership involving institutions of higher learning is not included in this literature review since it has little relevance to principals in public schools. The research review of Hispanic educational leaders in the public school setting only included leaders in schools that served grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

The methodologies used in previous research concerning the perceptions of Mexican-Americans in school leadership include both qualitative and quantitative research. The majority of the studies completed in the field of Mexican-American educational leaders and their career paths are mostly completed in a qualitative manner. Many qualitative studies were found while examining the literature. These studies greatly added to the knowledge of data on the struggles faced by Latino educational leaders and those aspiring to be educational leaders. Only one quantitative study was found relating to the leadership attributes of Latinos including the study by Tresslar in 2010. Although qualitative studies seem to fit the nature of this topic, more data needs to be collected in multiple ways in order for Latino leadership to be viewed holistically.

In summarizing the historical research completed on Mexican-American educational leadership, the literature shows that events in American history have impacted the number of Latino administrators in the United States. Four themes emerge after reviewing the literature regarding the historical research. One major theme found in

this review uncovered studies that focused on statistics in order to illustrate the inequities found regarding Hispanics and school leadership in society today. A second group of studies dealt with mentoring programs for Latino educational leaders. A third category of studies examined Hispanic school administrators and their individual and on the job struggles with racism and other social prejudices. A final theme emerged which attempted to connect student performance to the ethnicity of the principal. This review found that there are significant gaps in the literature regarding the perspectives of Mexican-American males and their struggle to reach the principalship. This review found that the methodologies used in previous research concerning the perceptions of Mexican-Americans in school leadership include both qualitative and quantitative research.

Changing Demands of the Principalship

The role of the principal is constantly evolving in the United States. The principal's role has changed from being a manager to being an instructional leader who is in classrooms on a daily basis influencing the way that the curriculum is taught. Many books have been written on or about educational leadership in order to keep up with the demands of the increasingly diverse community of stakeholders being served by schools. These publications have addressed such topics as leadership models, school culture, instructional leadership, collaborative leadership, and moral leadership (Sergiovanni, 1996; English, 2005; Marzano, 2006; DuFour & Eaker, 2008; Schmoker, 2011).

According to Michael Fullan, principals must be able to not only engage in leadership but must be able to sustain effective leadership by combining several factors. Effective leaders in today's schools, according to his research, must possess a strong

sense of moral purpose, and an understanding of the change process. Fullan states that effective principals must be able to build relationships utilizing emotional intelligence. Furthermore, his research purports that principals must have a devotion to formulating and sharing knowledge with the members of their professional learning community. Effective principals must be able to create order out of the complex factors of a school in a unique way (Fullan, 2002).

In schools today, the principal must assist in the teaching and learning process and must break the traditional role of manager in order to impact instruction leading to student achievement. Campus principals must engage in multiple roles. The principal must supervise curriculum, insist upon the implementation of research-based instructional techniques, oversee the differentiation of instructional delivery, and facilitate a climate of professional growth (Ediger, 2009). In implementing these techniques, principals must also engage in non-traditional activities such as shared leadership.

The changes in society are forcing school principals to engage diverse stakeholders in schools. Current school principals must understand their community's demographics and educational needs more than ever before. Today's principals must engage their communities if they are going to be successful in reaching all segments of the community. The research shows that it is the job of the principal to set direction, develop people, redesign the organization, manage the instructional program, and handle internal and external relations (Protheroe, 2011). The research illustrates that principals must empower others in order to create strong professional learning communities.

Shared leadership is a fundamental principle and dynamic of learning communities. We encountered no instances to support the "great leader theory" –

charismatic people who create extraordinary contexts for teaching by virtue of their unique vision. Strong principals empower and support teacher leadership to improve teaching practice (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Strong principals utilize shared leadership both internally and externally in a school in order to create organizations that value learning above all else. These external relations with diverse community groups are changing the characteristics that the principal needs in order to be successful.

Examining the changing role of the principalship enables one to see the increased demands that society is placing on this key position in educational leadership. The literature reveals that principals are serving communities with greater diversity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The role of the principal has changed in today's society because the principal is forced to become less of a manager and more of a leader in order to effectively serve all student groups. The increasing diversity of society is forcing principals to engage stakeholders on their level if schools are to reach the diverse students that exist in our schools today (Dimmock & Walker, 2005).

Globalization Demands

Globalization has had an enormous impact on the world in the last six decades. Globalization is explained as “a process of change which underpin a transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents” (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton, 1999). This advancing force has made interdependence a necessity in the modern world. The world's population is becoming more and more interrelated. This interdependence of our world society is economic, social, technical, and political. Citizens are expected to engage in international trade more frequently, understand cultures other than their own, and connect with one

another with frequency on the Internet and other means of telecommunications. Over the last decade, schools, business organizations, and communities have evolved into ever more diverse, global communities. This greater globalization has produced a myriad of challenges for organizations around the world. One of the greatest challenges that face organizations, including schools, is the need to find and pick the proper leaders for these organizations (House & Javidan, 2004). This trend of globalization has formulated the need to find school principals that understand cultural diversity.

In order to be successful in the world of globalization, school principals must be able to function in an environment of cross-cultural needs. According to Adler & Bartholomew (1992), global leaders identified five cross-cultural attributes that effective leaders need to cultivate: Effective leaders in a multicultural world must understand business, political, and cultural settings in the global economy; Effective principals in a world of globalization must be able to discover the perspectives and likes and dislikes of numerous cultures; Future principals must be able to effectively produce results consistently with individuals from many cultural backgrounds; Functioning in the world of globalization, principals of the future must be able to adapt to communicating with ease with those from backgrounds different from their own; Leaders in the world of globalization need to be able to connect with individuals from other cultures from a position of equality instead of cultural superiority (Alder & Bartholomew, 1992). Globalization will impact the principalship by demanding greater numbers of individuals that can span the gap of a cross-cultural environment.

Principals must be able to understand cultures other than their own in order to be successful in the era of globalization. Culture is an abstract concept and difficult to

define. Culture is the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions shared by a group of individuals. To sum up the definition of culture is that it is the way people live, their customs, and script of a group (Gudykunst, Ting-Tooney, & Chua, 1988).

The principals of the future will not be able to be ethnocentric and place their own cultures at the center of their scrutiny of other individuals and the world. Future principals will not be able to view others through a perceptual window from which individuals from one culture engage in judgmental determinations about people from a culture different from their own (Porter & Samovar, 1997). Principals in the post No Child Left Behind era must be able to fully understand the achievement of *all* students and respect the viewpoints of individuals from other cultures in order to be effective. The changing role of the principalship is requiring that principals be able to recognize their own ethnocentrism and be able to tolerate the ethnocentrism of people from other cultures.

The changing demands of the principalship require a person who is not prejudice. The nature of prejudice is the fixed position, conviction, or feeling that is believed by one person about another person or group that is founded upon flawed or unproven information. Prejudice is the making of judgments about others using past experiences. It utilizes rigid generalizations to hold back the force of change (Ponterotto & Petersen, 1993). Prejudice tends to be self-centered rather than service oriented, and this will hold back the principals needed in today's global world.

Principals in the growing world of diversity need to have cultural coherence to navigate the dimensions of culture. Over the past three decades, the nature of culture has been examined in numerous studies. These studies have identified the main

characteristics of different cultures. Principals must be able to understand these different dimensions of culture in order to be most effective. A study performed by Hall (1976) discovered that one main characteristic of culture is the degree that individuals are focused upon the individual or on the group (Hall, 1976). Hofstede uncovered five main dimensions of culture on which cultures differ: power distance, uncertainty, avoidance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and long-term—short-term orientation. Effective principals in a world of globalization must be familiar with these characteristics of cultural differences.

The changing nature of the principalship will require principals to be familiar with the Clusters of World Cultures that have been identified by House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta in a study conducted in 2004. This analysis was published as an 800 page report entitled: *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: the GLOBE Study of 62 Societies* (House et al., 2004). The clusters identified by this paper include: Southern Asia, Latin America, Nordic Europe, Anglo, Germanic Europe, Latin Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, Middle Eastern, and Confucian Asia. Principals in today's world will need to be familiar with the cultural attributes of students and the challenges of globalization.

Hispanic Population Growth Impacting the Principalship

The changing demands of the principalship make dealing with diverse stakeholders a current reality and professional necessity. Rapid growth among the Hispanic population will impact the principalship. According to Reddy (2011):

In a demographic shift touching every corner of the United States, the Hispanic population grew faster than expected and accounted for more

than half of the nation's growth over the past decade, with the groups increase driven by births and immigration.

The state of Texas was impacted in particular. In the state of Texas 95% of the growth among student population growth occurred among Hispanics. Texas led all other states in population growth adding nearly 1 million children of Hispanic descent.

The rapid growth of the Hispanic population in Texas illustrates the need for a larger number of Latino principals in order to lead the pace of change. A review of the literature reveals that Texas is second only to California in regard to the overall Hispanic population among all states in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2011).

According to analysis by the Pew Research Center, in 2010 there were 17.1 million Latino children ages 17 or younger in Texas, which represents 23% of this age group. The number of Latino children grew by 39% during the last decade. Hispanic student representation in the United States is largest in the geographic areas of the south and west. Thirty-seven percent of all students were Hispanic in the western United States. The southwestern states will need more educational leaders in order to keep up with this growing population of Hispanics.

Changing demographics in Texas will also impact the number and type of principals needed in Texas. The Texas State Demography Center is forecasting that Hispanics will outnumber whites in Texas sometime between 2015 and 2034. Hispanics are on track to become the absolute majority between 2028 and 2040. Over 70% of Hispanics are concentrated in four states, Texas, California, Florida, and New York. An important factor in the rising Hispanic population growth is that the fertility rate of the Latina is 3.89 births, twice that of the white female which are at 1.9 births (Maler &

Hunt, 2010). The Mexican-American component of the Hispanic race grew faster than any other group at 107%. Hispanics are the second largest racial ethnic group in the United States (National Education Association, 2006).

The cities of Texas will have a tremendous need for Hispanic principals in the next few decades. The cities of Texas are seeing the largest gains in Hispanic student population growth. Dallas added 77% and Houston added 87% Hispanics to the overall child population growth in those respective cities. The cities of South Texas will see increasing numbers of Hispanic students as the population continues to increase in that region. Huge portions of the United States are becoming more diverse from the bottom up as the child population becomes more and more Hispanic (Frey, 2011). Four decades ago the state of Texas was mostly rural and white, four decades into the future it will be mostly Hispanic and urban.

All demographic indicators point toward more Hispanic population growth in the state of Texas, and there will be a need for more Hispanic principals in order to meet the demand. A review of the literature reveals that the population in the state of Texas is younger than the country's population as a whole. The median age in the state of Texas is the second lowest of any state at 33.2 years old. The median age in the United States is 36.8 years old. The number of Hispanics is increasing at a faster rate than the U. S. Census anticipated. The count of the Hispanic population was 1.9%, larger than the census bureau expected over the last decade (Pew Research Center, 2011).

Texas colleges are serving additional Hispanic students in order to help meet the increasing number of principals needed in the state. The rate of Hispanics attending college since the 1970s has increased. In the last decade this trend has continued. The

number of Hispanic students increased from 51% in 1996 to 58% in 2006. In 2006, 24% of Hispanics ages 18 to 24 were enrolled, compared to 41% of Anglo-Americans and 33% of African-Americans. Hispanics represented 13% of undergraduate students in higher education (Excelencia in Education, 2008). Hispanic college enrollment is projected to increase faster than other groups. Between 2006 and 2017 enrollment for Hispanic students is expected to increase 39% compared to 5% for whites and 26% for African-Americans. These data illustrates an increasing Hispanic student population.

Texas colleges are producing more Hispanic college graduates yet proportionally the number of Hispanic college graduates is declining, and this trend will impact the number of male principal candidates. Hispanics have lower educational attainment than other groups. Hispanics of traditional college age are less likely to be enrolled in college (Excelencia in Education, 2008). In 2006 Hispanic students represented 12% of undergraduate students in the United States. In 2007 13% of Hispanics 25 and over had earned a bachelor's degree or higher in comparison of 32% for whites and 19% for African-Americans. The trend shows an increasing percentage of Hispanics obtaining college degrees. From 1995-96 to 2005-06 the number of Hispanics receiving bachelor's degrees rose 84%.

More Hispanics are earning master's degrees from institutions of higher learning, and this trend will need to continue to help meet the need for additional Hispanic principals. The number of Latino graduate students increased from 2000 to 2006, Latino graduate student enrollment increased by 42%. There were more Latinos obtaining master's degrees between 1996 and 2006, and the percentage of degrees earned increased 125% (Excelencia in Education, 2008).

Hispanic females were more likely to earn master's degrees than their male counterparts. Hispanic females earned 64% of master's degrees conferred upon Hispanics. While Latino male enrollment in higher education has increased, female enrollment has increased more rapidly than that of male Hispanics, and in 2007 59% of Hispanics enrolled in college were women. The number of Latinos earning college degrees is increasing; however, this number has increased more rapidly for females (Excelencia in Education, 2008).

The number of Hispanics receiving doctorate degrees has increased over the last two decades which will impact the number of Hispanic male principals. Even though Hispanics earned only 3% of all doctorate degrees, the number is on the rise. Between 1996 and 2006 there was an increase of 89% in doctoral degrees earned by Hispanics. This growth in the number of doctoral degrees conferred upon Hispanics will increase the number of minority educational leaders (Excelencia in Education, 2008).

In 2008, non-minority principals made up 68.2% of all principals in the state of Texas (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 2008). Many large metro areas of Texas now have minority white populations including the cities of El Paso, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and McAllen (Frey, 2011). On the eve of the 2010 Census, nearly 50% of the student population in Texas public schools was Hispanic (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Whites make up the majority of principals, but the growth of the Hispanic population in large southwestern states such as Texas illustrates the need to produce additional Hispanic principals in order to maintain equitable schooling and keep up with Hispanic student growth.

The changing demands of the job as principal make dealing with diverse stakeholders a necessity of the job (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). All demographic indicators point toward more Hispanic population growth in the state of Texas, and there will be a need for more Hispanic principals in order to meet the demand. The cities of Texas will have a tremendous need for Hispanic principals in the next decades. Changing demographics in Texas will impact the number and type of principals needed in Texas placing cultural wealth, racial, and conversations of equity and social justice at the center of principal leadership and schooling.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Discussions about racism are difficult to have in any professional field. In education discussions are equally difficult and require courage to discuss such issues as the achievement gap (Singleton & Linton, 2006). According to the Brookings Institutes (1998), the United States is one of the most unequal educational opportunity places in the world. Unequal access to key educational resources, including qualified teachers and rigorous curriculum, lead to vastly different educational experiences for children in the United States based on a students' socio-economic standing (Brookings Institute, 1998). Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides an alternative perspective for viewing education and society to impact racial and cultural change. Delgado, Matsuda, Lawrence, and Crenshaw (2009) define Critical Race Theory as a burgeoning movement centered on the following themes: that racism is an everyday part of our society, that the legal system is not neutral in regards to race, that the law must be understood historically and contextually, and that the dominant perspective of the majority must be countered by the

counter-stories of marginalized citizens and their experiences (Delgado, Matsuda, Lawrence, & Crenshaw, 2009).

Critical Race Theory is an intellectually and politically committed movement in American legal scholarship that studies race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This theory is based on two premises. The first idea that Critical Race Theory is based upon is that white supremacy and racial power are reproduced over time and that the law tends to aid that process. The second basic premise of Critical Race Theory deals with the possibility of transforming the relationship between law and racial power (Crenshaw et al., 1996). According to Derrick Bell:

The presentation of truth in new forms provokes resistance, confounding those committed to accepted measures for determining the quality and validity of statements made and conclusions reached, and making it difficult for them to respond and adjudicate what is acceptable.

Utilizing Critical Race Theory, educational leaders will be able to advance toward greater social justice.

One component of Critical Race Theory embraces the idea of minorities utilizing cultural capital and identifying this cultural capital to advance themselves in society and the workforce. Students as young as kindergarten were interviewed and their ideas and thoughts about cultural universals and cultural wealth were recorded. Children at this young age were able to identify unique factors that differentiated the races between minority groups (Brophy & Alleman, 2008). These differences are the types of cultural wealth that a group can use to capitalize on in order to advance their social standing and workplace achievements. Ladson-Billings asserts the idea that all children are better

served educationally when their cultural needs are met and capitalized upon. In this book, the author puts forth that culturally relevant teaching involves the teacher's efforts to shape learning with the unique strengths derived from the cultural wealth that a child brings to the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

A fundamental tenet of CRT includes the notion that racism, rather than being unusual or an example of aberrant behavior, is normal business in this country (Yanow, 2007). This became especially true during the civil rights movements when it became illegal to treat people differently because of the color of their skin. A second tenet of CRT practice reflects speaking from the voice of the oppressed (Yanow, 2007). Often, the voices are heard in the form of storytelling in which "...writers analyze the myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race and that invariably render blacks and other minorities one-down" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. xvii). The population in the United States is growing more diverse every day. Principals today must have the cultural competencies to deal with the growing diverse population (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Hispanics will be able to utilize cultural capital in order to enhance the performance of all students in the schools that they serve (Yosso, 2006). The use of social capital can be utilized by all racial groups in order to better their position in society and gain influence.

In schools in the United States, the issue of race continues to be a challenge. Despite gains in school funding equity, those who own wealth have more rights and are valued over those who are poor when it comes to handing out school resources. White females have been the group that has gained the most from civil rights legislation (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Hispanics have been held back by barriers when seeking career

aspirations (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). These barriers can be weakened if educational leaders consider utilizing some of the ideas advocated by those who support Critical Race Theory.

Cultural capital is a point of view that shifts the focus away from the deficit view of communities of color. The idea of cultural capital focuses instead on the array of cultural information and abilities possessed by disenfranchised groups that often go unidentified and underappreciated (Yosso, 2005). Ethnic groups have numerous forms of cultural wealth which include motivational, community, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital. These forms of cultural wealth are formulated in the home and brought to places of social interaction.

Nationwide diversity has not fully reached the principal's office because as of 2004 only 6% of principals were Hispanic in Broward County, Florida. Hispanic community leaders in southern Florida are calling for greater diversity within the ranks of the principalship because 25% of the students were Latinos at the time (Flannery, 2004). The research literature shows that a school that is largely made up of Hispanic students can be successful but that the school must engage families. Building a caring community that envelops Latino students is imperative. Understanding and respecting the Hispanic culture is very important as well, if the students are going to be successful in predominantly Hispanic high schools. Engaging students' families by having activities such as adult computer education, food and nutrition classes, and as English as a Second Language (ESL) is very important to build the community school connection (Garcia, 2000). Hispanic principals bring their cultural capital into these schools and enhance student success.

In an empirical study, Medina (2008) found that principals can make a difference in the education of students in their roles as instructional leaders. This advocacy for ESL/Bilingual students enhances the learning of those students. This analysis found that leaders who are passionate about their commitment to educate language minority students can increase the likelihood of ESL students' success (Medina, 2008). Additional Hispanic principals will increase the probability of having a school leader that understands the racial and cultural challenges that Hispanic students face in a white dominated society.

Research shows that communication sent to parents in both English and Spanish increases school parents' involvement among Hispanic families. A study by Smith, Stern, and Shatrova (2008) was conducted looking at the factors inhibiting Hispanic parents' school involvement in non-metropolitan areas. These findings showed that the main factors inhibiting Hispanic parent involvement in schools were the following: the failure of the school to send correspondence, school calendar, lunch menus, or newsletters written in Spanish, the inability of the parents to speak English in personal communication with the school, and the reluctance of the parents to question authority or to advocate for the rights of their children (Smith, Stern, & Shatrova, 2008). Having greater numbers of Latino educational leaders enhances the greater communication between the school and Hispanic families. When engaging in school reform efforts for schools with large Latino populations, the research shows that the special language demands of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students must formally be taken into account; the curricula and instructional practices should recognize the multicultural assets that diverse students bring to the classroom (Borman, 2008).

A large portion of school effectiveness research highlights the behaviors and characteristics of effective leaders who stay in touch with their stakeholders. Effective leaders engaging in school reform must possess skills such as clear educational vision, communication skills, and data driven leadership skills (Carr, 2001). Educational leaders are responsible for many tasks such as developing a supportive environment and promoting instructional efforts structured around ever changing student needs (DuFour & Eaker, 2008). Effective leadership involves more than just being a good manager; it requires the principal to be actively engaged in the leadership of the school (DuFour & Eaker, 2008). Hispanic educational leaders know that they are role models in the Latino community and will feel the pressure to be more than just managers but community leaders to the greatest extent possible. The effective principal must be sincerely committed to diversity and issues concerning diversity and establish a school culture that deeply values everyone within the community (Kane & Temple, 1997). Additional Mexican-American male principals would be committed to diversity and establishing a school culture that deeply values everyone within the community. Utilizing the cultural capital framework exposed by Yosso greatly enhances the cultural coherence of principals to meet the current reality of cultural shifts and to stay connected with their students, parents, teachers, and their community.

Cultural Capital Framework

Cultural capital is the idea that social networks are a treasured item and that relationships are very important. It refers to the social interaction that allows people to create communities and that these communities build trust and commitments to one another and are able to create a social tapestry. Members of these groups gain a sense of

belonging and form social networks that are able to benefit them because the members trust one another. Groups that have a great deal of social capital tend to benefit from lower crime, better health, higher educational achievement, and greater economic growth. Pierre Bourdieu (1985) stated, “Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p. 249).

Bourdieu (1985) created his writing from a Marxist perspective in which he identified three types of capital: economic, cultural, and social. He examined the processes that led to the creation of unequal access to resources and led to a differential in power and the way these helped to create classes among members of society. Social capital is sometimes used by groups and organizations with greater social capital assets to try to exclude and subordinate other groups.

Cultural capital is an encompassing term that refers to the norms and networks that facilitate collective actions and work toward the mutual benefit of a particular group. Cultural capital is context dependent and can emerge in numerous forms. These relationships among members of a group form a complicated network of interactions and communications (Fukuyama, 1999). All groups possess some form of cultural capital, which is a type of cultural wealth that can benefit members of marginalized groups.

Cultural capital is the viewpoint that shifts the lens away from the deficit view of minority communities; instead, it focuses on an array of cultural knowledge, skills and abilities, and contacts possessed by marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged (Yosso, 2005). Yosso outlines forms of capital that comprise community cultural wealth that most often go unacknowledged. The six forms of cultural

capital Yosso puts forth include aspiration capital, linguistic capital, social capital, familial capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital. All of these forms of capital can be woven together to help Mexican-American males be recruited into the principalship.

These six types of social capital are not unique to marginalized cultural groups and do not remain fixed but are always evolving. These forms of cultural capital come together and form a type of wealth that helps to encourage and further the social advancement of its members. Aspirational capital is the ability to demonstrate faith in a climate of institutional inequality generally in the face of overwhelming odds. This form of cultural capital is based on the work of Patricia Gandara (1995) whose work illustrated that Hispanics experience the lowest educational outcomes of all of the marginalized groups while consistently maintaining the highest aspirations for their children's future. Linguistic capital is defined as the ability to utilize intellectual and social skills gained through the use of two languages and the benefits that come from engaging in this endeavor. Familial capital is defined as the culmination of cultural knowledge nurtured by the family unit that highlights community history, unity, cultural institution, and memory (Bernal, 2002). Social capital is the networks and community resources that work together to further the cause of under privileged groups. These include peer and social contacts that enable member of a marginalized group to navigate through society and its institutions. Navigational capital is the means of getting through society's network of institutions. This process refers traditionally to social institutions that were not set up with marginalized groups in mind (Auerbach, 2001). Resistant capital is defined as a

group of knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001)

Certain groups are beginning to champion the cause of Latino administrators in the field of education. In 2002 the Association of Latino Administrators was formed in Albuquerque, New Mexico in order to assist other Latinos to become educational leaders. Even though Latino students are the fastest growing segment of the population, of the more than 14,000 school districts in the United States only around 250 of these school districts have a Latino superintendent (Garcia, 2011). Clearly this demonstrates a need to study this issue further because at least 50,000 Latinos turn 18 every month in this country, as reported by the American Bar Association Commission on Hispanic Legal Rights and Responsibilities. Since the majority of these Hispanics are being served by the public education pipeline, it only makes common sense to strive to increase the number of well prepared and well supported Latino school administrators.

Critical Race Theory provides the scholarship discourse for this study. This viewpoint is a different way to view the principalship and the filling of this crucial educational leadership position. Cultural capital provides the framework to document the journey, the racial experiences, and value the various forms of cultural capital that minority principals in the field may or may not utilize to be proficient in their leadership roles. It is the counter narratives that acknowledge and bring peripheral voices to the mainstream/ethnocentric conversations in the principalship in this country. These counter narratives provide information to bridge the literature gap with Mexican-American males in the principalship and it provides a discourse to further increase the number of Latino principals in the United States.

Summary and Implications for Further Research

The role of the principal is instrumental to school success according to many respected researchers (Sergiovanni, 1996; English, 2005; Marzano, 2006; DuFour & Eaker, 2008; Schmoker, 2011). According to numerous sources of data, the Hispanic population is the fastest growing segment of the student population in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011; Excelencia in Education, 2008). In the past, studies conducted on educational leadership have tended to focus on the general population. There are a few studies that examined extraordinary Hispanic educational leaders, but it is apparent that research is very scarce concerning the professional and personal experiences of Mexican-American males in educational leadership. Conducting an analysis of Mexican-American male principals helps to fill the gap and assist in creating theory and study to include the viewpoints of an expanding group of educational leaders. This literature review identifies gaps in the literature regarding Hispanics in educational leadership. Additional studies are needed of this growing segment of school administrators. Many of the barriers that Mexican-American males face in obtaining the position of principal are unexamined, undocumented, and unnoticed. Many researchers advocate the use of counter-narratives in order to record the stories of marginalized groups (Ikemoto, 1997; Fernandez, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2006). The recording of these counter-stories gives these groups a voice and an alternative viewpoint. Qualitative research as a post positivistic ideology is an important methodological opportunity that brings in-depth perspectives to document the plight of Hispanic educational leaders. Further investigations of Mexican-American principals,

and their journey and career pathways into the principalship, would assist in formulating additional programs and methods to retain and increase minority principals.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design and methodology of the investigation. Explained in this section is the rationale of utilizing a qualitative methodology, the population sample and content analysis as a method to understand Mexican-American male principal's perceptions of race and ethnicity in the principalship, and the use of cultural wealth in the quest to become principals in the state of Texas. This chapter explains the rationale for the research design, research questions, participants, data gathering, participant selection, and interview procedure and the data analysis process. This chapter further explains how trustworthiness, triangulation, and transferability were achieved.

Qualitative analysis proved to be an effective method of investigation for this study. The methodology allowed the researcher to engage an in-depth, interactive understanding of the cultural phenomena of Mexican-American male principals' experiences and perceptions. The process allowed the researcher to look at the world as a laboratory in order to find understanding and further explain social phenomena (Flick, 2006). The qualitative method and its critical depth of inquiry provided a lens to examine the racial experiences that influence Mexican-American males as they navigate the journey toward the principalship. This methodology provided an appropriate lens for data collection from words that described people's knowledge, opinions, perceptions, and feelings. Deep description was utilized in this study, which goes beyond the mere reporting of a fact but attempts to uncover intentions and meaning (Denzin, 1989).

As a method, content analysis provided the platform for deep data collection, organization of vast amounts of data, and a vehicle to structure questions to capture the counter narratives. To further obtain the rich, deep description of the participants in the field and capture peripheral voices, Critical Race Theory inspired the use of counter narratives, which serves as a method of inquiry to record the thoughts and experiences of those individuals that tend to be marginalized by society. Unlike positivistic research, qualitative research allows for the "...construction and interpretations of reality that are in flux and that change over time" (Merriam & Associates, 2002, pg. 4). Finally, the biases and context of the research are acknowledged as a white male, current public school leader, and both observer and instrument in the qualitative research process.

Participants

The sampling strategy used in this study was purposeful sampling. The intention of purposeful sampling was to gather data from individuals who have in-depth information to aid in answering the research questions (Patton, 2001). The perceptions, experiences and narratives of seven Mexican-American public school principals were examined. All of the participants selected for this study were native-born United States citizens and self identified as Mexican-American, with both parents being either Mexican or Mexican-American. Each participant had a minimum of two years of administrative experience.

In order to promote trustworthiness and credibility, this study was thoughtfully designed. The selection of the participants was carefully conducted in order to ensure the participant pool was similar because the more similar the participants are the more credibility that the investigation will have. Seasoned administrators were sought for this

study as their experience in the field of education and in the principalship provided the reflection upon the work, role, and experiences of principals leading schools.

Qualitative Research

By nature qualitative research is personal research. It places the daily experience of principals, as people in the various individual and social settings they occupy, at the center of inquiry. Qualitative researchers seek to discover how individuals position themselves within their environments and how they derive meaning from their environment using “symbols, rituals, social structures and so forth” (Berg, 2001). Qualitative researchers seek to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them (Glesne, 2006).

Those engaging in qualitative research learn how people make sense of themselves and others (Berg, 2001). Using qualitative methods, researchers create instruments with the intent of making generalizations about social phenomena. Predictions are then formulated regarding the phenomena and the data provides explanation of why this occurs. Qualitative methods allow researchers to uncover and understand what lies behind a phenomenon about which little is known.

Qualitative research was utilized by the researcher to document the meanings people attach to events and the meaning that emerged from the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This research methodology enabled the researcher to uncover intricate details of phenomena difficult to convey through quantitative methods alone. Qualitative research provided a space for in-depth interviews with open-ended questions to discover unknown details about the phenomena. Qualitative research was utilized for this research topic because it allowed for naturalistic inquiry into these phenomena by examining Mexican-

American male principals in their own real world settings. This form of research uses multiple empirical data sources that document points of time and significance in people's lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Critical Qualitative Research

Critical qualitative research takes qualitative research beyond interpretation (Yanow, 2007). Critical qualitative research questions and challenges power relationships including those related to race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc., as well as the intersection of those social constructs (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Recognizing the implications for how we, ourselves, merge with the data is more complex, especially when as researchers we come from a position of more privileges than do the people we observe (Fein, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000). Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used to frame the discourse around the principalship in Texas for this research as it is a robust theory that allows for and encourages a critical or counterview of the world that begins with life experience (Yanow, 2007).

Qualitative research looks at how the socio-cultural or socio-political aspects of an experience can impact the subsequent meaning of that experience (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe the history of qualitative research in America as "seven historical moments" which overlap and continue to the present (p.2). Qualitative research is a post-modern theory that is concerned with issues relating to social justice and racial equity. This concern of issues of social justice provides the argument to position critical pedagogy, critical race, and critical studies in the center of educational studies instead of the periphery.

Content Analysis

This study utilized content analysis as a research design. Content analysis is a qualitative research design method that uses a great deal of data to create useful files for the researcher (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011). Content analysis, also referred to as textual analysis, is a research tool utilized to pinpoint trends in data. Earl Babbie (2010) identifies content analysis as the study of recorded human communications through books, websites, paintings, and laws. Content analysis is used to identify the intentions, focus, or communication trends of an individual or group. This approach is utilized a great deal in mass communication studies and can be found in a wide array of studies in the social sciences. Content analysis is not associated with only one methodological approach and is founded on a number of data forms.

Content analysis requires a great deal of forethought and planning before the research process begins. Numerous decisions must be made about the data prior to any coding. When utilizing content analysis, the researcher must have well thought out, exact questions prior to the study. Interview questions are designed to be specific because the amount of information gathered can be enormous and the limitations enable the researcher the capability to compile the sought after information in a more efficient manner (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011). Once the information is gathered, it is then analyzed and coded in order to create themes. Content analysis is documented as a valid form of qualitative research. Stemler (2001) argues content analysis is a systematic methodology with replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. The reliability of a study conducted with content analysis refers to its strength or the tendency for the researcher to

consistently code data patterns over a long time period. Consistent coding in qualitative content analysis leads to reproducibility and accuracy of the study, further defining the categories.

Berelson (1952) states that there are many reasons for engaging in content analysis as a methodology; the methodology enables a researcher to compare individual differences in communication style and allows a researcher to compare actual content with intended content. According to Klaus Krippendorf (2004), content analysis consists of five key concepts. The first is unitizing, which is done by creating units of analysis such as word meanings or interviews. A second key concept is that of sampling, which involves numerically identifying words and their frequency of use. The third key point of concept analysis is that of reduction. Content data must be reduced in complexity. This involves coding and statistical analysis as covered by Hodson (1999). The fourth concept is inferring. Contextual phenomena collected must be broken down to provide the meaning in order to produce the findings of the study. The final key concept of content analysis is narrating. The researcher must develop conclusions by writing the findings in a narrative format.

Advantages of using content analysis as a methodology include direct examination of communication via text or transcripts and identifying the central aspect of the social construct. Another advantage of content analysis, according to Ole Holsti (1969), is that it provides the researcher with spaces to infer about the antecedents of a communication. Furthermore, content analysis allows for valuable historical and cultural insights over time through the analysis of interviews.

Counter Narratives

This study utilized the art of gathering counter narratives to provide the cultural insights, perceptions, and experiences of the Mexican-American male principal. Narrative inquiry is defined as the act of storytelling. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) put forth, “Humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives. Thus the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world” (p.2). Counter narratives are the art of telling the stories of those who do not often have their stories told. It is a method of capturing and creating a space for powerful stories to emerge of those who are on the margins of our society. Counter stories are utilized to illuminate, investigate and balance out the narratives and power of the majority. Counter narratives challenge the malaise of dominant thought, contest the prevailing discourse on race, and seek to advance the cause of social reform. If these stories are ignored then, as a society, we let the dominate group in our country define the norm entirely (Ikemoto, 1997). The documentation of counter narratives and the experiences and lives of people of color fortifies their traditions of political and social endurance.

Counter-story telling has a rich past that stretches back into the history of African folk tales and tribal lore (Bell, 1992). This rich history of story-telling is abundant in Hispanic communities as well (Delgado, 1996). Native-American cultures honored the art of story-telling about their societies to document tribal histories and accomplishments (Williams, 1997). It bears repeating the thoughts of Richard Delgado (1989) that, “Oppressed groups have known instinctively that stories are an essential tool to their own survival and liberation” (p. 2436). Scholars have continued to embrace this art form to ensure that all groups in society have their perspective documented.

One type of counter-story recognized by scholars is that of personal stories or narratives. These recorded accounts document the experiences of individuals who faced assorted types of sexism and racism. Margaret Montoya (1994) utilized this type of recording in order to capture the voices of those individuals who are ignored by society at large. These counter narratives are autobiographical reflections of the authors in which their beliefs are influenced by critical race analysis and how their experiences fit into the larger picture of the social construct.

Other people's stories are recognized by researchers as a valuable tool in illuminating the experiences regarding racism and sexism as told by a third person voice. This type of documentation tells the stories of individuals in a biographical study of the occurrences of minority groups and relates those experiences in the framework of the social order and sociohistorical background of the United States (Fernandez, 2002).

Counter stories are composed by identifying and gathering data into information that is useful in determining patterns of behavior. Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to an idea identified as theoretical sensitivity and have documented this as "a personal quality of the researcher":

It indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data. One can come to the research situation with varying degrees of sensitivity depending upon previous reading and experience with or relevant to data. It can also be developed further during the research process. Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't. (pp. 41-42)

Utilizing the theory of theoretical sensitivity put forth by Strauss and Corbin (1990), many researchers have documented counter narratives. Theories will be composed using the data acquired during the research, the existing literature on the topic, and the

researchers' personal experiences. Once the data has been analyzed it is compiled and transformed into a story which illuminates the concepts, ideas, and experiences of people of color.

Counter narratives are valuable assets to the study and data collection process as it assists in the construction of community voices. These narratives bridge the gaps in literature by creating a familiar identity and relating it to those who are often marginalized in our society through educational theory and practice. These narratives illustrate to other members of marginalized groups they are not alone in their endeavors. Counter stories confront the prevalent thoughts and beliefs of the majority and provide a viewpoint that can help to change people's belief systems. This form of documentation creates a rich mixture of both reality and story that is superior in meaning to utilizing either story or current reality by itself (Solórzano & Yosso, 2006).

This qualitative study frames a CRT discourse with Mexican-American males in the principalship through a cultural capital framework and counter narrative approach. The researcher's experiences as a white male principal will be utilized to parallel and provide in-depth reflection and meaning in order to supply context in analyzing the data. As with narratives, "Narrative inquiry characteristically begins with the researcher's autobiographically oriented narrative associated with the research puzzle" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 41).

The counter narratives of Mexican-American males who have experienced the quest for the principalship will be used to create the thematic units of data to further add to the knowledge base. The goal of this analysis is to discover the experiences and racial conversations of Mexican-American principals in becoming public school principals in

the state of Texas. This data will frame the discourse on race and examine the challenges of Mexican-American males being kept out of the ranks of the principalship due to racial, cultural, or social obstacles. Both CRT and cultural capital provide a conceptual framework to view the principalship from a lens that promotes cultural diversity and acceptance. The research goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods, and validity components of this study will be closely integrated as a unit.

Reflexive Journal

In qualitative research, the use of a reflexive journal is generally accepted. These devices allow researchers to discuss with themselves about their predilections, preferences, understandings of the world, and their actions while they are engaging in their research (Ortlipp, 2008). Creating a reflexive journal allows the researcher to make his or her experiences beliefs, ideas, and feelings, evident during the research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation cycle. This is an accepted methodological practice by researchers from the constructivist, feminist, interpretivist, and post positivist viewpoints (Denzin, 1994). A reflexive journal was utilized during this research in order to record the thoughts, biases, and predilections of the researcher.

Research Questions

The research questions address the racial group experiences and perceptions Mexican-American males faced during the journey to become principals in the state of Texas. The research questions examine the career pathways, structures of race, and the cultural wealth Mexican-American males followed in their quest to become public school principals. The study investigates the barriers, real and/or perceived, that Mexican-

American males overcome in obtaining the principalship. The research questions for this study were:

1. In what ways were Mexican-American males influenced to become school principals?
2. How does race and ethnicity structure the career path and journey toward the principalship for Mexican-American males?
3. What forms of cultural wealth impact the Mexican-American male experience to become school principals?

Research Design

The procedures used to capture and document answers to the research questions were broken up into three main phases. Each of these phases was divided into explicit steps. The first phase of this project consisted of the researcher documenting his experiences, beliefs, and preconceived notions of the principalship through the lenses of race, gender, and his own cultural wealth and capital. The second phase of this proposed inquiry consisted of the creation and testing of a semi-structured interview script through a pilot interview. The next phase of the analysis involved the interview of the study participants and the final phase included the data analysis.

The first phase involved the exploration and statement of the researcher's assumptions, biases, beliefs, and judgments concerning the analysis. These thoughts, documented in a reflexive journal by the researcher, were held in suspension throughout the investigation to substantiate issues of validity. Notes were constantly recorded by the researcher during this study, even though all situations do not lend themselves to note taking or recording of researcher thoughts (Agar, 1973). Researcher predilections were

utilized during the course of the investigation and during the analysis process. The researcher referred to these predilections often during the data gathering phase, the data analysis phase, and when the researcher was compiling the findings of the study. It is important that researchers stay in touch with their emotions when studying a topic. “Ignoring or suppressing feelings are emotion work strategies that divert our attention from the cues that ultimately help us understand those we study” (Kleinman & Copp, 1993, p. 33).

The second phase of this research dealt with the creation of an interview guide and the testing of this instrument in a pilot study. The majority of this phase of the project involved formulating the semi-structured interview guide. The researcher first examined the literature for past interview templates used by qualitative researchers in completing their studies. Using these examples, the researcher then developed a semi-structured interview template for the pilot interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to gather more in-depth meaning from the participants (Glesne, 2006). The third step was testing the interview guide upon participants who met the participant criteria. The selection of these participants was based upon the criteria set forth by the researcher. The next step in this process was for the researcher, with the assistance of qualified colleagues, to examine the results of this pilot interview and make the necessary modifications. The researcher then engaged in a critical race analysis and peer discourse with colleagues to determine the appropriateness of the interviews questions. The final step included a revisit to the four prior phases, which coincided with the researcher’s beliefs and were recorded during the first phase of this research.

The third phase of this research project consisted of interviewing participants and analyzing the data. This phase was split into five segments: 1) the selection of the seven Mexican-American male principals, 2) the scheduling and performing of the initial interviews, 3) the transcribing and analyzing of the initial interviews to prepare for subsequent interviews and follow-ups if needed, 4) engaging in written and oral member checks, after getting the participants' feedback on the information and performing the second interview, if needed, and 5) the deeper data examination gathered from interviews.

Data Collection

Each of the seven participants was given an opportunity to select the time and location for their conducted interview. School offices and campuses were recommended by the participants as a comfortable location for data collection. Participants work schedule, time, and context of their leadership role was taken into consideration through the data collection process. Each interview lasted about an hour.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were primarily used to collect participant's experiences and decipher meaning of those experiences. Depth probing was utilized to pursue all points of interest by utilizing such open-ended statements as "tell me more," "can you elaborate," and "what did you mean." The intent was to capture the full meaning about the interview topic and have the topic fully explained (Glesne, 2006). The intent of the semi-structured interview approach is to enter into the experiences and perceptions of participants and fully discover their experiences. The interviews involved an informal, interactive process and utilized open-ended comments and questions to gather counter stories, rich, deep descriptions, and first hand experiences.

Electronic recording devices were used to ensure interviews were accurately captured and the full meaning was extracted from the transcribed text. Data gathering methods facilitated investigating and answering the research questions put forth by the study. Recording devices provided the advantages of density and permanence (Glesne, 2006). The open-ended questions utilized during the seven interviews allowed for findings to be uncovered through inductive analysis.

Research Bias

Researcher bias was acknowledged and monitored throughout the entire study. The researcher explicitly stated his beliefs and perspectives about the phenomena to be studied in a reflexive journal before embarking upon the research. The researcher made his predilections known to himself during the data collection and analysis process. The qualitative researcher must make himself aware of his biases and assumptions before the investigation begins, during the investigation, and during the data analysis phase. This constant monitoring of the researcher's potential biases added to the trustworthiness of analysis.

The critical framework and reflective narrative method provided the researcher with an intimate view of racial issues of Mexican-American male principals. The researcher's experience as a practicing principal in Texas for thirteen years, participating in interviews and interview committees, and undergoing the application process various times for principal positions provided a layered context for understanding the scrutiny experienced to become a principal in the state of Texas. The reflexive and critical narrative of the researcher as part of the white dominant culture provides an additional

lens and avenue for the discourse on the ethnocentric practices and research bias found in the literature regarding the principalship.

Data Analysis

The data analysis methods utilized included data reduction and coding. The researcher's basic unit of analysis was thematic units and chunks of text which reflect a single theme (Tesch, 1990). Data reduction is a necessary part of qualitative data analysis. An interpretive approach was utilized to create themes and categories to further deconstruct the collected data.

Coding provided the researcher with a systematic process of analyzing textual data. "The use of coding is what the data you are analyzing are all about" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 38). Coding is a method of organizing and grouping the information to create a structure of thematic concepts. This process was necessary because emerging themes were coded for categorizing and classifying.

Data analysis in qualitative research is systematic, comprehensive, and flexible partly because the researcher cannot always anticipate all of the questions needed but also because the meaning evolves over time as narratives are shared. After completing the interviews, the researcher began the process of transcribing the recordings verbatim. The researcher then was able to recognize and organize various themes and patterns from collected data. Data reduction enabled the researcher to focus, simplify, and transform the raw data into a more manageable form. Coding involved assigning labels to neighboring units of text and served to act as tags for later retrieval and/or indexing through content analysis. Open coding was utilized by the researcher to identify themes by pulling together real examples from text.

The MAXqda software was utilized to further chunk, code, and facilitate the deconstruction of data analysis during this inquiry. The tools in MAXqda were designed to manage and categorize large amounts of qualitative data. This software assisted in the management, organization, and analysis of the collected interview data. The use of qualitative software devices assisted the researcher in locating useful items and multiple perspectives on a category or theme (Creswell, 2006). Using a computer software program allowed the researcher to identify themes within the data, producing a study that added to the body of knowledge.

Trustworthiness

This research incorporated multiple strategies in order to ensure credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability. The researcher explicitly stated his beliefs and perspectives about the phenomena to be studied before embarking upon the research process. Member checking, an external reviewer, and reflexive journal were used to triangulate and provide trustworthiness to the study. Throughout the project the researcher continued to make known his predilections to himself during the data collection and analysis process. The analysis process, and these predilections, was referenced when writing up the findings. In order to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, members of the research community were asked to review the results as external reviewers of the interviews. The use of peer debriefing with each participant enhanced the accuracy of the interviews and added to the study's trustworthiness (Creswell, 2006).

Triangulation with peer debriefing, member checking, and reflexive journaling was used to add to the credibility and reliability of this analysis. Triangulation occurs when research incorporates multiple lines of site (Berg, 2001) and meaning is clarified by

identifying the different ways the phenomena is viewed (Flick, 2006). Denzin (2003) proposed the use of various and multiple methods, sources, researchers, and theories. Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed several strategies such as prolonged engagement, persistent observations, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checks. The researcher and other professionals examined the data regarding the hiring of Mexican-American principals from several different perspectives such as interview results, member checking, and follow up interviews. Reviewing the data from several different perspectives ensured the study engaged in triangulation.

Summary

This study involved Mexican-American male principals and presented a critical and qualitative research framework to further understand how belonging to racial groups impact the career paths and journey to the principalship. Changing mindsets in adults is difficult. The goal of this study was to gain insights and knowledge from the racial experiences and cultural wealth of the participants. Understanding minority school leaders encourages university preparation programs, school districts, and current and future principals to consider issues of equity and race more significantly when examining the experience of school leaders. This research study uses counter narratives as a method of inquiry to gain understanding of the Mexican-American male experience in the principalship, make meaning of the real and perceived barriers, and interpret these narratives with that of the researcher, a white male principal centering his own racial group experience and how that impacts his own journey toward the principalship.

Qualitative methodology guided this research regarding Mexican-American males and their racial and career path experiences. The knowledge sought from Mexican-

American male counter narratives and their conversations of race, along with the researcher's own perceptions and reflections of being a white male in educational leadership, aided in formulating the deep, rich contexts found in qualitative data. The findings of this research study were analyzed through chunking, coding, and theme creation and reflected on the data gathered through semi-structured interviews. A reflective journal constructed by the researcher included his own experiences with race and his encounters in the principalship. Critical perspectives, Critical Race Theory, and aspects of cultural wealth were incorporated into the analysis to discover positive attributes of resilience which can be capitalized in encouraging other Mexican-American males to become educational leaders.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysis of data collected by interviewing seven Mexican-American male principals about their career paths and the social capital that they utilized in order to gain their positions in educational leadership. After a short introduction and review of the study, this chapter begins with a description of the informal discussion among friends and colleagues which brought about the idea for this study. This will be followed with an introduction of each participant, his family, economic status, life style, upbringing, education, and career path. The data was gathered by conducting individual conversations using semi-structured interview questions followed by an analysis of the responses given by each person interviewed regarding race, gender, and cultural factors that impacted their career paths. The final section of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of the similarities and differences in the information obtained.

Context of the Study

The intent of this study was to investigate how the cultural capital from Mexican-American male backgrounds impacts and helps create new leaders in our public schools. This study examined the narratives of seven Mexican-American male principals through the lens of Critical Race Theory. This study focused on two important foundations of Critical Race Theory, that racism is normal, not aberrant, in US society and that storytelling is an important method of examining race and racism. Using this lens, the research further analyzed three main areas when examining the data: gender, culture, and racism. This data was then analyzed from a strength based paradigm utilizing Yosso's

(2005) theory of “cultural wealth” to provide a foundation to support the development of minority educational leaders in our educational communities.

Through an examination of seven Mexican American male principals and their career paths, this study intended to make a significant and original contribution to education, to existing scholarship, and to the field of educational leadership. This study focuses on the depth of understanding of the largest growing ethnic group gaining ground in the principalship. Without critical discourse surrounding this large group of leaders, progress will not be made and cultural competence will be lost. The purpose of this study is to conduct a content analysis study of Mexican-American male’s perception of their career paths and how race impacted their journey to the position of principal in the state of Texas.

Gaps in the Literature

The data was analyzed after examining the current literature about the principalship and Latino educational leaders. Following a thorough examination, numerous gaps were discovered in the research. After an examination of the current literature it was found that, according to many respected researchers, the role of the principal is instrumental to school success (Sergiovanni, 1996; English, 2005; Marzano, 2006; DuFour & Eaker, 2008; Schmoker, 2011). The literature review uncovered the fact that, according to numerous sources of data, the Hispanic population is the fastest growing segment of the student population in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011; Excelencia in Education, 2008). In the past, studies conducted on educational leadership have traditionally focused on Anglo-American male principals. There are relatively few studies that examine Hispanic educational leaders,

and it is apparent that research is very scarce concerning the professional and personal experiences of Mexican-American males in educational leadership. After an examination of the publications, it was determined that many of the barriers that Mexican-American males face in obtaining the position of principal are unexamined and are in need of documentation.

Research Design

Qualitative research is a post positivistic methodology that provided the tool to document the in-depth perspectives held by Hispanic educational leaders regarding their plight in obtaining their positions. Many researchers advocate the use of counter-narratives to record the stories of marginalized groups (Ikemoto, 1997; Fernandez, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2006). The recording of these counter-stories gives these groups a voice and an alternative view point.

A content analysis study is a research design method that uses a great deal of data to create useful files for the researcher (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011). This approach is not associated with one methodological approach and is founded on a number of data forms. Data analysis requires a great deal of forethought and planning before the research process begins. Numerous decisions were made about the data prior to any coding. When utilizing content analysis, the researcher had well thought out, exact questions prior to the study. Interview questions are designed to be specific because the amount of information gathered can be enormous and the limitations enable the researcher the capability to compile the sought after information in a more efficient manner (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011). The information gathered is then analyzed and coded to create themes.

Qualitative Questioning

This study utilized semi-structured, open-ended qualitative questions designed to extract as much information as possible in order to identify the cultural capital that these men used in order to obtain the position of principal. The qualitative data gathered during these interviews was transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate findings. Semi-structured interviews were conducted twice with each of the seven candidates using well thought out questions. The participants checked over their interview transcripts in order to validate the data obtained during these qualitative interview sessions. Follow up interviews were conducted over a six month period during the winter and spring of 2011-2012.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted utilizing the interview protocol in order to evaluate the questions. The semi-structured interview questions were analyzed for their effectiveness in extracting the necessary information to enable the researcher to identify patterns or chunks of data that produce meaningful results. The interview questions were reviewed by the researcher and two other professional researchers to determine whether or not these questions would provide the author with enough data to create the thick description needed by the researcher in order to reproduce counter narratives that would be useful. After the data was reviewed by the team of research analysts, the questions were deemed adequate to begin the research.

The Birth of a Study

The concept for this study began at a TASA Conference in Austin in January, 2011. At the end of the sessions for the day, administrators were sitting or standing in

groups in the hotel lobby. The researcher joined a group and found they were discussing the fact that the National Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators (ALAS) needed to hold a conference in the state of Texas. The group happened to be made up of all Mexican-American principals. I was the only white male administrator among the group. Although this conversation centered on race and ethnicity, I was very comfortable in this situation because I grew up in a small West Texas town with a Mexican-American majority. Many of my friends are Mexican-American because their parents or ancestors came from Mexico; my ancestors came from a variety of European countries and it was never considered “a big deal.” As we moved into the dining room, the conversation progressed to the relatively small number of Mexican-American male principals in the state in comparison to the general population. Demographics were such that the discrepancy was becoming more and more apparent, and the number of Mexican-American graduates in the field of education did not seem to be increasing enough to keep up with the demographic shift. As I thought about this, I realized that in the public schools where I graduated there were six campuses with only one Hispanic principal and one assistant principal and six Anglo-American principals. Reflecting on these discussions and the inequities and social injustices found in schools and the principalship brought about this study. Before the conference ended, I met with this group of colleagues and shared my ideas for conducting a study on Mexican-American principals in the state. The researcher led a discussion, brainstormed, and sought pertinent information in that forum to encourage Mexican-American males to choose the route to the principalship. Some of the questions that were formulated are included in this study, and several members of the group agreed to become participants in the study.

Rationale for the Study

As an educational leader for over a decade, I have had the opportunity to think about and practice social justice, tackle issues of equity, and reflect on the importance of treating people with respect and honor and to respect their cultural background. This study was conducted to focus on the strength and positive aspects of the cultural wealth of Mexican-Americans. The researcher chose this study and the qualitative methods in order to better understand the social constructs, dominant cultures, and micro-aggressions these men endured in their careers.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) provided the lens and vehicle to give voice to those who are often left out of the race conversation, especially in the principalship, where the concept of cultural wealth is rarely harnessed and capitalized on within educational communities. This research study attempted to shed light on issues of race and inequities in the principalship, which are understated and affect Mexican-Americans in subtle, undetectable, and unethical ways. This research helped uncover a variety of factors which aided Mexican-American males in overcoming adversity and barriers limiting success in the principalship and to capture the strength of family and cultural knowledge. The lens of CRT provided the discourse to frame those positive factors of cultural wealth: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital identified by Yosso (2005) in her research.

Participants

After receiving the signed consent forms, the examiner contacted each of the seven participants who had agreed to participate in the study. Interviews were conducted at a time when it was convenient for the participant and each interview lasted

approximately one hour. These interviews were conducted in surroundings in which the participants felt comfortable. The interviews were transcribed and sent to the participants for input, clarification, and/or approval. The participants were given time to review transcripts of the initial interviews and were contacted to see if further conversations were needed in order to answer questions and make corrections. A second round of interviews was scheduled and conducted with the participants using semi-structured follow up questions. They were then transcribed and returned to the participants for member checking and approval. Once the two rounds of member checking were approved, the data was analyzed and quantified into charts utilizing MAXqda qualitative research software. After receiving and transcribing the interviews, the results will be presented in the next section of this study. All names and locations have been changed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Table 4.1
Career Path of Participants

	Career Path	Certification	Years of Experience	Universities
Hector Venegas	Speech Therapy Secondary Principal	Speech Therapy Principal	25 Years	Regional University
David Tellez	Teacher Secondary Principal	Agriculture Teacher Principal	27 Years	Regional University
Marcos Estrada	Teacher Secondary Principal	Teacher Principal	37 Years	Regional University

Table 4.1
Continued

	Career Path	Certification	Years of Experience	Universities
Roberto Baca	Teacher Secondary Principal	Special Education Teacher	29 Years	Regional University
Carlos Quiroz	Industrial Arts Teacher Elementary and Secondary Principal	PE Teacher Coach Principal	24 Years	Regional University
Ben Gomez	Teacher Counselor Elementary and Secondary Principal	Teacher/Coach Counselor Principal	32 Years	Regional Universities
Gerardo Torres	Teacher Assistant Elementary and Secondary Principal	Teacher Principal	15 Years	Regional Universities

Note: The preceding table illustrates the career path of seven Mexican-American male principals interviewed in this state.

When quantifying the career path data of these seven Mexican-American male principal candidates, the median years of experience was 27 years in the field of education. This data compares similarly with that of the researcher’s level of experience which, at the time of the study, was 25 years. All seven principals interviewed for this study attended smaller regional colleges and universities at some point during their quest to become principals. Ben Gomez stated:

I believe attending a small regional school has advantages because you attend classes with those from the area around you, and you have things in common with each other. It is very close knit and the professors get to

know you better, more so than a bigger school. I think it is a plus to attend a small regional school for a Hispanic male.

One of the seven principals worked in the career and technical education area as a building trades teacher on his path to the principalship. All seven participants served in the capacity of assistant principal at one point during their career. Six principals interviewed out of the total of seven served as classroom teachers while working their way up the ladder to the position of principal. During the analysis of the data, it was determined that five of the seven Mexican-American male principals worked on secondary campuses exclusively during their career in public education while three of the seven worked at both elementary and secondary levels. Ben Gomez stated that he enjoyed working as an elementary principal where the schedule wasn't as heavy, the night time activities were less, the hours were shorter, and the environment was more positive. The students respect you and they believe you and want to please you. He felt as if everything he did as an elementary principal was in a helping capacity. Discipline was a lot easier because elementary students wanted to listen to you, and parent conferences were very positive at this level.

The following section of this study introduces the participants to the reader. The researcher's career path is chronicled at the end of this chapter so that readers can get a sense of who is undertaking this study and why. Greater details of participant's career paths and paradigms will be revealed as the data is displayed during this chapter's analysis of the data utilizing the conceptual framework of Critical Race Theory.

Hector Venegas

Hector Venegas is a friendly, average-sized, articulate man about 48 years old who was well-dressed and seemed to exude confidence. He has lived in the same area of Texas all of his life. He is a second generation American, and is bilingual, but grew up in a home where the dominate language was English. Mr. Venegas is a principal in a Texas town of approximately 30,000 people, predominately Mexican-American, in close proximity to the Mexican border where he grew up. He was the youngest of six children of a middle income family with no apparent financial issues while he was growing up. His father was a navy veteran who was employed by the United States Customs Department after he was discharged from military service. His mother did not finish high school but took classes and got her General Education Development (GED) while raising six children. She never worked outside the home but devoted herself to raising their children; the oldest and youngest became educators and the others pursued various careers. Mr. Venegas participated in athletics in high school and he felt like his coach was somewhat of a mentor to him. When he graduated from high school he had no idea about what career path he wanted to follow; he even considered the military but decided to go to college and get his *basics*. When he graduated in 1980, the high school counselor had not offered any guidance whatsoever; she never encouraged “any Hispanic” to go to college as far as he knew. He felt as if once you were out of school you were supposed to figure it out on your own. He thought seriously about joining the military but decided against that so he just started college with an “undecided” major. His oldest sister, an educator, told him of a need for speech therapists and he did not know what speech therapy was at the time. On her recommendation he took that route,

graduating as a speech pathologist, and very much enjoyed that area of education. In his job as a speech therapist, he served students on various campuses throughout the district. His special education director called him into the office and suggested that he go back to school and pursue his mid-management certification so he could become a special education director. She told him that she would help him with data, sources, and whatever he needed. Several principal friends heard that he was considering working on his master's degree and his mid-management certifications; they also encouraged him and told him he could become a principal. His wife and parents, who were always very encouraging and supportive, as well as his siblings, urged him to go back to school at the university in their area of Texas. After much thought he decided he would do it; so he returned to school while he continued fulfilling his responsibilities to the school district. He went to college at night and during the summers until he completed his degree, which takes a real commitment.

After you decide to make the return to school, it takes time and money, and the travel it may entail. You are responsible for the course work, and your job. You need not only your own dedication, but the support and encouragement of your family which I was fortunate enough to have. If you have a wife and children it takes dedication and sacrifice especially from them. The Hispanic culture is such a tight knit unity I felt very fortunate because they were such a strong support system.

He really thought he would get his certification and become a special education director, but he was soon offered a job as an assistant principal, which he accepted. He served in that position for six years. Mr. Venegas did not take the traditional route of being a classroom teacher to the principalship; therefore, he did not have a curriculum background nor classroom experience. For that reason, he had to learn about those areas

once he became an administrator. After being an assistant principal for six years he became a principal and has served in that position for about 20 years.

Marcos Estrada

Marcos Estrada has been a teacher, coach, an assistant principal, a principal, an assistant superintendent, and a superintendent during his successful career. He grew up in a small Texas oil and ranching community of about 10,000 Anglo and Mexican-American people. He is a second generation American and is the oldest of seven children in a hard-working, loving family where education was always important. English was the home language, but all of his family members are bilingual. His early memories are of his parents reading to them regularly and his grandfather spending time with him as a young boy teaching him math. He remembers that when he started to school he could count to *forever*. His three other grandparents were an important part of this life, but he does not have memories of them reading to him or doing math. He started school at the *Mexican school* because at that time the elementary schools were segregated until fifth grade, after which the schools were integrated. All of the kids in the town played Little League together and were friends every summer but never thought anything about separating to go to school in the fall. That is just how it was at that time. After fifth grade they all went to school together. When he was young, the family had a farm; and as the children got older, probably starting about fifth grade, they would help with the work on the farm. When he was in eighth grade, his father bought a filling station and then they all worked there. They learned to keep the records, to check the pumps, reconcile the day's activities, and about profit and loss. They learned how to change flats, wash cars, change oil and filters, and all about how to run a business. They all

learned a strong work ethic and how to deal with people. His parents did all they could financially and emotionally to help him go to college. They hoped that as the oldest, if he would attend college, he would set the stage for the others to attend, and they did. By this time his father was selling cars at the gas station so his children always had transportation while in college. Mr. Estrada was an athletic high school basketball player, and he was offered a scholarship to a small university, about sixty miles from home, which he accepted. Mr. Estrada married during his senior year of college and his parents continued to do all they could to help him. He said they never were really able to give them any money. When they would go home, after spending the weekend with his and his wife's parents, they always went back to school with enough food for the upcoming week. He said, "My wife and I always had food, clothes, a car, and my basketball scholarship paid for school so we really had everything we needed." The counselors at high school had never offered him any career counseling nor encouraged him in any way, but his parents and coaches had encouraged him to be a teacher and coach; he thought that was a good idea and would be a career he enjoyed. He graduated from high school during the Viet Nam conflict and many Mexican-American parents really encouraged their sons to go to college and maintain good grades so they would not be drafted into the military. More Mexican-American boys went to college at that time, where before the conflict they would never have thought about college as an option. He completed his bachelor's degree and became a teacher/coach in a school district about 150 miles from his home town. He remained in that position for one year and then was offered the opportunity to return to his hometown as a teacher and coach. He accepted that opportunity because he and his wife could be close to their parents and other family

members. After three years he went to the school office to apply to become the head basketball coach but came out of the meeting convinced to start mid-management classes that were being offered locally to encourage qualified teachers to become principals. He enrolled in the classes, and he soon became an assistant principal serving in that position for three years, and when the principal left, Mr. Estrada was recommended for the job. The middle school teachers “lobbied” for him to become principal because he had earned their confidence and support. He successfully served in that position for thirteen years. After that, he became an assistant superintendent in the same district, which was well known for never promoting from within. He remained in that position for a number of years. Marcos Estrada served the students of Texas as a coach, teacher, and administrator for thirty seven years. He is certified as a teacher, coach, and administrator and earned his bachelor’s and master’s degree and all of his certifications at a small university close to home.

Roberto Baca

Roberto Baca is a friendly, well-built, athletic man in his early 50s. He is a second generation American of average height, has gray hair, and wears glasses. He grew up in a home where the home language spoken was Spanish. Mr. Baca’s parents both had very little education and worked hard to provide their children with a stable life and greater opportunities than they had . His mother had a fifth grade education and his father only completed sixth grade. His father worked in the maintenance force in construction, and his mother was a house cleaner so the family was able to get by on their incomes. When Mr. Baca was born, the family lived in an unstable neighborhood in a large California city and remained there until Mr. Baca was in junior high school. They lived near the

Watts area of Los Angeles, and there were big gangs, riots, and unrest; in fact, his dad was a gang member at that time and had risen through the ranks to be the leader of his group, but he always wanted to get out of the gang and the area and provide his children a different life. His dad had an opportunity to transfer with his employer from California to Texas, and he welcomed the opportunity. The job was in a city of about 100,000 people in the Texas “oil patch.” During the oil boom taking place at the time, the only housing available was in a small community about 35 miles from the job. It was a small, windy, and dusty West Texas oil and ranching community, but they moved there and the children enrolled in school. His father commuted to his job, and everyone adjusted well, so the family decided to make this small town their home. His parents wanted the family to be far away from the gang activity they had previously known. Mr. Baca started thinking about wanting to become a teacher because an English teacher at high school took an interest in him, encouraged him, and helped him remain eligible for athletics; he was a good athlete who played both football and baseball. His English teacher was an older Anglo-American lady and he never had her for his regular teacher, but she cared about him. She had seen him come in often “jumping from teacher to teacher looking for help.” She called him in one day and told him she would be there early, late, even after games, or whenever he could come, she would be there to help him. She would study with him and help him understand his assignments and get them in on time. She also knew athletics was important to him and helped him stay “eligible.” Then in his senior year, in 1974, a counselor called him into her office and told him that, “At the rate I was going, if I worked really, really hard, I might be a really good trash collector, and that got my attention.” Shortly after that, his coach told him he had received a scholarship offer

from an area university, but he had never even thought about going to college. “I did not even know where the university was!” He was offered an opportunity to visit the school, and a friend offered to take him. They looked around the town and toured the university with a coach, and he was offered a full scholarship if he played both football and baseball. He told the coaches that he would have to discuss it with his parents. He went home to talk to his parents about it, and they said that if he had this opportunity he should go to college and they really encouraged him to accept the offer. They said they would do all they could to make it work for him. He had no idea what he wanted to study, but because of that English teacher’s influence on him, he decided to be a teacher and coach. Mr. Baca had an uncle who was also very influential in his life, and he has always been there with encouragement and advice. His uncle had never wanted any part of the gangs in California, and Mr. Baca loves and admires him. His uncle, Tomas, was a very positive role model for Mr. Baca and encouraged him to accept the offer and go to college. Mr. Baca decided to accept the opportunity and he graduated from that university but was offered an oil company job with a good salary before he completed his certification. He took the job and worked for that company for a number of years and then was “downsized” and given a severance pay bonus. With that money he and his wife moved to a city of about 100,000 people; he enrolled at the local campus of the University of Texas, earned his certification, and began teaching and coaching. During the time he was teaching and coaching, he was asked by the athletic director to inaugurate and become the teacher of an adaptive physical education program in the district. He had never heard of adaptive physical education at that time but accepted the opportunity. He was sent for training and returned home to develop a new program for the district. He learned a new

facet of education and really loved it. He was a teacher/coach for ten years and trained others in his district to inaugurate programs in adaptive physical education on other campuses. During this time, he became well acquainted with the special education director, Mr. Floyd, and they became friends. Both his principal and Mr. Floyd encouraged him to complete his mid-management certification and move into administration; the district was trying to hire some Hispanic principals and they thought he would be good in that position. He commuted on a part-time basis, to the small university he had attended, to work towards his master's degree, and he took classes as quickly as he could. He had a wife and young son and did not want to be away from them over an extended time so it had been a hard decision. It was difficult for him to be away from them all week during the summer and then having to study so much while he was at home on the week-ends, but his wife and son both encouraged him to finish. He enjoyed talking to his four year old son every day and being told to "go and do it" by the young boy; Mr. Baca stated, "It really helped me do it." Within a year of completing his master's degree he was offered an assistant principal position at a junior high school. Mr. Baca remained in that position for seven years then was transferred, possibly because he was an effective disciplinarian, to the alternative high school for several years. He is currently a principal at a high school. He feels that being bilingual has helped him in his career. He enjoys what he is doing, and he loves being able to help students in any way he can.

Mr. Baca and his wife are both very family-oriented, and his son is now a junior in high school and into many activities. After his son graduates from high school in 2013, he will actively seek a job as a principal in the San Antonio area where their son

plans to go to college to be in close proximity to him. Mr. Baca spoke of the Hispanic culture being very family oriented and the value this closeness instills in Hispanic children as they grow up. He has applied for, and was offered, principal jobs in other cities but each time was unable to accept due to unexpected family responsibilities, major health problems, the death of his father, and again by the death of his father-in-law. Also during this time his mother-in-law was gravely ill and the family had to find a care facility. Due to the closeness of his Hispanic family, he decided to remain in the area near his family.

David Tellez

David Tellez is an impressive looking, well-dressed, dignified man of medium height who grew up in an area of Texas where the population was about 95% Mexican-American. He is second youngest in a family of eight and was raised by loving, very supportive parents. In high school, he was very involved with agricultural education classes. He graduated from high school in 1981 and enrolled in a university in his area as an agricultural major. His parents were very supportive of him leaving home to go to college because in the Hispanic culture it is hard to move away from the family, but his parents encouraged him to take the opportunity to get an education close to home. He received a Bachelor of Science degree and began his educational career as an agriculture science teacher. He taught for seven years and, during that time, he completed his master's degree at a school which is part of the Texas A&M system. He graduated in May of 1994. He loved teaching the agriculture program and the responsibility that comes with it. There were responsibilities in the morning and in evening for the care of animals. For several years, his students went to the state level competition and excelled.

He also assisted in the math department and the English Language Arts (ELA) department through curriculum. The year he completed his master's degree, he accepted a position as an assistant principal at a middle school in a near-by town. When he was hired, he was one of only three Hispanic administrators in the district in a community that was over 90% Hispanic. The following year he was transferred within the district to the high school as assistant principal and served in that position for six years; in 2000 he was appointed as high school principal. He had expected that the move from high school assistant principal to principal would be a smooth transition. It was a much more challenging experience because he was following an outstanding leader, and the job was much different and more challenging than he expected; however, he was very successful in his new position. The first year he was principal, the school received a recognized rating on Texas Assessment Standards, and received exemplary ratings each of the following years. One year he was Region One High School Principal of the Year and was a nominee for State High School Principal of the Year. His philosophy of education is "effective teaching combined with a strong foundation of student discipline." Mr. Tellez began his administrative career at 29 years old, and if he could have done anything differently in his career, it would be to stay in the classroom a little longer. He has published articles and manuscripts on public education. He has been married over twenty years, and his wife has supported and encouraged him in every way. His wife has always been supportive, especially when he had to be away from home because of the long hours required as the teacher in the agricultural program. Through all of his years taking classes and getting degrees and the long hours and out of town trips needed in his position as a principal, his wife has been there raising their children and keeping the

family going. He and his wife have two teenage sons, and the family enjoys their country life style.

Carlos Quiroz

Carlos Quiroz is a confident, handsome, articulate man; he has green eyes, a fair complexion, and is 45 years old. He grew up in a small Texas college town where people worked on ranches, in the oil industry, and on the college campus. His home town is one of those small towns where the population more than doubles when college is in session. He was one of five children and is a third generation American. Mr. Quiroz is bilingual and Spanish was the primary home language. When Mr. Quiroz was a senior in high school he went to see the counselor, an Anglo-American woman, to ask about going to college. He wanted to know where he could get the “best bang for his buck.” She informed him that his best bet in life would be to go serve his country and join the armed services.

She gave me the epiphany that I probably needed to show her that I could indeed go to college, in fact do something more than be a jarhead, even though I had considered the military as a big possibility at that time.

He talked it over with his dad who was a high school drop-out and a huge proponent for a college degree. He speaks of his father with much admiration describing him as a loving father, an excellent role model, and mentor. His father had served and fought in the Korean War and then worked in construction for 36 years. He had crushed his knee while working as a superintendent in construction and that made working more difficult, but when his injury healed, he continued to work to provide for his family. His father

had also gone to college under the GI Bill and received his bachelor's degree in two and a half years, then he went on to get his master's degree. Mr. Quiroz's father, Carlos's grandfather, had always thrown in his dad's face that he had three sisters who all had college degrees and his only son was a high school dropout. Carlos's father never really utilized his degrees like he should, but he felt a need to show people, especially his father, that he had the mental ability to earn college degrees. Mr. Quiroz's father had always wanted him to go to college, and when Mr. Quiroz graduated from high school he was only seventeen and would need his father's signature to join the marines. His dad told him to try college first hoping it would give him a new perspective and maybe he would find out that an education offered a better future than the service. Mr. Quiroz also wanted to go to college to show his high school counselor that, "This poor economically disadvantaged Mexican-American could do something with his career." Mr. Quiroz said:

I followed my father's advice because I knew the struggles and hardships he endured while raising five kids, getting his knee crushed, and still working forty hours a week and completing his college degree in two and one half years. If he could accomplish that, there was no obstacle that I could not overcome.

Mr. Quiroz and his siblings were able to get Pell grants due to the family's economically disadvantaged status, but he had to work to pay his other expenses. "I worked at night, some jobs were from 10-4, and I worked construction. One time I even had my own construction company." It took him six years to finish his degree, which he finally completed at a medium-sized, regional university. He started his master's degree at the mid-sized university but finished it at a small university close to his home town. He met and married his wife during his senior year of college, and she was a big proponent for

him to finish his degrees. “She was always there for me and one of the biggest driving factors, along with my dad, in getting my college degrees.”

His first teaching job was over 600 miles from his home town; he said he always had a desire to see the world and that was a good start. He loved it there, but when he went home at the beginning of the summer, his grandfather was very ill and his dad was not well; his grandfather died before the summer was over. Mr. Quiroz heard of a job as a shop teacher in a nearby town and he applied for that position to remain close to his family; he was hired and moved back near his family. He was still working on his master’s degree while teaching full-time and additionally taught a General Education Development (GED) class in the evenings. After his first year as the shop teacher, he was also asked to be a coach; so, once again, he had a very busy life. He then became the department head for the vocational wing, but one evening when he came home, his one year old daughter started crying because she did not know who he was. His wife told him that he needed to cut down on some of his jobs,, because their child should not grow up without knowing her dad, and he agreed. About the same time, a principal started pressing him to pursue administration; he asked him to shadow him in the office and see if he would like to step up to an administrative position. A good opportunity came his way in 1999; the superintendent came to see if he would take a position at the alternative center to restructure the program there. He agreed to try it and, within two years, they met state standards, and he felt that being a male disciplinarian was an asset in the restructure process. The program at the center was for credit recovery and graduation. Within two years the school had achieved exemplary accreditation from the state of Texas. “I brought back discipline which had been lax at the school; discipline was my strength, my

weaknesses were curriculum and instruction.” The next step in his career was as the principal at an elementary school in the same district. The administration thought the state Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test scores would fall because the students who would be promoted to the campus had lower scores on the TAKS benchmark tests and, therefore, the ratings would drop. Through his leadership and the teachers’ efforts, the school did achieve exemplary rating for all three years he was there. Mr. Quiroz’ wife was working and she was being transferred to a town of about 100,000 people, 35 miles from their current home. Rather than her commuting each day, he decided to seek an administrative position there; he was offered an assistant principal job at an alternative school. The pay for that assistant principal job was more than he was currently making as a principal so he took the job. He was only there a few months when he was approached about moving to the career center. The position at the career center would take him back to the area he had really enjoyed in his previous district, so he became vice-director of the career center. “Being at the career center took me back to a realm I really liked, and I learned a lot about instruction while I was there.” He remained there for four and a half years and then he became an assistant principal at a large high school within the district where there are eight assistant principals. He soon became vice-principal and his responsibility was directing the assistant principals. He is currently the principal at that school where the enrollment is nearly 2,500 students.

Through all of this time he had always felt that he would like to work on his doctorate degree but he had struggled mentally about being able to do it. He had failed a test during his certification process to become a principal, and he had lost some of his self-confidence because he realized he was a weak test taker. He could see a huge

difference in the people around him who were confident, strong test takers and the weak, struggling test takers. In his opinion, once you get into the realities of being a principal and the learning styles and personalities, the job weighs heavily upon you and your decision making; it is not the utopia you are taught in your college classes and it is not really dependent upon a test score.

Ben Gomez

Ben Gomez has a fair complexion, is a distinguished looking gentleman, and is a little above average height. The interviewer met with him in his attractive office, which was furnished with comfortable leather chairs. Mr. Gomez is very articulate and can speak “off the cuff” on many subjects. He was born and raised in South Texas, about 75 miles from the Mexican border in a small, low socio-economic community. Ben is the sixth of thirteen children; there were eight girls and five boys. One of his brothers is a mechanical engineer, but after a number of years working in that position, he heard of the need for math teachers so now he teaches math in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Mr. Gomez is bilingual, and his primary home language was Spanish. He is proud to be a seventh generation American who can trace his roots to Spaniards who were in Texas before the Texas Revolutionary War with Mexico. There was a Mexican–American side of town and an Anglo side of town where he grew up. Schools in his hometown were segregated through eighth grade and then all students went to one high school. At the time and in the place where he grew up, minority students were told they were good with their hands so they needed to learn a trade or go into the military; no one encouraged Mexican-American students to go to college. Mr. Gomez was told this during his freshman year; however, he had already made his decision to go to college; he was going to prove them

wrong! He may not have had the money but he was determined to take college preparation classes. Each time he was advised to go the trade school route, he became more driven to go to college. When he started college, he still had the same feeling of discrimination; it was almost as if some of his professors thought, “Why are you here? You do not have any business here. You will be gone in a year or two.” Again, he was resolved to prove them wrong. The first year his grades were low, but he was not organized in his work habits or study skills. Nevertheless, during the second semester, his grades were better and he was on the Dean’s List from his sophomore year and every semester through his senior year. During his senior year, he retook any freshman class where his grade was a D on his record and replaced the D with an A. He graduated from an area university with teaching and coaching certifications. He began teaching and coaching but aspired to be a counselor and a principal; again he was discouraged by others who said he was not counselor and principal material. His determination and perseverance helped him complete his master’s degree and obtain his guidance and counselor certification from Texas Tech University. Ben began his career as a teacher and coach at a seventh through ninth grade campus that was predominately Hispanic and located within a large area of Texas. Students there were in need of direction and guidance both in and out of school. He was a Mexican-American male, one of the few in the district, so they looked up to him and came to him for advice and guidance. This was one of the reasons he returned to school so soon after he started his teaching career. Before he completed his master’s degree, he became the director of a satellite counseling program because they needed a bilingual counselor to run a counseling program. He worked at several schools and, due to his bilingual abilities, he was given added

responsibilities. All of this helped in his preparation to become a principal. At times he thought this was unfair, but during this time he felt that he could best serve the students by getting his mid-management certification, so he did that in addition to his school and coaching duties. At one time he thought he would work toward a doctorate degree but found he loved being a principal both at the elementary and junior high levels so much he decided that was where he could be a better help and role model for these predominately Mexican-American campuses. He remained a principal for 24 years until he recently retired.

Mr. Gomez was educated at two universities close to his home town and is certified to be a teacher, coach, counselor, and principal. He has held positions in all of those areas. He has worked at both the elementary and the high school level for a total of 32 years. He never had any encouragement to go to college from his counselors in high school, but he knew from his freshman year forward that he wanted to be a coach. He feels like being a teacher, coach, and counselor were an asset and excellent training for being an effective principal:

What happened to me in each position helped me to want to pursue the next position. What I saw in teaching made me want to be a counselor. What I saw in counseling made me want to become a principal.

What made him decide to become principal is that he believed he could make a bigger impact on students as a principal and make big picture decisions that help a greater numbers of students.

Gerardo Torres

Gerardo Torres grew up in a Mexican-American section of a small town. The schools were integrated when Mr. Torres attended school. He came from a family that spoke only Spanish in the home, so he did not speak English when he entered school. His mother and her father had a great influence on him; they always talked to him about getting a good education. His grandfather, who had spent his life working very hard as farm laborer, always gave him “the lecture.” “Get a good education, study hard, go to college; I do not want you to have to work as hard as I did.” His family was poor but his father, who never said much about education, worked hard and they “always had clothes on their backs and food on the table.” Mr. Torres, a high school athlete, participated in every sport. He mentioned two coaches that were really good influences or mentors for him. He has maintained contact with them. Another educator who mentored him was a high school English teacher; she taught him twice, once as a freshman and again as a senior. “She was one that pushed me hard; I was one that did not always want to push myself that hard in the classroom.” As a student, Mr. Torres was content with making B’s in the classroom but she pushed him for those A’s. She would let him know if he did something wrong and have him correct it, but she helped him to develop a “hard work ethic and a sense of pride in everything that I do.” So he thinks about these professional educators frequently, especially when he reads about how positive of an influence those teachers can be on students. “I think back to those individuals in my life, my coach and my English teacher, and I am thankful that they were there for me.”

Mr. Torres went to college right after high school, and he dropped out after only one year. After three years of work experience, he decided that he did not like what was

doing and he did not want to work for minimum wage all of his life; therefore, he decided to go back to his local university and complete his education. He started his career as a teacher and coach at a junior high school. After two years he transferred to high school as an English teacher/coach and worked there for two years, then the junior high school needed an assistant principal and he was asked to interview for that job. He was told they needed him in administration, but his lifelong dream was to be a head varsity boys' basketball coach, and that job was also available. After much thought he decided he could help more kids as an administrator. He was selected and worked there for three years; his next career step was as an assistant junior high principal while he was completing his certification. During his career, he has also been a high school assistant principal and an elementary principal. During this time in his life he had several mentors that took an interest in him. One of them told him that he had leadership skill that he had developed as a coach and he saw him as a great leader as well as a fine teacher. During this time in his life Mr. Torrez had continued to take classes at a large university, and earned his master's degree and his certifications as a principal and a superintendent.

Principals' Experiences With Race and Ethnicity

All seven of the Mexican-American male principals interviewed described racism as factors they dealt with during their careers. The following table highlights some of the information gathered during the interviews that helped shape these men's careers and their lives. Racial barriers are defined as a factor that may have made it more difficult to obtain the position of principal in the state of Texas. For the purpose of clarity within this study, "poverty" was determined by the family being eligible for free or reduced priced lunches at school. Obstacles discussed by these seven Mexican-American males

included such factors as time, money, uneducated parents, separation from family, lack of study habits, and the “good old boy” network. Another factor discussed by the seven Mexican-American males was how social justice impacted their lives and careers. The factors that they identified included high school counselors that failed to give them any career guidance or that discouraged them from going to college. The impact of ethnicity upon their career was also discussed by these seven Mexican-American male principals.

Racial Barriers

The information in the following table lists the racial barriers that these seven Mexican-American males faced on their quest to become principals in the state of Texas. The first column illustrates whether or not the principal ever felt that being Hispanic had any impact upon him getting a job in educational leadership. The second column shows whether or not these men ever faced social injustice in their lives. The third column lists any obstacles which the principals faced while obtaining the job of principal. The final column of this chart lists whether or not the Mexican-American male principal grew up in poverty as defined by whether they were enrolled in the United States government’s free or reduced breakfast and lunch program.

Table 4.2
Race and Ethnicity Experiences of Mexican-American Principals

	Bilingual/ Home Language	Hired For Ethnicity	Generation American	Experienced Discrimination
Hector Venegas	Yes, English	No	Second	No
David Tellez	Yes, Spanish	No	Five	No
Marcos Estrada	Yes, English	Yes	Second	Yes
Roberto Baca	Yes, Spanish	No	Second	Yes
Carlos Quiroz	Yes, Spanish	Yes	Third	Yes
Ben Gomez	Yes, Spanish	Yes	Seventh	Yes
Gerardo Torres	Yes, Spanish	Yes	Third	No

Note: The preceding table illustrates the race and ethnicity experiences of the seven Mexican-American male principals interviewed in this study.

Bilingual

Examining the racial backgrounds and perceptions of the seven Mexican-American principals was the next step in the process. All seven of the Mexican-American principals were bilingual and were very comfortable speaking Spanish adapted to the regional dialectic of the locale in which they were employed. Each of them believes that being bilingual is an asset but not the most important asset to be considered in searching for and hiring a new principal.

Ben Gomez grew up in a home where Spanish was the primary language; in fact, he started kindergarten speaking only Spanish, but as a grade school student, he spoke both languages while at home. He stated that being bilingual has been a plus on his career path. "Being able to read, write, and speak two different languages is an asset. I can't tell you how many jobs I have gotten just for that very reason alone." He did not learn to read and write Spanish until he was in high school. He remembers being in a Spanish class when he heard the news that President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

Hector Venegas' family was bilingual, but the primary home language was Spanish. Mr. Venegas feels that it is helpful to be bilingual, especially with Hispanic families that only speak Spanish. He has seen principals who are not bilingual but still have a good relationship within the community; however, he definitely feels that being bilingual is really a plus. He feels that knowing the culture is more important because it ensures a more positive relationship with the community in which you are working or seeking a position.

Gerard Torres entered kindergarten speaking nothing but Spanish, he said, "I started kindergarten speaking nothing but Spanish but the teachers did not give up on me. I came in speaking only Spanish and, because they did not give up on me, I was able to become an English teacher."

Both Carlos Quiroz and Marcos Estrada felt that speaking Spanish was a valuable resource as an assistant principal and a principal but neither felt as if being bilingual was the reason he was hired. As he was growing up, Mr. Quiroz remembers that his family used both Spanish and English in the home with Spanish being the dominant language. Mr. Estrada's primary home language was English but the family members were raised

speaking both Spanish and English because some grandparents and others in the community spoke only Spanish. David Tellez feels that being bilingual in the valley of South Texas is not mandatory but does help an applicant get serious consideration for the job of principal.

Hired for Ethnicity

Of the principals interviewed four of the seven were hired in order to meet a racial quota of some type; and three of the seven felt as if the fact they were Hispanic was not a factor to ensure the racial balance in the community. Marcos Estrada expressed that he felt like a token when he was hired because the town where he was employed almost always employed white male administrators. Several years earlier, the district had sponsored mid-management classes offered locally in cooperation with the university located in the area with the stipulation that the minimum number of ten students had to enroll. The administration actively recruited Hispanic teachers to work toward the principalship; however, though Anglo teachers could take the classes if they wished, they were not actively sought after unless the minimum number of ten enrolled failed to be met. Of the principals interviewed, the data showed that two of the seven principals interviewed felt like their ethnicity had impacted their career in a positive way. Two stated that being bilingual helped them to get the job of principal in the district where they are employed in other capacities. At least one, Carlos Quiroz, felt as if being a Hispanic had opened doors for him:

I felt like it did open doors. That was not my intent but it did because they were looking for people that met certain demographics in the area. Although I didn't want that to be a driving force for hiring me because I wanted my own ethic, my own traits that I had worked hard to attain, my own expertise that I've tried to create, my own record to speak for itself. I'm afraid it helped.

Two of the participants who felt as if ethnicity was not a factor in obtaining the principalship were from the valley of South Texas, where the vast number of inhabitants are Mexican-Americans, have grown up and attended a university in the area, and both returned to area towns; Mr. Venegas as a speech pathologist and David Tellez as an agricultural science teacher. Each man completed his mid-management certification requirements, received a master's degree, and soon became an assistant principal; their career paths were somewhat similar. Mr. Venegas felt he had some additional help; a board member in his community was pushing the superintendent to hire a Hispanic administrator. This wish of the board member quickly resulted in Venegas being advanced to an assistant principalship. Mr. Baca expressed that he could not think of his success in attaining his goal as an ethnic issue:

I do not think it helped me or hindered me and I never even looked at it at that point. My aspect has always been 'what can I do to help you,' and I did not ever want to say 'just because I am a Mexican this or that way.' I Just wanted to say 'I am an individual and I want to be seen in that way,' so I am a person who never saw it that way.

Ben Gomez stated he could certainly understand why being bilingual is an important qualification. He does not know if that was a consideration when he was chosen for any position. Being bilingual is very important in some areas of towns and cities and in certain areas of Texas, but Gerardo Torres "does not know if that is why I was employed in any of the jobs where I was selected from a field of applicants."

Primary Home Language

Out of the seven interviewed, two Mexican-American male principals spoke English as the primary language in their home, and five grew up in homes where Spanish

was the primary home language. Hector Venegas and Marcos Estrada both spoke English as the primary home language, but each of them could also speak Spanish because some grandparents and others in the community did not speak English. Roberto Baca grew up in a home where Spanish was the primary language, and he feels speaking fluent Spanish is a plus in his career. He understands the culture of the Mexican-American population, and that helps in his job. Ben Gomez stated that he spoke Spanish at home until he started kindergarten and did not learn English before starting school. He did not learn how to read and write Spanish until he was in high school; in fact, he was in Spanish class learning that skill when he heard the news that President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. As a grade school student he spoke both languages while at home. Upon reflection, he felt that retaining Spanish was an asset in his career and a necessity both when going to certain businesses and in order to converse with elders and others in the community. When he entered elementary school, Gerardo Torres spoke only Spanish, he said, "I started kindergarten speaking nothing but Spanish but the teachers did not give up on me. I came in speaking only Spanish and, because they did not give up on me, I was able to become an English teacher." David Tellez's primary home language was Spanish while he was growing up in the Texas valley. As he was growing up in a small west Texas college town, Mr. Quiroz said his family spoke a mixture of Spanish and English.

Generation American

The data analysis illustrates that three of the seven Mexican-American male principals identified themselves as second generation American, meaning that at least one grandparent was from Mexico. Two of the Mexican-American male principals stated that

they were third generation American. One participant of the seven men identified himself as a fifth generation American and one identified himself as a seventh generation. Ben Gomez said that he is proud to be a seventh generation American who can trace his roots to before the Texas Revolution from Mexico. Marcos Estrada stated that he is a second generation American and is the oldest of seven children in a hard-working family where education was always important. David Tellez stated that he is a fifth generation American. He grew up in the South Texas valley where there was a large majority of Mexican-Americans. Hector Venegas is a second generation American, is bilingual, and grew up in the valley where most people have roots in Mexico. Roberto Baca stated that he is a second generation American who is proud of his culture. Mr. Baca's parents both had very little education and worked hard to provide their children with greater opportunities and a stable life. The families of Gerardo Torres and Carlos Quiroz think of themselves as being in this country for three generations.

Experienced Discrimination

Of the participants interviewed, two of the seven men stated they attended schools that were segregated in elementary school as students; once they reached high school, the races were mixed and everyone played sports together. Ben Gomez stated that when he was a child, he lived in a small town that had "the Mexican living area and the white side," and he attended a segregated school until eighth grade. Marcos Estrada stated that he started to school at the "Mexican school" because, at that time, the elementary schools were segregated until fifth grade after which the schools were integrated. The kids all played Little League together and were friends every summer but never thought anything about separating to go to school in the fall. That is just how it was until after fifth grade

when they all went to school together. Five of the seven Mexican-American male principals attended integrated schools with their white peers throughout school. The two other participants never experienced any segregation growing up.

The data illustrated that four of the seven Mexican-American male principals had experienced discrimination at some time during their life associated with education. Two of these men experienced discrimination or prejudice while dealing with parents as they were doing their jobs as principals. Roberto Baca stated that there have been several occasions since he has been a principal where a parent or a student has been upset that there was a Mexican principal at his child's school. The two incidences that he mentioned both involved members of the Arian Brotherhood, commonly thought of as a white supremacy gang. Once, while he was a principal at a junior high school in a city of about 100,000 people, a young male student was sent to the office because of an incident. The boy pulled off his shirt and he had swastikas on his chest and back; the school called his father because of the consequences of his behavior. His father came into the office, and he had swastikas on his head and everywhere else you could see. He said that, "No (expletive) Mexican is going to talk to his son without him present. You can call my son to the office but before you do you had better have me sitting here." His son was taking it all in. Mr. Baca explained:

I told him I cannot stop how he thinks or lives but, as long as your son is a student at this junior high, he will have to follow the policy and I administered the policy, and you will deal with this Mexican. Dad was startled that I came back with that situation and he just stood there and looked at me.

Then he said, "OK, just give it to him so we can go." Another time, while Mr. Baca was at the alternative high school, there was another student who was a member of the Arian nation. He was the head person of the youth version for this region and again he was not doing what he was supposed to in the school cafeteria. Mr. Baca asked what he was doing; he did the same thing; he took off his shirt in front of everybody. There were about fifty other students there at the same time so Mr. Baca cleared everybody out. The student was about 6'5," and he leaned down and got in Mr. Baca's face. "I just got right back in his face and told him, 'Let's go somewhere away from here and if you want to talk to me man to man, then we will talk.'" Mr. Baca told him that as long as he was on that campus he would have to respect the blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. They had a long conversation and, after that, he became a good friend on the campus. A few years later, his sister enrolled at the campus where Mr. Baca was a principal, and she looked about like her brother. She asked him if he was Mr. Baca. When he said he was, she told him that her older brother had told her that she had better not get in trouble at that campus or she would have to answer to her brother as well as to Mr. Baca.

Marcos Estrada stated that he really only had one incident as a junior high assistant principal that was openly racist, and it did not pertain to him. A grandmother came to school because her granddaughter had been disciplined. When a student was sent to the office at that time, before in-school-suspension (ISS), they were either given licks or sent home. She had been sent home by the assistant principal because she was repeatedly defiant to her math teacher who happened to be Hispanic. The principal and Mr. Estrada were both in the office and she said, "It's just like a Mexican, you give one a hand and they'll take the whole arm." The principal jumped out of his chair, opened the

door and said, "This meeting is over." she responded, "I am not through." He said, "Oh, yes you are. Please get of my office." She left and the principal started to apologize to him. Mr. Estrada told him he did not owe him an apology, just consider the source and forget it. The student was suspended for three days because that was the policy for all students. Of those interviewed, five of the seven did not share any experience of discrimination or prejudice while they were on the job as school administrators. Mr. Quiroz felt as if he experienced a different kind of discrimination; he experienced discrimination by one Hispanic against another Hispanic. He had applied for the position of district wide career and technology director. He had been one of three administrators at the career and technology center, where he had in essence been "running it;" the other administrators had other responsibilities. The position of director of the career center was open, and he applied for the job. After several interviews with various people, he was selected for a different position, the district wide career and technology director:

This is where the problem came in; I was hired and went to meet with the assistant superintendent of the district, and I made the mistake of asking if my race could be any problem. When I was told the job was mine, I was given the job description; it had given me the latitude to hire or appraise people and make department decisions, but when I arrived for the meeting, the job description had been completely changed; it was more of a curriculum type position with very little power involved. I questioned the assistant superintendent about it and he became very upset; he said he did not like the way I phrased the question; he halted the meeting saying he had another meeting to attend and he left. I returned at the appointed time and was told the position had been frozen. I later found out that this Hispanic assistant superintendent was very paranoid and he had done this with several other Hispanic administrators as they applied for promotions; another Hispanic should not question him.

When Gerardo Torres became an elementary school principal in 2004, a few parents seemed to automatically view him as incompetent just because he was Mexican-

American. He believes he is a pretty reserved person but is friendly and will talk to people about “anything and everything.” He tries to be available and helpful to everyone, students, parents and staff, but he believes some people have closed minds and they seem to think that just because someone is Hispanic, he will fail. There was one veteran Anglo-American teacher on the campus when he first became principal who viewed it as, “No Mexican is going to tell me what to do.” He was consistent in how he handled staff, but she did not view it that way. She eventually became very critical and made mistakes, the kind that lead to her having to leave. “From her point of view, it was a racial thing, but from my point of view, I could have cared less.” Mr. Torres felt that at school, “The important thing is doing right for the kids, giving them a quality education.”

Since he resides in an area of Texas where over ninety percent of the population is Mexican-American, Mr. Tellez voiced that his home area is not the same as other parts of the state. Therefore, in that setting the “ethnic balance is reversed;” the Anglo population is less than ten percent. When he was hired as an assistant principal in 1994, he was one of three Hispanic administrators in the district. It seems as if the paradigm is shifting in that district where 95% of the students are Hispanic. Currently, the superintendent is Hispanic, and there are more Hispanic leaders in the district and community. He has noticed that when he is a member of a state wide board, he has been the lone Hispanic member.

Table 4.3
The Subtle and Not So Subtle Challenges of Race

	Ethnicity Impact	Social Injustice	Obstacles	Socio-economic Status
Hector Venegas	Being Hispanic helped	Failed to mention any	Money, Time	No, Father worked as a customs agent
David Tellez	Being Hispanic helped	Guidance Counselors No career advice	Uneducated parents, Poor study habits	No, working class
Marcos Estrada	Felt like a token Hispanic	Segregated Elementary School, No career advice	Time away from family	Yes, he felt poor growing up
Roberto Baca	Being Hispanic neither helped nor hindered	Discrimination at restaurant	Uneducated parents, low expectations	Yes, father worked construction
Carlos Quiroz	Opened door	Counselor discouraged college	Time, Money	Yes
Ben Gomez	Bilingual and culture helped, Shortage of Hispanic principals	Fight for equality for school, and refrigerated fountain	Good Ole' Boy Network, Uneducated parents	Yes
Gerardo Torres	Bilingual helped, board members wanted Hispanic	No advice from guidance counselors	Uneducated parents	Yes

Note: The preceding table illustrates the subtle and not so subtle challenges of race faced by the seven Mexican-American male principals interviewed for this study.

Ethnicity Impact

The principals were asked whether or not ethnicity had impacted their careers. Seven out of the seven felt that their ethnicity had impacted their career in a measurable way. A lone member of the seven principals expressed the fact that he felt like a token when he was hired as an assistant principal because the town, where he was selected from a field of applicants, always employed one white administrator and one Mexican-American administrator on their secondary campuses. Seven out of seven stated that being bilingual helped them to get the job of principal in the district where they are employed. At least one believes that being a Hispanic had opened doors for him. Another principal expressed the opinion that a board member in his community was pushing the superintendent to hire a Hispanic administrator. This wish of the board member quickly resulted in this interviewee being advanced to the principalship. Seven out of seven of the participants noted that their family's support while they were in college was very important to each of them in their quests for the principalship.

Dr. David Tellez stated that he thinks being a Mexican-American has advantages, especially in certain areas of the state, but he is unsure if he was ever hired specifically because he was Hispanic. Knowing the culture and how to speak Spanish is an advantage when parents who do not speak English come to school. Another important thing is for the Mexican-American students to see a Hispanic man in a position of authority who is well-dressed and respected as well as remaining an athlete. This can send an important message to students; they can go to college too and become respected in a professional in a career of their choice.

Ben Gomez stated that he grew up in a home where the primary language spoken was Spanish and being bilingual has been an asset in his career path. He also believes that ethnicity impacted his career path, such as the discouragement that he felt when the high school counselor did not even encourage him when he told her he planned to go to college. Even as he took college preparation classes, the counselor showed no interest in helping or encouraging him. He did feel that ethnicity played a role in a situation at one of his campuses. He believes that discrimination was the reason that he was selected to be director of a satellite counseling program mainly because he was bilingual, and the administration felt that “he could deal with those people.” At the time he also was responsible as a counselor for two predominately Hispanic schools. He felt that it was unfair because he had the responsibilities of the director, which has some of the duties similar to a principal, had to be the counselor of two schools, and at times as a translator. He saw a great need for Hispanic principals during that time. He knew that as a principal he could have a positive effect on students and be a good role model for the students.

When asked about how his ethnicity had or had not affected his career path to the principalship, Marcos Estrada responded that he thought it had helped. He was one of the local teachers asked by the administration to enroll in mid-management classes, which were being offered locally in partnership with a small university in a near-by community; the perception was that it was a push to get Hispanics into administration. He had already started on his master’s degree at that college so he enrolled in the local classes. He and the other students took all of the classes offered locally and during the summers commuted to the college campus to finish. Those were difficult summers:

We had to leave home around six in the morning, go to classes. We would get back to town in time to teach drivers education shortly, about two o'clock in the afternoon. Then some nights the ones who played baseball would have practice or a game until nine or so at night and then get up the next morning and do it all again.

Here again, this schedule was possible because of the lifestyle he had learned from his parents while growing up. The summer schedule was hard on him and his family, but he finished his degree as soon as possible. When he was accepted for the job as junior high assistant principal, he felt as if he was a “token” and, therefore, he must succeed, for himself and for other Mexican-Americans who would follow. He had been a teacher for only three years and he felt that there were more qualified applicants when he was offered that job, so he felt that being Hispanic was an important part of him getting the job “because he was the best thing available.” Marcos Estrada stated that another thing that was a plus for him in his career was he spoke Spanish.

Three candidates spoke of how ethnicity impacted their careers. Carlos Quiroz believes that at the time he received his mid-management degree, being a Mexican-American was an asset. His ethnicity opened doors for him in his quest for the principalship; then it became his responsibility to succeed. Roberto Baca stated that being bilingual had helped him to get interviews for principal jobs but, that after getting his foot in the door, it was up to him to get the job. Knowing the culture and language have been positives in his quest for the principalship; knowing about the “gang culture and mentality” has helped him to understand and work with some students who were much like he was as a boy. Mr. Venegas grew up in a part of Texas where the vast majority of

the population is identified as Mexican-Americans; he believes that his ethnicity helped him get a job in that area because he knew the language and understood the culture.

Social Injustice

The candidates were asked about incidents of social injustice they may have experienced in the past. Out of the seven principals interviewed, seven stated that they had experienced social injustices in their lives outside of their professional capacity as educators. Two out of the seven principals cited examples of social injustice in the professional arena. Five of the seven principals shared stories of social injustice that they experienced in education at some point during their lives. Following the data analysis, it was determined that two of the seven principals attended segregated schools while they were in elementary schools growing up.

Two of the principals cited examples where they had experienced social injustice in the professional arena. When asked if he had experienced social injustice, David Tellez stated,

There are just some people out there that question your ability to be an effective principal. Some who knew you were a coach, you are coming from 'that specialty,' therefore, the new administrator don't know about the important things like curriculum, programs, or many of the responsibilities that a principal must deal with every day.

He said he has had several teachers who immediately assumed, "He is just a coach; he can't do it; our campus will go down in its ratings." "Some Hispanics as well as some Anglos think 'He does not know what he is doing.'" "You are going to deal with criticism and adversity." When Mr. Tellez attended regional and state educational committee meetings he often was the lone Mexican-American in the group; this made him question

if he the “required” Hispanic. When Mr. Gomez was an elementary school principal, the large school district decided to install refrigerated water fountains throughout the district. They started installing the fountains but failed to come to his campus. They had been installed at the “Anglo campuses” but had failed to come to his predominately “Hispanic campus.” He contacted the administrative office repeatedly to tell them the installers had failed to include his campus, and it took them many requests and several more months to install them at the “Hispanic campus.” The people on his campus felt they had been treated unfairly and had been discriminated against.

Five out of the seven Mexican-American male principals cited examples of social injustice in their broader lives as well. Mr. Quiroz recalled how he felt when the high school Anglo-American counselor encouraged him to join the military service and how that gave him the epiphany, “I am going to show her, I can do something more than just be a jarhead.” Mr. Venegas received no guidance or counseling in regard to his future after high school and he felt as if he needed some suggestions. Ben Gomez stated that he grew up in a home where the primary language spoken was Spanish, and being bilingual has been an asset on his career path. When he was a child, he lived in a small town that had “the Mexican living area and the white side,” and he attended a segregated school until eighth grade. He also believes that he has experienced discrimination, such as the discrimination he felt when the high school counselor did not even encourage him when he told her he wanted to go to college even though he had made that decision by the time he was a freshman

Mr. Estrada attended a segregated school as an elementary school student and the lack of help and encouragement of the high school counselor were barriers in his quest

for a college education; the Mexican-American students felt as if they were all told, “Go find a trade school.” His parents let him know when he was a young boy they expected him to go to college and earn a degree. He grew up during the Viet Nam conflict and his Hispanic parents knew that, at that time, you could get a deferment; as long as you were in school and making your grades you would not be drafted. As soon as you graduated, you would be drafted so you knew you were just postponing the inevitable. Mexican-American parents sent their boys to college hoping the war would be over before they graduated and risk being drafted. Mr. Estrada asserted that he believes that the Viet Nam conflict is one reason so many Hispanics started to college at that time.

Mr. Baca remembers the discrimination of a restaurant manager when he was playing football at a nearby town while he was in high school. “We pulled up and he came out and greeted the coach,” and Mr. Baca can still remember his words, he said, “‘All the white boys go on in through the front door, and all you non-white boys come on round to the back with me through the kitchen,’ and that’s where we ate.”

Obstacles

Four of the seven Mexican-American male principals shared that they did have some type of obstacle to overcome on their paths to the principalship. Two of the Mexican-American male principals cited money and time as being their biggest obstacles. Two of the seven stated that self-confidence and developing study habits were obstacles that they had to overcome on their journey to the principalship. During the interviews, the data illustrated that three of the seven men who became principals stated that their parents were uneducated and they felt this was a barrier for them.

Two of the Mexican-American male principal candidates felt that time and money were their biggest obstacles in obtaining the principalship. Mr. Venegas believes time and money were the biggest obstacles he had while he was obtaining all of his degrees and certifications. When working on his master's degree he had to travel back and forth from his home to the university for his classes; the tuition and the fuel cost put a strain on the family budget, and he missed being with his family in the summer and on weekends. Marcos Estrada said that time and money were the most pressing obstacles in his career path to the principalship. While he was working as a high school teacher and coaching, staying late at school for athletics and taking classes to earn his mid-management and certifications, those responsibilities left little time for his family, which made it hard on his wife, children, and himself. Mr. Estrada shared, "I never encountered any obstacles in getting my education and during my employment other than the ones everyone seems to face." These were a lack of money, the cost of classes, and travel, which caused a problem in family budgets. Time was an ongoing problem while they continued their educations, especially "after you are already employed and you are teaching, coaching, and trying to spend time with your family."

Two of the Mexican-American principals felt that they had barriers to overcome in their own minds in obtaining the principalship. Gerardo Torrez stated that "I guess the biggest obstacle may be in my own mind. 'Can I do this?' My hesitancy was overcoming that fear." Mr. Torrez also shared, two additional obstacles: coaches were not viewed as good teachers by some people, plus he was Hispanic. David Tellez stated that he had to study and work hard to get through college, but he had a college advisor who taught him to organize his materials and develop good study habits to be successful

in college, and this helped him tremendously. This interviewee thought this had been a barrier that he had to overcome on his path to obtain the principalship.

Three of the principals stated that uneducated parents were an obstacle in gaining a college education. Ben Gomez stated that, in his career, he had seen that the “good old boy network” is still at work; it is who you know that is still a determining factor on some occasions. He felt that, “It was very important who you knew, not what you knew” in gaining a job in the district in which he was employed. Mr. Gomez felt that having uneducated parents meant you had to turn to friends to help you figure everything out about college. David Tellez stated that the only obstacles he had while growing up or going to college had nothing to do with ethnicity, but could be true for anyone; he had uneducated parents and, therefore, there were low expectations and, like so many others, his family was working class and there were eight in the family so money was tight in his home, making it necessary for him to work while attending college. He also refers to himself as “vertically challenged,” and on more than one occasion he has felt as if he had to prove himself up to the challenge of a being a principal. Roberto Baca believed that having uneducated parents is an obstacle on your path as you struggle to get an education, His mother had a fifth grade education and his father finished sixth grade and they were unable to help him in secondary schools, nor could they offer any college advice.

Socio-economic Status

Racial barriers were identified by the seven Mexican-American male principals that were interviewed as an important factor that impacted their lives. The majority of the participants interviewed, five of the seven Mexican-American male principals, grew up in homes that were economically disadvantaged or they grew up in poverty. For the

purpose of clarity within this study, “poverty” was determined by the family being eligible for the United States Department of Agriculture School Lunch Program’s free or reduced lunches at school. Of those interviewed, two of the seven stated that they did not grow up in poverty.

Five of the seven Mexican-American male principals shared their thoughts about growing up in poverty. Marcos Estrada, one of those interviewed, stated that while he was growing up he always felt poor even though his father owned a small business. He worked on the family farm from the time he was a young boy until his father bought a gas station, then he and his brothers worked there until each left for college. When he was not in school or involved in school activities, he worked to help his father run the run the business. It was a positive experience in many ways. “We worked when we were available and the station was open.” They learned about money and running a business, thus helping to support the family. It was good experience; they learned lots of math, and good people skills, and how to manage their time. He expressed gratitude to his father because the skills he learned from his father as he was growing up have helped him throughout his life.

Gerardo Torres stated, “My father was a good man who provided for us and saw that we had the things we needed, and he was a role model in that way.” His father did not take an interest in the children’s education, so he says that his mother was the one who “taught us and told us the value of education and that we should make something of ourselves.” Torres further stated, “I grew up in poverty; I do not want to live that way.” He looks back and they lived like the majority of folks in their neighborhood. He did not want the nicest house or clothes or the best car, and he said he knew that an education

was the best way out of poverty. “I want to send my kids to college; I want to live in comfort and that is what I strive for.”

Roberto Baca thought that his family was poor, but his father always set a good example, working hard in his construction job. Mr. Baca had a football scholarship to a small university about one hundred miles from home and his family had no idea where it was even located, but they urged him to accept the scholarship and get an education.

Carlos Quiroz’s father was a high school drop-out who worked in construction to support his family. His knee was crushed in an industrial accident which affected the family life style. Mr. Quiroz said they were poor while he was growing up. After his knee healed, Mr. Quiroz’ father was able to continue to work, and he got an education utilizing The Servicemen Readjustment Act of 1944, (The GI Bill) to get an education, but he never really utilized his education.

Ben Gomez shared his background, his schooling, his struggles throughout his growing up, and his educational experiences in his life while being raised in a low socio-economic neighborhood and growing up as a Mexican-American in a small town. It is a combination of a lot of things that have helped to make him more empathetic and understanding about what the people in the community are experiencing. Some students may not have a place to study, their own “space or room;” some students may not even know if they will have food or a roof over their heads, or the proper clothing, such as coats for the next day:

I think I can empathize with the kids; I remember how it was with me. I am not in a hurry to be critical of their situation, but the fact is that I had a lot of work experience in different areas coming up. In fact, I have worked in different areas; I was a bus driver, I worked in maintenance, I have worked in all aspects of the educational system.

The two Mexican-American male principals that grew up in the same large area of Texas stated that they did not grow up in poverty but in middle class homes. David Tellez grew up in a middle class family and they lived a lifestyle in which all of the daily needs were met. His parents did urge the children to go to college or a school where they could be prepared for the future. Hector Venegas lived in a middle class home; his father had been in the navy and then returned home to work for the United States Customs Department. All of the family's needs were met, so money was not an issue for them while the children were growing up.

Gender

The seven Mexican-American male principals interviewed in this study all described gender factors they dealt with during their careers. The following chart presents some of the data gleaned from the interviews that helped shape these men's careers and their lives. Gender played a clear role in how their lives unfolded. The chart illustrates the role of athletics and how this factor helped to develop these men into leaders. Strong male role models are depicted in this chart and how these males impacted their career paths. The chart shows how being a strong, male disciplinarian assisted their career path as well.

Table 4.4
Gender Roles

	The Athlete, The Leader	Strong Male Role Models	The Disciplinarian
Hector Venegas	High School Athlete, Principal	Coach, Principal	Discipline not reason chosen
David Tellez	Agricultural Science Teacher, Principal, High School Athlete	Coach, Principal, College Advisor	Discipline was one of the main reasons chosen
Marcos Estrada	High School & College Athlete, High School Coach, Principal	Coaches, Principal	Discipline not primary reason chosen
Roberto Baca	High School & College Athlete, High School Coach, Principal	Coaches, Special Education Director, Principal	Yes, as an ex-coach
Carlos Quiroz	Shop Teacher, Coach, Principal	Coaches, Career Center Director, Principal	Discipline was strength when chosen
Ben Gomez	High School Athlete, Coach, Principal, Community Leader	Coaches, Principal	Discipline a strong factor when chosen
Gerardo Torres	High School Athlete, Coach, Principal, Community Leader	Coach, Principal	Was an ex-coach with a reputation regarding discipline

Note: The preceding table illustrates the gender roles identified in the seven Mexican-American male principals interviewed.

The Athlete, The Leader

In examining the data gathered from the chart labeled Gender Roles, several clear patterns showing the impact of gender upon career paths of these seven Mexican-American male principals emerge. Seven out of seven of these Mexican-American males were high school athletes and saw themselves as leaders because of this experience.

Roberto Baca was a high school athlete and excelled in football and baseball, so much so that he was offered a full scholarship at a small college about one hundred miles from home, if he would participate in both sports. His parents were pleased and encouraged him to “go for it.” He wanted to be a coach and a teacher. He participated in athletics all four years at college; he finished all of his classes, got a degree, and worked in the oil industry for several years before completing his certifications to coach and teach. He went to work for a school district and started his career at a junior high school. From there the next step was as a line coach at high school. The athletic director called him in one day and asked him if he would be willing to start an adaptive physical education program for the district. He did not really know what an adaptive physical education program was, but he took the challenge and learned all about it, started the program, and administered it. It developed into a job he really enjoyed. During this time, he was also encouraged to get his mid-management certification because he was a leader. Shortly after he became certified, he became a successful principal at a junior high school then moved to a high school.

As a basketball player in both high school and college, Marcos Estrada was considered an outstanding athlete. As a senior in high school he was offered, and accepted, a full four year scholarship at a small college in a near-by town. He was the

oldest son in a family of seven children and was expected by his parents to be a role model for his siblings. His mother told him that, as the eldest child, if he went to college and graduated, then they would emulate him and achieve college degrees.

Ben Gomez excelled as a high school athlete. “I was an athlete in high school; I did everything in athletics ... I taught myself how to play sports and those kinds of things ...without that I could have veered down the wrong path.” Because athletics was so important to him, he became a coach. He enjoyed the responsibilities and influence that was part of being a coach. He was looked up to by the young people in his neighborhood.

Gerardo Torrez enjoyed athletics and the attributes it developed in him and believes he has been able to influence others in the same way. He knew he wanted to become a coach from the time he entered high school. He started as a junior high physical education teacher, coach, and high school assistant coach; after several years, he moved to high school as an English teacher and assistant varsity coach. His next step in his career was into administration as a junior high assistant principal; next he became an elementary principal.

Carlos Quiroz was a high school athlete who went to the local college and graduated with a certification to teach and coach. Mr. Quiroz began his teaching career and started coaching as soon as he was offered a position. He enjoyed coaching and teaching boys things he had learned from his coaches when he was in athletics. He continued to coach until he completed his mid-management certification; he was asked to apply for a principal job and he was chosen and this started a new phase in his career.

Hector Venegas was on his high school football team but did not participate in college sports.

Being a high school athlete, and involved in agricultural science projects, provided David Tellez with an opportunity to be involved in programs that taught him leadership skills, time management, and responsibility and kept him in good physical activities to develop into a strong athlete and leader. All of these attributes have been important qualities in his career as well as his adult life. After graduating from high school, he went to a mid-sized university and graduated as an agricultural science teacher. He returned to his home area as a teacher with the goal of being able to help young Hispanic boys in high school. They lived in a part of Texas where the population is over 90% Hispanic. He taught for several years, completed his master's degree and his mid-management certification then, at the age of twenty nine, he began his administrative career. He served as an assistant principal at a high school and became high school principal at the age of twenty-nine; the leadership qualities he developed in athletics and agriculture science helped him achieve success at an early age.

Strong Male Role Models

Seven out of seven Mexican-American males that were interviewed for this study had strong male professional role models in their lives. All seven spoke of high school coaches and principals as educators who had a positive influence on their lives. Hector Venegas stated that his high school coaches taught them self-discipline, responsibility, to work together for a common goal, and how to succeed through hard work. He spoke of two principals who were always supportive and encouraging. The special education director was the first one to suggest to him that he needed to work toward his mid-

management certification and master's degree because he could become an outstanding administrator.

Carlos Quiroz spoke of the coaches while he participated in athletics and how they modeled hard work effort, team work, and how to strive for success in everything you attempt to accomplish in life. While he was working as a teacher, the superintendent encouraged him to become an administrator because he saw the necessary attributes in him. The director of the career center and the junior high principal told him he had leadership that would make him an outstanding administrator.

Ben Gomez felt that participating in high school athletics helped him become a leader because they were taught many of the attributes used as school administrators such as, self-confidence, working together as a unit, having a positive attitude, and responsibility. After he became a teacher, several people encouraged him to become a principal because they thought he would be an outstanding leader. His main mentors after he completed his master's degree and began his administrative career were the superintendent and two principals. He would always ask one of them about the ins-and-outs of the principalship. When problems arose, he would say, "This is how I handled it; this is what I did; and maybe you have a better way." With their guidance, Mr. Gomez felt that he could develop his own path, his own ways of doing things "and that, in turn, helped me be the principal I needed to be."

An ex-coach was a role model for David Tellez. The coach, now an administrator, guided him not only as a high school athlete but continued as a role model after David Tellez became a teacher. He encouraged him, "You have the characteristics of becoming a school administrator." With support from his ex-coach and others, David

Tellez got his master's degree in education administration and became a principal. David Tellez has had several mentors as a student and in his career. His college advisor, an ex-marine, "trained the students very well, we were well disciplined." Mr. Tellez spoke of the first principal he served with as an assistant principal. He had been a principal for 18 years before David Tellez became his assistant and, "Whatever I had picked up as a graduate student and having a graduate degree, I probably set it aside because the training was done at hand and in the trenches if you may." As experienced as the principal was at being able to manage the instructional programs and the day to day responsibilities of a campus, this was a training period on how to deal with teachers, parents, programs, schedules, and so many other necessary attributes. "I stayed there only a year but appreciate the tremendous training and experience that I gained." Another successful principal he worked with as an assistant principal had a very successful instruction program; there was another assistant with six years of experience on the campus and he was able to acquire a lot of traits from her and from her experienced, intelligent skills. After he became a principal, he worked with several superintendents who taught him additional points and skills that have served him well.

"Coaches were role models both in high school and college," stated Marcos Estrada. "They taught us self-discipline, responsibility, the importance of following rules, and fair play." He was told he had the characteristics of a leader by two men he knew; one was his ex-coach and the other was a school administrator. They urged him to obtain his master's degree in school administration, and he did. When Mr. Estrada became assistant principal at the middle school, he worked side-by-side with a principal. They worked together

more as co-principals in order for him to learn exactly what the job of a principal really involved. They worked so closely together that Mr. Estrada told him he felt as if he were stealing from him; he was told, “Steal isn’t the right word, but I know what you are talking about; but be careful because a lot of what I do may not be right so keep the good and throw out the bad.” After that principal left, Mr. Estrada took the reins; he said he had some veteran teachers who taught him much about instruction, and modeled “the straight and narrow.”

While he was in high school and college, Roberto Baca’s coaches were his role models. They modeled many attributes such as a strong work ethic, a love for what you are doing, and leadership skills. They also assisted him in finding someone who could help him with his studies. Coaches helped him get his college scholarship, which started him on his career path. The principal of the junior high school where Mr. Baca got his first job as an assistant principal was another role model for him; it was through his guidance and leadership skills he learned the skills he need to know. That principal was the first one to tell him he would mess up, but not to be afraid of messing up, just learn from the mistakes and move on. He has found over the years that it’s important to learn from others around you; it makes you a better principal. Another role model for him was the special education director, who was the first person to talk to him about getting his principal certification. He was a kind and helpful role model/mentor.

According to Gerardo Torrez, two people had great influence on him in high school, one was his basketball coach and the other was a teacher. The coach was a positive influence because he taught him lots of discipline, lots of character, and a strong work ethic. He told the athletes about the three Ps; this lesson made a big impression on

Mr. Torrez and he has used it for his athletes, with teachers, and even in motivational speeches he has given:

My high school basketball coach taught to me the three Ps, and these three Ps help you out in life, its 'Patience, Pride, and Poise.' Have patience in all that you do. Things are not always going to come easy but, if you work hard and are patient, you are going to persevere. You are going to get where you need to be. Pride, be very proud of who you are and where you came from, and that is one of the things that I am. I am very proud of whom I am, I am very proud to be a Hispanic, I am very proud of where I came from, I am proud of my family and everything, and that pride in me kind of keeps me going; it keeps me motivated. Again I don't want to disappoint my family.

His coach also told him that you must have poise; when things are going bad around you, don't lose your head. You know you are going to deal with some adversity but you know how you respond to that adversity says a lot about you. So again those three Ps that his coach taught him have helped him out in life to this day. They have helped him in his life, his job, and with his family, everything that he does on a daily basis.

The Male Disciplinarian

Five out of the seven Mexican-American male principals felt that they were hired because they were male and could help with the discipline on the campus. Since he had been a coach, Roberto Baca thinks that is one of the reasons he was chosen to become an assistant principal; he would be able to handle students and parents. "I am a little vertically challenged, and I think that makes a lot of difference when a district or campus is looking for a disciplinarian" David Tellez said, when asked if he had been hired as a disciplinarian. He went on to say that had no trouble disciplining students, "Some people may say that is my strong point." He continued by stating he did not yell or scream but, as an agriculture teacher, he had spent a lot of time with horses and learned that if you

used a “proper tone and made them understand that if this happens, this is the consequence.”

When he was chosen to be the assistant principal at middle school, one of Marcos Estrada’s responsibilities was to handle discipline, but that was not the reason he was chosen. The school district needed some Hispanic male administrators, and he had completed his certification requirements, so he felt he was chosen as the “token Mexican-American” at that time.

Discipline was one of the reasons, perhaps the primary reason, Carlos Quiroz was chosen to become director at the career center where he taught industrial arts. He was considered a good disciplinarian in the small town district in which he was employed. He was nearing completion of his master’s degree with a mid-management certification. The setting at the school was for credit recovery and graduation, and discipline was lax on the campus. While he was in that position, the campus received an exemplary certification from the state for two consecutive years. “I think if we spend any time as campus administrators, assistant principals, and principals, the demands of the business calls for more than 60-70% of student discipline.” He said that it is just the nature of the business that principals are disciplined individuals and, therefore, should be able to implement a successful student code of conduct or student discipline program and that helps make them successful and able to implement any successful instructional program.

Ben Gomez contends that he was hired at one time because he was known as a strong disciplinarian, but he knew he was weak in curriculum and he felt it was his

responsibility to learn all he could about curriculum as quickly as possible. He felt he needed to work with someone whose strong area was curriculum. He believed that he took a common sense value to discipline; the purpose of discipline was to help the students, and people as well as students knew his main interest was in improving the students.

When Gerardo Torrez was chosen for an assistant principal position, he felt it was partially because of his reputation as a coach who could handle discipline issues, being a coach is something that he thinks can help prepare you to become an administrator. The skills that are utilized in one professional area tend to be utilized in the other, such as teambuilding and conflict management.

Cultural Wealth

This table illustrates the types of cultural wealth the seven Mexican-American male principals utilized on their journey to the position of principal in the state of Texas. The impact of the nuclear family and extended family emerged as a type of cultural wealth that the men used in their quest to become principal. Being bilingual was another type of cultural wealth that these men utilized on their path to the principalship. Aspirations toward the principalship were identified as an additional type of cultural wealth that enabled these Mexican-American men to become educational leaders. These seven men utilized the impact of friends and mentors in navigating their way to the principalship.

Table 4.5
Cultural Wealth

	The Nuclear and Extended Family	Bilingual as Capital in the Principalship	Professional Inspiration, Aspirational Capital	Impact of Friends and Mentors
Hector Venegas	Parent, wife, siblings	Yes, an asset	Special Education Director, Principals	Cultural Community
David Tellez	Parents	Yes, valuable	College advisor, Superintendent, Principal	College Advisor
Marcos Estrada	Father, Mother, Wife, Grandfather	Yes	Coaches, College Advisors, Principals, Superintendent	Teachers, Administrators
Roberto Baca	Parents, Uncle	Yes	Parents, Uncle	Coaches, College Advisor
Carlos Quiroz	Father, Wife	Yes	Principal, Coaches	Principal, Father, Friend
Ben Gomez	Father, Wife, Family	Yes	Family, community members,	Mother, Grandfather
Gerardo Torres	Father, Mother	Yes	Coaches, Principal, Superintendent	Grandfather Continuously told him to go to college

Note: The preceding table illustrates the cultural wealth identified in the seven Mexican-American male principals interviewed.

Nuclear Family

The entire group of seven Mexican-American male principals stated that their parents were important as role models in their lives. “We never quit!” was the motto in

Carlos Quiroz' family; his father led by example, was a role model, and was a driving force in his life. His father was definitely one of the ones who led him to his career path; he drilled into his children that the medical field and education field would always be here, but the oil field would be a huge risk, and he was right; they must get an education. His father exhibited this behavior by his own life; he was a high school drop-out who had enlisted in the military. After a severe industrial accident, he returned to school. He got his GED, his bachelor's and master's degrees, and during this time he continued to work to support his family. When Carlos Quiroz graduated from high school at age seventeen, he had been thinking of joining the marines. His father told him that he would go to college first and then after that he would be old enough to join without his signature. "He was hoping that college would give me a new perspective and maybe I would find out that I didn't need to join the service because an education offered a better future than the service." Mr. Quiroz's father was a significant role model for him. His father gave him good advice that field.

Mr. Quiroz had great respect for his father and his guidance led Mr. Quiroz to enroll in college and once there he went on to succeed as a coach, teacher, and principal. Mr. Quiroz married while he was a senior in college; his wife was very supportive and encouraging about him completing his bachelor's degree and then continuing to pursue other degrees and certifications.

Gerardo Torrez described his father as a man who worked hard to provide for his family, but he failed to be a good role model in other ways; his mother was his immediate family role model. Mr. Torrez's mother talked to her children about getting an education because that was a way out of poverty, he must work hard and dedicate himself to his

studies so he did not have to work as hard as his father and grandfather. Through the influence of his family, he made the decision to be a coach and a teacher at an early age.

Ben Gomez stated that his dad, along with his mother, wanted him to become a principal, so they encouraged him along that path. Mr. Gomez stated that he had been close to death as a child, and his parents always said that God saved him for a reason. He often reflected upon this; they always said that he is destined to do “good in this world.” This positive, constant encouragement meant a lot to Mr. Gomez and drove him internally to seek more in life and positions of influence. His older brothers and sisters always encouraged him to go to college and get his education. “Do what we should have done; go to school and get a good job. Your life will be a lot easier.” His brother let him borrow his car and would give him money occasionally.

Marcos Estrada indicated that his parents were his first role models. When he was young his parents taught all of their children things they would need throughout their lives. His parents modeled a good work ethic, financial management, parenting skills, and all the other things they did by their own attitudes and behaviors. Mr. Estrada’s father was a strong role model for his children. He taught them about hard work, dependability, and money sense by demonstrating the financial aspects of running a business, and he demonstrated strong parenting skills for them to emulate. When Mr. Estrada was young, the family lived on a farm. The children helped on the farm when they were old enough, so they learned early about hard work. When Mr. Estrada was in junior high, his father went into the filling station business and the family worked together to make it a success. He learned “people skills” and how to manage money through experience there. He also learned that, “It was a bad idea to borrow money and

pay interest because that is not good.” His father taught him about base ten “and if you understand base ten in math, then math is a piece of cake.” He expressed gratitude for his parents and all the things he learned from them plus their support for him in every endeavor; he has tried to emulate them as a role model to his own children. Mr. Estrada’s wife was supportive of him as he pursued his degrees and in his career; she was alone raising the children for very long hours but always wanted her husband to pursue his dreams.

When asked if there were people who had provided a support system or were his role models as he followed his career path to the principalship, David Tellez mentioned his parents who had always been there for him and had taught him a strong work ethic. They had brought him up telling him that the only way to be successful in this society was to educate oneself and they and his siblings had always been very supportive of him. “I cherish that every day of my life and certainly in my administrative career.” The Hispanic culture family unit finds it hard to send their children far from home to go to college, but his parents were in agreement about his choice of schools, and sent him to mid-sized area university with their blessings.

Hector Venegas had strong male role models in his life; his father and mother encouraged all of their children “to be all they could be.” Mr. Venegas’ father was a loving father and role model who provided for his family by working for the United States Customs Department in order that they would be able to live the middle class life style. He always encouraged him in any path he followed. After he married, his wife became another family member to support and help him to achieve his goals of becoming a principal. His older sister “mentored” him by encouraging him to become a speech

pathologist; she knew that school systems needed speech therapists and there were not enough of them. He decided to take her advice; it was a profession he enjoyed very much, as well as working in the school districts, and that eventually started him on the path to be a principal.

There were several key people in Roberto Baca's life who were his role models. His parents were hardworking, loving individuals who were examples for him by their lifestyle after their move to Texas. They always did all they could to help him achieve his goals.

Extended Family

Gerardo Torrez's grandfather was a positive role model and mentor for him as he was growing up; he modeled a good lifestyle for the children. He spoke of education as the way out of poverty, the way to success; he must get an education so he would not have to work as hard as his grandfather did on his farm. From the time when he was a small boy, through grade school, middle school, and until he graduated from high school, his grandfather "gave me the same lecture when he saw me: get an education; you do not have to work as hard as I do." While he was in high school he did not want to go to his grandfather's house because of "the lecture." He did not appreciate "the lecture" until he graduated from college, and he was able to look in the audience and see his grandfather. Mr. Torrez had dropped out of college before he finished. He worked hard for three years then thought, "I do not want to work like this all of my life" so he returned to college, mindful of his grandfather's advice, and finished his degree, and he continued on to a master's degree.

Marcos Estrada's grandfather taught him the importance of "numbers" in his life, he taught him the base 10 way of counting, and the knowledge of everyday math has helped him throughout his life. All of his grandparents were involved in his life, read to him, and encouraged him to always do his best. Another strong influential male in his life was his paternal grandfather, who had worked with him on math skills; he had been taught to count before he started to school. On one of the first days at school the teacher had given the students a piece of paper with one hundred squares on it; they were told to write numbers as far as they could and then turn the paper face down on their desks:

All around me the kids would write, put down their pencils, and turn the paper over. I kept writing and writing and she would come by and check on me; I kept writing and writing and finally she asked me how far I could count. I told her I could go all day because my grandfather had taught me how to do that, to just keep adding zeros and you can go on forever.

His grandfather owned a farm and he taught the children a strong work ethic and told them to educate themselves to improve their lives.

Ben Gomez admired his father and grandfather as strong Hispanic role models in his life. He worked hard to provide for his family, and modeled determination, self-confidence, a strong work ethic, and many other values to his children.

Good college professors at the small regional university that he attended "were really, really good mentors" for Carlos Quiroz. They didn't really need to push him but they were always there to listen, always there for a pat on the back when the struggle was the hardest to stay with it and get it done, and they were always there with a word of

encouragement. They would advise him about what he needed to take, and many other things, both as an under graduate and as a graduate student.

Hector Venegas' grandfather had worked hard as the owner of a small store that made enough profit to support his family, and he too encouraged his grandson in any endeavor. When Hector Venegas graduated from high school, he had no idea what he wanted to study in college.

Roberto Baca's Uncle Tomas was another role model; when they still lived in the gang area of Los Angeles, he would never join a gang, and he "got me extremely motivated to stay out of gangs; I consider him as my second dad." His Uncle Tomas is the one who really encouraged him to get into the teaching field and coaching field or any other area of education in which he was interested. His uncle was very influential in his life, and he has always been there with encouragement and advice.

Bilingualism as Capital in the Principalship

Roberto Baca is a second generation American who grew up in a home where Spanish was the primary language spoken. He does not know if being a bilingual Mexican-American has helped during his career but for him personally, it is an advantage. When he applies for a position he wants to be judged on his abilities and vision rather than his language skills or ethnicity.

It would have been an advantage if he wanted to move to the Metroplex. Once, when Hector Venegas was at a conference in Dallas, he was approached and invited to apply in that area because there were openings for Hispanic principals available and no one to fill the vacancy. Being bilingual is also an advantage with Spanish speakers; Mexican-American principals can communicate easily with parents who come to school

and do not speak or understand English. Parents seem to feel more at ease if the principal comes from the same cultural lifestyle. Mr. Venegas did say that while being bilingual was a help, if the non-Hispanic principal would learn about the culture and respect the culture, it would go a long way in his acceptance by the Mexican-American population in his district and was a plus in seeking employment.

Before he completed his master's degree, Ben Gomez became the director of a satellite counseling program because they needed a bilingual counselor to run a counseling program. He worked at several schools and, due to his bilingual abilities, he was given added responsibilities. All of this helped in his preparation to become a principal. At times he thought this was unfair, but he felt that he could best serve the students by getting his mid-management certification, so he did that in addition to his school and coaching duties. At one time he thought he would work toward a doctorate degree, but he found he loved being a principal both at the elementary and junior high levels so much, he decided that he could be a better help and role model on these predominately Mexican-American campuses. He remained as a principal until he recently retired.

Being Hispanic and speaking Spanish have been advantages for Gerardo Torrez in his quest for the principalship. He stated, "Being bilingual is a plus in a community like ours; we are 76% Hispanic and about 85% low socio-economic." He went on to say, "There are a lot of parents who only speak Spanish and many of them can read Spanish, It is a real advantage as a principal to be able to read, write, and speak Spanish." He also told the researcher that knowing the Hispanic culture is equally as important as knowing the language. He was one of those children who entered kindergarten speaking

only Spanish, but the teachers did not give up on him; he was not allowed to “fall through the cracks,” and he ended up as an English major and taught English before becoming a principal.

There were people in Ben Gomez’s community who were aware of his goal to become a principal and they encouraged him telling him “to hang in there and become a principal,” and that encouraged him when he needed it. Mr. Gomez articulated that during the time he was in college, several of his college professors encouraged and mentored him along the way to his certifications. This type of interest and encouragement has a positive effect on many college students.

Aspirations Toward the Principalship

Ben Gomez articulated that, during the time he was in college, several of his college professors encouraged and mentored him along the way to his certifications. Mr. Gomez mentioned that he had several college advisors; he fondly remembered one lady that told him what professors to take. The counselors also enlightened him on what types of careers he could pursue with the degrees he would be able to earn, they even encouraged him to pursue subsequent degrees. Friends of siblings gave him support as well, “In fact, they called me professor.” During his career Ben Gomez has been a high school assistant principal and an elementary principal, and he has had several mentors that took an interest in him. One of them told him that he had leadership skills, which he had developed as a coach, and this mentor said he saw him as a great leader as well as a fine teacher. At this time in his life, Mr. Gomez had continued to take classes at a large university and earned his master’s degree and his certifications as a principal.

Gerardo Torrez had two mentors in high school that greatly influenced him. “I could have easily taken the wrong path, but a coach and a teacher both took an interest in me and encouraged me to succeed.” Both the coach and teacher referenced above were Anglo-Americans who saw all the students the same, “I know, I am a realist; all teachers do not feel that way, and we are a diverse society. These two educators gave me the opportunity; they did not write me off, and helped me become a success today.”

An educator who played a big part in Roberto Baca’s life was Dr. Simpson, his college advisor at the small regional university he had attended when he was working on his mid-management certification. Dr. Simpson had previously been Mr. Baca’s wife’s basketball coach. He was the most motivational person Mr. Baca ever knew; he helped him in many ways, and they have remained friends. He always asks if Mr. Baca needs any advice or assistance. Mr. Baca added:

I think the background that really got me to obtain this, that helped me, was just the actual supportive guidance I got from just folks in the community that taught me I had to deal with every kind of situation but depending on how I was going to attack these issues would determine whether or not I was going to be successful or unsuccessful.

An ex-high school coach of David Tellez’s had become an administrator, and he and another principal encouraged Dr. Tellez to change his graduate degree from agricultural science to school administration; they told him he had characteristics of a school administrator. He changed his degree plan, completed it, and had an opportunity to work with them and learn from them. Another mentor was an ex-marine who was his college advisor, and he mentored him in self-discipline. “He trained us very well. If you

are putting in a student code of conduct or student discipline program, self-discipline helps make principals successful and to be able to implement any instructional program.”

Hector Venegas’ high school coach was a role model; from him he learned self-discipline, teamwork, and responsibility, in addition he offered him encouragement. There were two elementary principals in the school district where Mr. Venegas served as the speech therapist “whom always encouraged me and were always willing to help me out when I needed it.” The special education director for the district, who initially talked to him about getting his mid-management certification, encouraged him and helped him when he needed data, sources, or whatever he needed.

According to Carlos Quiroz, good college professors at the hometown university where he had been educated were “really, really good mentors” who didn’t have to push him but were always there to listen, give a pat on the back when the struggle was the hardest, and encouraged him to stay with it and get it done. It was important that they were there to help him in any way they could.

A college advisor was a role model and mentor for Marcos Estrada; he took an interest in him more as a student than as a basketball player.

Impact of Friends and Mentors Navigating the Principalship

Only one Mexican-American male principal mentioned friends as being an important source of career advice. Ben Gomez stated, “If it had not been for my friends, I would not have gone to college. They picked me up from work at a construction site on registration day and said come on.” His friends knew the professors, they told him the best professors for his classes, they had cars to drive us to school, and they helped in any way they could. The data showed that one out of seven mentioned the importance of

community members in offering him career advice. Mr. Gomez said community leaders said, “You would make a good principal because you know all the problems.” The custodian at the school told him, “You have the brains so go get it done.” There were people in Ben Gomez’ community who were aware of his goal to become a principal and they encouraged him, telling him “to hang in there and become a principal” and that encouraged him when he needed it.

“The Hispanic culture is a tight knit unity; the community is a support system there for you when you need it” Hector Venegas responded when ask about receiving support and encouragement from other besides his family. In the south valley of Texas the vast majority of the population is Hispanic; so through everyone’s support, “I felt a self-worth to go in and do it, and I was responsible enough to do it.”

One of the things Roberto Baca mentioned as being an asset in his quest for the principalship was the “actual supportive guidance I got from just folks,” they taught him that he would have to deal with every kind of situation and depending on how he was “going to attack these issues would determine whether or not I was going to be successful.”

A friend at college was an inspiration for Carlos Quiroz. In high school one of his teachers was very inspirational in changing his world for him, and that led to a “spike” in his interest in education. A friend who happened to be a principal when he was working on his master’s degree would “always tell me to go and get it. We always talked about our strengths and weaknesses. I remember him telling me I would be a great role model for kids.”

Gerardo Torrez had never thought about being an administrator, he loved being a coach and teacher; but his high school principal for just one year told Gerardo that he had watched him as a coach and a teacher but admired how he handled that situation. He went on to say he thought he was a great leader and he encouraged him to get his mid-management and master's degree and become a principal.

Mr. David Tellez had much the same experience as Mr. Torrez. Two gentlemen, one a coach and the other a principal, told him he should change his master's degree plan from agricultural science to school administration because they each saw in him a leadership quality that would be an asset for a principal. He did change his degree plan and he has enjoyed being a principal and feels as if he is helpful to students and to parents.

When the school district and a university teamed-up to offer masters and mid-management courses in Marcos Estrada's district, those who created the program, and administered it, helped him decide to become a principal. He laughed and told the researcher, "I went from applying to be the head basketball coach, to agreeing to apply for a degree to become a principal on just one trip to the office." Another event in which others affected his career was when the teachers at the middle school strongly supported him to become the new principal when the current principal resigned. They made calls, visits, and wrote letters in his support; he got the job.

Leading in the 21st Century: Mexican-American Voices and the Future

This table depicts information from the interviews of seven Mexican-American males and their views upon the future of Latino principals in the state of Texas. The value of principals understanding the culture and class of their professional learning

communities and its stakeholders is illustrated in this table. This table presents the opinions of what these men think about what future Mexican-American males need to know about the interview process before becoming principals. Recommendations these Mexican-American males had for principal preparation programs is included in this table.

Table 4.6
Leading in the 21st Century: Mexican-American Voices and the Future

	Culture and Class	Interview Preparation	Recommendations
Hector Venegas	Must study students in poverty	Know the community	More courses on how to deal with cultural groups
David Tellez	Must know our students socio-economic needs	Know campus demographics, traditions	Improve communication skills
Marcos Estrada	Need knowledge about students' cultures, how it affects relationships	Know curriculum, have organizational skills, leadership skills	Teach about cultures; how to deal with kids, parents ; teaching area
Roberto Baca	Respect Hispanic Culture, Socio-economic classes knowledge	Know programs & curriculum, present yourself well.	Offer more cultural classes for better understanding
Carlos Quiroz	Must understand culture of students	Know curriculum and organizational skills	More real practicum and on the job training.
Ben Gomez	Importance of class, culture of students, affects	Know about school, Personal strengths weaknesses	Finance, budgets, culture, community relations
Gerardo Torres	Understand culture of students	Know community	Need more shadowing of principals

Note: The preceding table illustrates the knowledge necessary to prepare future Latino principals according to the seven Mexican-American male principals interviewed.

Understanding Culture and Class

Seven out of seven Mexican-American male principals said it was important to know about culture and class. Roberto Baca is a principal at a mostly low socio-economic school. He spoke of socio-economic “cultures” and the difference in students from a “barrio” in a small town and the “barrio” in a city like El Paso. Even though the socio-economic level is the same, the life styles and behavior of students from each area are different; therefore, there is not only that difference, sometimes when you add an ethnic culture or cultures to the mix, it becomes difficult for a teacher who came from a middle class home and an Anglo culture or a Hispanic teacher from a middle class home to understand the students and their parents; their expectations and perceptions may be entirely different. In his job, Mr. Baca deals with mostly low socio-economic class students, but almost all of the other socio-economic groups are represented in the student population. He has empathy for the students from “gang” neighborhoods because he lived in a similar area as a young student. He works with students who must show gang “colors” on their walk through their neighborhood on their way to school making it possible for them to attend school safely. He has dealt with students from the Arian Nation culture when he was assistant principal an alternative high school; “Class” is part of the education system.

Another principal, Ben Gomez, spoke of students from low socio-economic homes bringing a different perspective to school than the perspective of a student from a middle class family and the importance for educators to be aware of students’ needs and lifestyles. They may worry about the family having food or a place to live, they may even be homeless; therefore, their concerns are less on their studies and more on personal

concerns. He felt that being Hispanic, being bilingual, and being familiar with the Mexican-American community and the culture were assets that helped him in his job as a principal.

Marcos Estrada spoke about working with students from different cultures; there are things about various cultures that would be valuable for a school principal to know. In the Hispanic culture, the dad is the one you need to communicate with because he is the parent who gets action, the mother seem to be more passive. In the black culture, the mother is the one who gets a lot done because often there is no dad. Understanding the cultural backgrounds of your students and their parents is a real asset for a principal. “It is important to know about culture and cultural backgrounds because they impact decision making” Carlos Quiroz asserted. “We should incorporate and have respect for cultures and build a foundation because assimilation comes when kids open themselves up with that.”

Gerardo Torres believes we must understand not only the Hispanic but other cultures as well, understand how people in poverty live, how they think, and what their values are. Teachers need to understand the culture of poverty. Mr. Torres’ teachers helped him; he started school speaking only Spanish, “but they did not leave it at that, I went on to become an English teacher.” He does not believe you must speak the community language, it helps, but someone who values education and wants to do right for the students is more important. Knowing the community, the kids, and the socio-economic conditions are the important factors to know in education.

Not knowing about a culture may intimidate some individuals, says Hector Venegas, “It may kind of get them to write them off.” We need to be willing to learn about cultures and work with them:

If people did this with the Hispanic culture, for example, then you would know why they bring grandma and grandpa; the Mexican-American community has very tight-knit family units. Knowing about a culture might make you more willing to understand and accept it more.

In the valley, it is very important to know about and respect the Hispanic culture; knowing it builds rapport, and the Hispanic community will help you understand the community. “It will make a more positive relationship.”

Interview Preparation

Four out of seven Mexican-American male principals stated that it is important for an aspiring principal to know about the community. Three out of the seven participants said that it is important to know the curriculum of the campus. Race should not be a consideration anymore. Mr. Baca tells prospective principals that when they go for an interview, race or ethnicity is really not a consideration when hiring a new principal. “Do not go in with a chip on your shoulder; don’t go in with a defeatist attitude. Be positive, sell yourself.”

Marcos Estrada stated that aspiring principals need to know many items before going into an interview:

Whether you are black, brown, or white you better know curriculum, have people skills, have organizational skills, leadership skills and understand the difference between being a manager and being a leader. The more you know about curriculum, lesson plans, testing, Gifted/Talented (GT),

bilingual, special education, the more you know about all of the programs the better off you are going to be.

Mr. Estrada said that it is important to understand leadership and know the difference between it and management skills before going into the interview. He stated that during the interview, candidates should display that they are organized individuals.

Speaking as a Hispanic, Carlos Quiroz believes that before he interviews to become a principal, it is important to realize how cultural attitudes can influence your decisions. “First and foremost, at school it has to be a decision that has the students in the forefront.” You need to realize the position can consume you; you have to balance your life and, as a Hispanic, Mr. Quiroz’s mantra is “Family comes first.” If you do not realize this about families, what is going on will affect the students; if you do not understand this, then “the kids are not being taught.”

Ben Gomez feels that a principal aspirant should become familiar with the faculty, programs, priorities, and curriculum and he should know what is needed in that school; he needs to know what he is up against. Mr. Gomez further believes the applicant needs to know at which school he is going to work and for what position, and he needs to know all he can about that school. He needs to know about the staff, and he needs to know the community that revolves around that school.

He must know his own strengths and weaknesses; when Mr. Gomez was hired for his first principal job, he felt his strength was as a disciplinarian and his weakness was curriculum. He was able to hire an assistant principal whose strength was curriculum so they complemented each other in that respect. He said he got busy and learned; he took

training and learned all he could from his assistant until he felt he had added curriculum to his strengths. A new principal needs to be able to communicate with parents and peers, being a “people person” helps, as well as having a “support group.” He would advise a new principal to take care of himself, the job is demanding and he should be in the best health possible; he needs to set his priorities. The applicant needs to know that legality can be a problem sometimes; you need to follow the school code, stay as legal as possible, but problems present themselves that need judgment as well. If a high school bully comes to school with a knife intent on causing trouble, and a five year old finds a knife he found at home and brings it for “show and tell,” should the same punishment be applied? Are there legal ways and right ways? Should you make your decision on what you feel is equitable, or should you apply the exact punishment on both students?

“Be better versed than the committee about that particular school or institution,” this is David Tellez’s advice to Mexican-American male principal candidates before a job interview. They need to know about the demographics, the culture of the school, and the demographics of the teachers. Know about the traditions of that school; sometimes traditions are not evident, but they are the future principal’s responsibilities. Principals should be aware of things that are important to the student body and the parents and community, like if some activity has been a tradition for many years. Pay attention to details. Visit the campus while it is in session if possible; observe the flow of students and the practices of teacher and facility. Note if changes need to be made, not as personal preference. When we walk into that building, it is very important that lead teachers understand what are their responsibilities are. Study the master schedule, what are the opportunities for students, and what are future opportunities. If it is a high school,

know about college preparedness and college entrance opportunities. Those criteria should be presented at the interview. It is very important for the candidate to express his own knowledge and experience.

According to Gerardo Torres, “You know the most important thing is be prepared going into an interview, prepared for any and everything; whether it is a teacher group that interviews you, or a superintendent, you just have to be prepared.” Know about the campus, the faculty, and the students; look at the data, what are the positives and what does it need, in what areas does this campus need to improve, and know the culture. “Be humble, or life has a way of humbling you.” If you do not know about something, say you will find out.

Hector Venegas believes that you need to know your community, and you need to know the makeup of the campus. If a Hispanic is in a part of Texas where the majority of the population is Anglo-American, he must realize he may have some obstacles to overcome, but he knew of no other differences. “A principal is a principal; you have the same responsibilities everywhere.” You must deal with your campus, your district, curriculum, you need to research and learn about anything you are unfamiliar with and learn about it, and you need to know about accountability.

Recommendations

Marcos Estrada believes that universities should train less for a well-rounded education but rather train a prospective teacher to be better prepared in his teaching area and about how to deal with students from other ethnicities. In other specialties, if you are going to be an electrician, you are saturated with information about electricity; why should education be any different? Teach more cultural awareness classes; it is important

for educators to know about the various cultures with which they will be dealing. If a student is going to be an elementary teacher, teach about dealing with young students; if he is going into high school jobs, teach about older students; teach them to deal with parents of different ethnicities. Prospective administrators should learn about cultures, parent relationships, curriculum, laws, budgets, English as a Second Language (ESL), special education, and other specialty programs. Make the education more appropriate for the level for which they are training.

Mr. Quiroz recommends that those training in educational leadership programs “need to do a practicum;” it would be a tremendous help. Great theories are taught in the course work, but you must take the theories and try to mesh them with the realities of the job. This is his suggestion for everyone in the program, Hispanics, blacks, Anglos, and every other student.

Mr. Tellez feels that working on the communication skills of the students is important, particularly for Hispanics. It may be a cultural issue or mannerisms, our reservations or in some cases, being docile. There is a need for better communication skills, not only in public speaking but in most facets of public education. In some instances, in some areas of the state we do not grow up having communication skills, some have strong Hispanic accents, or do not properly pronounce certain words correctly; they need a little practice, “Many of us try and are successful, but I know many of us need to improve on that. So many things we all do are cultural, so yes, I would recommend it.”

When Hector Venegas was in mid-management classes, he had a course about social cultures, but it was such a broad course it wasn't focused on Latinos and the way

demographics are changing in Texas. They may need to consider putting in a course that is dealing with just Latinos “because this is going to be the majority-minority pretty soon.” They could have guest speakers maybe current administrators come in and work with the students.

Ben Gomez feels it would be a very valuable if colleges could provide future principals with the opportunity to shadow a principal and learn about as much of the responsibilities of the principalship as possible. They need to know about budgets, local, state, and federal programs, community and parent relations, and day to day operations of a school. One of his biggest concerns is about teachers from middle class lives bringing their values to school. Many of these new teachers have no knowledge about how to work with students in a low socio-economic neighborhood, nor do they have any knowledge about the everyday lives of these students or how to deal with them and their parents.

Roberto Baca stated that principal preparation programs should focus on the cultural and socio-economic needs of their students:

I think it all comes down to the adjustment of culture, they need to have more cultural classes because of where the candidates are coming from because now we have a large portion of Hispanic parents who are pushing their kids to go to school; you get kids from the top of the culture and you get kids from the lower ends of the economic culture.

The students that are being instructed may not be familiar with the academic language; did they come from the barrios in small towns or the barrios in a city like El Paso or were they from affluence? Where do they plan to start their careers? Graduating educators

need to know about socio-economic cultures and be aware of the cultural aspects and how they affect their pupils. Kids in different areas of cities can be completely different.

Gerardo Torres stated that colleges need to teach more multi-cultural classes that focus on cultural groups specific to the state. For example,

Teachers need to know Hispanic students respond differently to scolding than Anglo-American students because if a Hispanic student looks down, it is not a sign of disrespect; it is not disrespectful in the Hispanic community, you have so many parents that tell their kids, “Don’t you look at me like that” when they are getting on them, so that is their way of handling things. You know you see a lot of Hispanic kids, especially male students, that when a teacher reprimands them, they kind of laugh about it. Teachers view that as being disrespectful that this is not disrespectful either, that is their way of dealing with that, on the inside they may be crying, on the inside they may be scared to death because they are getting in trouble. So these are the things the teacher needs to be trained on.

Mentored Others

Mr. Estrada mentored several assistant principals, and he believes that they need to learn about everything a principal does. During the first year they have to learn many disciplines and textbooks, after that they learn about budgets and curriculum. They need to know how to be prepared to deal with master schedules, curriculum, and the day to day phases they will face; the list goes on and on. He tried to teach them as much as possible before they moved to another position.

At one time Mr. Gomez had only a part time assistant principal on a regular size campus, so he found it helpful to utilize teachers who were aspiring to become principals to help him meet all of his responsibilities. At a later time, he had the opportunity to mentor several of them as they moved into the principalship ranks. He later had several full time assistants whom he tried to teach what they would need to know once they became principals.

Mr. Baca has mentored several interns over the years and he feels that how you treat people is very important, treat them fairly and honestly no matter their clothes, their language, or their demeanor. When a parent comes to the school, your attitude toward them is important. Roberto Baca stated that he had mentored at least one educational leader. Roberto takes great pride in his ability to mentor others. "I want them to be successful and to help all of our young students excel. I have told the young principals that I have mentored to learn as much about curriculum as you can." They must learn to use participatory leadership and include others in the decision making process. Utilizing this approach enables teachers and others to buy into your program of getting all students to succeed.

As a principal, Mr. Quiroz has mentored several toward the principalship; they have done a practicum under his tutelage. Mr. Quiroz feels that this activity is a very important task because it is creating the future leaders of our schools. In that way he can teach them about the various responsibilities they will face on the job as principals.

When he was a mentor, Mr. David Tellez said he did not think they needed to ask what their responsibilities were because everything was timely scheduled and, if there was a crisis, everyone worked together until it was solved. In his first year as high school principal he had two new assistants. They started the year off together, they had to hire fourteen teachers and a head counselor before the school year started, the assistants had to learn quickly and take responsibilities as soon as they started. During the year, they worked together so they learned more about other responsibilities of the principal; they handled many crises that year and he felt they took management skills with them. Over

the years, he had a number of assistants and many have gone on to successful principalships and several to other administrative positions.

Gerardo Torres started “mentoring” a friend at a party with friends, many of whom were school employees. The gentleman was a softball coach and they started telling him he should be a teacher; he had a college degree but was not certified to teach. His school needed a Spanish teacher and hired him under local certification; he liked it and returned to school and got his teaching certification. He is now a certified assistant principal and is working at the high school. He has also mentored assistants on his campus, but they are learning the mechanics and, “You really don’t know what it is like to run a campus until you have the experience.”

He became a principal when he was just twenty-eight, and Hector Venegas believes that, just by being there, he has encouraged several teachers on his campus to follow his lead and become principals; he motivated two of them to go back to school and get their mid-management certification. He was always there to offer encouragement and help in any way he could. He also encouraged a para-professional to follow in his tracks. He believes he is a mentor in his community. When young Hispanic boys see a Hispanic male adult wearing a coat and tie, being the principal of a school, and living in a nice home, he is a symbol of motivation for the Hispanic community.

Recommend the Principalship

Hector Venegas would definitely recommend becoming a principal if anyone tells him he is interested in it:

I tell him to do it. There is a shortage of Hispanic administrators; we need to continuously support them and encourage them. But I always tell them, “Don’t

think you are going to get the first job you apply for, you may, you may not, but don't give up.

He has encouraged teachers who ask him about it, and who want to better themselves, that they should do it. According to Mr. Quiroz, the principalship is not for everyone:

If you are a big picture person like I am and you strive for that challenge, this is an excellent way to do it. If you want to affect change in a big way, then the principalship is a way to do it.

There are people who are nurturers and want to be in counseling; then that is the route they should take; there are people who always want to coach or teach; find what fits and stick with it.

Roberto Baca believes that if a person is able to see the "whole educational picture," and he wants to learn more about education as a whole, and would like to be a principal, then he would highly recommend it. In a classroom you are limited to "tunnel-vision," where you just worry about a small area, your classroom. Principals see many changes that are made and the value of change. "I tell them it is as if you take all of that wealth of knowledge in your teaching area and you can expand it and it keeps expanding." He describes it as if a "teacher is a math teacher then he has 'tunnel vision' about math, but when you become a principal, you take all you have learned and you can apply it to other areas as well." What has worked for him might just work for others. That's where he can become a success. This is how coaches and teachers can become successful administrators, if you would enjoy that concept, then becoming a principal is the way to do it.

One participant shared that it was very important for the principal to know the curriculum, leadership skills, people skills, and organizational skills inherent in that job; Marcos Estrada stated that future Latino principals need to know these aspects of the job in order to be successful. Principals need to know how all of their students are performing academically by tracking data. Conflict management is another area that Mr. Estrada stressed as a skill that young principals need to master.

“You’ve got to have the right stuff; I guess the astronauts said it right” according to David Tellez. If a person is dedicated, ambitious, strives for excellence, and takes personal criticism well, he recommends becoming a principal; it is very fulfilling. He doesn’t know what the right stuff is, but he knows that the job is a demanding one. Being a principal is not for everybody no matter how hard he strives; for some it is an impossible task. He has had some assistants work for him that just did not have the skill set needed to be a principal; he believes he would have done them a favor to reassign them. Some of the principals that worked for him literally worked themselves to death; he really thinks the stress and problems contributed to their deaths. It is a very demanding position, so he really felt he could not recommend the job to just anyone; it consumes some people. “I would tell anyone who asked me to be sure it is what you want. It can possess every minute of your life, but if you feel the drive and really want it, go for it.”

Summary

This chapter depicted seven Mexican-American male principal experiences and the perceptions of race and cultural capital which impacted their career paths. Detailed transcriptions of in-depth interviews provided insight into the participants’ views on the

cultural wealth that helped them reach the position of principal in the state of Texas. Themes of gender, race, ethnicity, and cultural wealth arose. Critical Race Theory framed the critical counter narratives, which gave voice to this population of principals. Yosso's (2005) six attributes of cultural capital played an important role in framing their journey; identity and cultural wealth were cultural markers which gave them the confidence to become educational leaders. This study utilized content analysis, critical qualitative data, and counter narratives to demonstrate the impact of race and the importance of cultural wealth among the Mexican-American male principals.

The data displayed in this chapter provided three dominant themes and various sub-themes. The topics of race and ethnicity, gender, and cultural wealth framed the critical discourse in this chapter. The first major theme that emerged from the data was that of race and ethnicity. One sub-theme identified from within race and ethnicity data was the notion of administrators hired to meet a quota. Another sub-theme identified under race and ethnicity was racial obstacles. Regarding race and ethnicity, a prevalent sub-theme included the use of resistant capital by every principal interviewed when confronted by social injustices, and they used this experience to advance their education and professional standing. The second major theme that emerged from the data was that of gender. All of the participants interviewed had a strong male role model in their homes growing up and all had well defined and involved male professional mentors in their career paths. A reoccurring sub-theme identified that each administrator had a male, athletic coach that shaped and guided him during his formative years.

The third major theme which merged from the collected data was that of cultural wealth. The importance of a strong nuclear family was all an integral part of helping the

Mexican-American principals in this study attain the principalship. Extended family and community support was important to career development and further showed how each man had someone within their nuclear family, extended family, or community that encouraged him to pursue his education. The final sub-theme reflected Spanish language and the linguistic capital which helped these men on their journey to the principalship.

The next and final chapter of this study provides conclusions, recommendations, and implications for future research on factors of race and cultural wealth in the principalship. The final chapter provides insight from the literature review and data collected as well as future research needed. Implications for professional practice are discussed as well as how the researcher's own professional practice has been impacted by this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was intended to conduct a content analysis of Mexican-American male principals' perceptions of their career paths and how race and cultural capital either played a part in helping or hindering the attainment of a principal position in the state of Texas. Prior research which identifies and investigates racial barriers and cultural capital used by Mexican-American male principals in pursuit of the principalship has been absent from the knowledge base in the principalship. The purpose of this research was to conduct a content analysis study of Mexican-American males' perception of how race and career paths impacted their journey to the principalship in the state of Texas. Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides the conceptual discourse of this study, which is framed by cultural wealth. This research examined the journey of educational leaders filtered through a strength based perspective of the Mexican-American male principal experience and the cultural capital which facilitated navigation of a social structure dominated by the white majority. Educational leadership is an area that can benefit from the fastest growing population in the southwestern United States and the fastest growing demographic group in the state of Texas (U.S. Census, 2011).

According to educational leadership researchers, the role of the principal is instrumental to school success (Sergiovanni, 1996; English, 2005; Marzano, 2006; DuFour & Eaker, 2008; Schmoker, 2011). Previous studies conducted on educational leadership have focused on the viewpoints of the white male, the majority population of educational leaders nationwide. This study attempted to add to the body of knowledge of the few studies which examine Hispanic male principals. Research focusing on the

professional and personal experiences of Mexican-American males as principals continues to be scarce.

Qualitative research was utilized to engage an in-depth interactive investigation to understanding the cultural phenomena of Mexican-American male principal racial experiences and career paths. The qualitative approach utilized in this study allowed for further examination of how these men placed themselves within their environments and how they derived meaning from the professional situation that they experienced (Berg, 2001). Critical qualitative research lenses framed the challenging questions regarding power relationships, including those related to race, gender, and ethnicity, and were utilized to capture data. Content analysis was utilized to delve deeper into the rich data collection and to thematically categorize the large sets of data collected in order to draw conclusions on the affect and impact cultural wealth had in the career path of Mexican-American males. This study used counter narratives, the art of unearthing data, and telling the stories of those “others” who are silenced to further frame the research findings (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

The display of data in this study is derived from the participants’ experiences with race conversations and their perceptions of cultural wealth and its impact toward the principalship. The in-depth interviews, follow up questions, and phone conversations, plus the time spent discussing and member checking with participants on race, gender, and cultural wealth, provided the critical dialogue which exposed CRT thoughts and experiences within the principalship. Cultural wealth played a significant role in providing these men with necessary cultural leadership tools to facilitate and obtain the principalship. This study discovered the voices of Mexican-American male principals,

the need for CRT conversations in the principalship, and a concerted effort for school districts and communities to facilitate development of Latino educational leaders.

Although the focus of this study was not to redesign or transform the training and certification process of educational leaders in the state of Texas, findings revealed training in cultural competencies in the principalship, along with issues of diversity, race, and ethnicity, were both missing and highly needed in current educational leadership certifications in the State of Texas.

Conclusions

The seven principals who participated in this study were regarded to be trustworthy sources of information for this content analysis study. The interview procedure presented ample occasions for specific information to be shared verbally, which is reflected through the second conversation and interviews by the participants. Through member checking and interviews, the researcher was able to capture the voices of underrepresented groups to further understand how participants made sense of their experiences. The detailed discussions and manifestations of the Mexican-American males helped to explain how they made sense of the career path toward the principalship and how they reached the position. In this study, the research participants had diverse professional experiences and attitudes toward their career paths, which were detailed in the interview transcription. Examination of the information collected during the interviews was conducted using content analysis and attempted to answer three questions:

1. In what ways were Mexican-American males influenced to become school principals?

2. How does race and ethnicity structure the career path and journey toward the principalship for Mexican-American males?
3. What forms of cultural wealth impact the Mexican-American male experience to become school principals?

The aim of this analysis was to evaluate the career paths of seven Mexican-American male principals and their stories about the cultural capital that they used in order to obtain the principalship. Specifically, through the use of content data analysis, the researcher attempted to identify how the emerging themes of racial barriers, gender, and cultural factors impacted the career paths of Mexican-American male principals.

This study found that, thematically, racial barriers were still in place but not overtly documented by bureaucratic entities. The perceptions and realities of racial barriers in the principalship created challenging views of the professional and personal self because of the deficit thinking of the dominant culture and covert practices through microaggressions found to be alive and well by the racially dominate group and in the “good old boy system.” Obstacles associated with family and individual poverty were not a deterrent to obtaining educational goals. All seven participants utilized the harsh experiences of social injustice during their youth and careers as inspiration and a cultural springboard to advance their careers.

Further findings of this study confirmed the importance of the imprint and role of the male gender in impacting the Mexican-American male principal career path. All seven, 100% of the participants, had a strong and significant male role model in their homes as they grew up. Another finding of this study was that all seven Mexican-American male principals had a strong male professional mentor or role model advising

and inspiring them in their career path to the principalship. The majority of the Mexican-American male principals were also influenced by their male coaches while they were student athletes.

The final major theme of this study regarded the cultural wealth of these Mexican-American male principals. The nuclear and extended families were all supportive of them while growing up and pushed them to succeed. This debunks the myth of minority parents not caring, not being involved, or not having high aspirations for their children. The Mexican-American male principal participants all had extended family and community support in their leadership quests. All of them had someone in their support network that encouraged them to complete their master's level education. Being bilingual, in this case speaking English and Spanish, was not required for the position but was clearly an asset to each one of the principals in communicating with their communities and obtaining the principalship.

Racial Barriers

There was an unmistakable undercurrent of racial barriers each of seven Mexican-American male principals faced on their career path to the principalship. Six out of seven Mexican-American male principals provided examples, which further developed this major theme. From the beginning of their educational careers, each one was omitted from college preparatory curriculum and any college going conversation in their schools. The education pipeline with each one was supposed to end before or at high school. Each was told by their high school guidance counselors to go into the military or go into construction.

For Ben Gomez, the messages of identity, self-worth, and racial biases began during his public school experience:

When I asked about college, I was told that most of your people don't go to college. You either join the military to learn a skill or learn a trade such as carpentry. I wanted to do more with my life than manual labor.

The racial conversation the white educators in schools had with Carlos Quiroz were overtly stated and supported the current mindset and school philosophies:

I was told by my high school guidance counselor to go into the military. I did not want to just be a jarhead. She told me you might want to go into construction because you people are good with your hands.

The one principal who could not recall this type of negative advice from their high school guidance counselor at all stated, "I did not get any career guidance at all." Consequently, 100% of these Texas public school principals dealt with racial barriers during their tenure in public schools and received no college readiness curriculum or advice. Moreover, this study also identified the impact these experiences, along with race conversations, had on the support structures available and geographic location of college choice. All seven principals experienced conversations discouraging them from pursuing university level and professional post-secondary education ambitions. They all attended small regional colleges that were near their homes to continue finding the support and loyalty that their cultural wealth valued.

Hector Venegas was conscious of using his familial and cultural wealth as a platform of support to make it through college:

I attended college close to home because it was close to my family and my roots. I felt that it was best for my situation at the time. I had grown up in south Texas and was glad to stay in close proximity to my mother and father in case they needed me. My father always appreciated me being close to home in case he needed a hand with something.

The impact of the cultural wealth valued post high school was captured by

Roberto Baca as he reflects on his family support:

My mom and dad were glad that I attended college close to home because they did not want me to stray too far from my family. It was nice at holiday time because I attended school close and was able to always attend family gatherings. In the Hispanic culture family gatherings are very important and you never get those occasions back.

As expected, there were differences found in each of the participants' responses.

Some participants attended segregated school as children and some did not. Many of the principals felt like they were hired to meet racial administrative team quotas or they were the token Mexican-American principal on the team. There was a mixture of English and Spanish speaking by the participants in their homes. With various depths and levels of generations of Mexican-Americans, many grew up speaking English at home, but Spanish language and Mexican culture was still a big part of the family dynamic and culture. Many of the participants were motivated to succeed in college and beyond by the racially charged remarks they experienced. Teacher ethnicity made an impact on the participants. Some of the participants had Anglo teachers help them to succeed in high school, and some did not mention having Anglo teachers help them succeed in high school. This section of the study found racial barriers both covertly and overtly in the career path of the principals, their public school experience, and during their tenure in the principalship. Race conversations are still present and found in the workplace in

American society, although they might not be as explicit as they were a few decades ago. The racial structures and power of the white dominant male population in the principalship is evident and still writing the principal narrative in this country.

Gender

Another examined theme which emerged in this study was that of the male gender and how that impacted the Mexican-American male principal's career paths and experiences. Insight into the minority principals' perceptions about their gender, their ethnic identity, and career paths was further explored in this theme. All of the Hispanic principals interviewed clearly stated that their father was a strong male role model and the primary source of income in their childhood homes growing up. Gerardo Torres reflected on his role as an adult male and educator:

There are some people in society that are going to strive to do more; they are going to push themselves harder than anyone else. Maybe I felt like I had something to prove. I grew up poverty and I didn't want to live that way. My father always worked and provided food on the table and clothes on my back.

In public school, the military option was provided to Carlos Quiroz as his only form of opportunity for education and financial independence, and he chose to have this discussion with his father to seek approval:

My dad was a huge proponent for college and when I was seventeen I graduated high school and I would need his signature to join the Marines and we did have a long discussion about it. My dad did tell me that I would go to college first and then after that I would be able to enlist myself and would not need his signature. He was hoping that college would give me a new perspective.

Each of these Mexican-American males had a strong male role model at home. The majority experienced poverty; each had an adult male and male coaches impacting their experience as a son, student athlete, and adult. All of them went on to become educational leaders in their communities.

This study found each participant had a strong male role model at home, during athletics, and a strong male professional mentor during their educator experience and quest for the principalship. The interviews clearly revealed each male principal had a strong male professional who had significantly impacted their careers in a positive manner along the way to the principalship.

A lasting impression and conversation with his mentor kept Marcos Estrada focused on the ethical standards and the importance of the principalship:

When I became an assistant principal, my male principal and I worked together on everything we did. I remember telling him that every day I worked with him I was stealing from him; he said steal isn't the right word but I know what you are talking about, but be careful because a lot of what I do may not be right, so keep only the good and throw out the bad.

The power of experience and learning on the job provided David Tellez with instructional leadership and the science and the art of school leadership:

My mentor principal had been principal at the middle school for 18 years, and whatever I had picked up as a graduate student I probably set aside because the training was done in the trenches. He was able to manage the instructional programs and the day to day of the campus and his knowledge and experience helped in my training.

The influence of these male principals shaped the Mexican-American male principal careers of these seven men.

Cultural Wealth

The principals discussed the value and importance of the cultural wealth in their families and communities they received during their educational career paths. A strong supportive nuclear family was mentioned by seven out of seven Mexican-American male principals in this study.

Marcos Estrada reflected on his own nuclear and extended family experience and the impact it had on his own education career path:

My mom and dad, they were always reading to us when we were kids. My grandfather taught me math. When I started school I could count to forever so, basically, it started at home. It was always expected of us that we were going to go to college. My mom always told me that if I went to school, the others would follow. She made sure that education was always important to us.

The verbal encouragement and constant support for education and success impacted Hector Venegas. It is the type of information he continues to share today:

I would say my parents were always very supportive and encouraging as well as my siblings. I never had anybody at home tell me not to finish my education. Everyone was very supportive. They were always encouraging in everything that I ever did. I think it all comes down to the adjustment of cultures. Principals need to have more cultural classes because of where the candidates are coming from. We now have a large portion of Hispanic parents who are pushing their kids to go to college; you are going to get kids from the top of the culture and get kids from the lower ends of the economic culture. You have to adjust.

Extended family and community support was another finding of this study which is part of the cultural capital and network all of the principal participants. Cultural wealth was part of the family legacy and impacted career and education decisions.

Gerardo Torres stated that the pursuit of the American dream and Mexican-American cultural wealth were both part of the support he experienced in his extended family network:

My grandfather worked hard all of his life. Growing up he was the one that I would always hear lecturing me on the importance of an education. “You need to get an education, you need go to college, and you don’t need to work as hard as I do.” For as long as I can remember, I heard that speech over and over. I did not appreciate that speech until the day I received my bachelor’s degree.

Ben Gomez shared his extended network, which included a host of individuals and also those often marginalized, like the school custodians:

People in the community were hoping that I would become a principal. Leaders in the community encouraged me to stick in there and become a principal. Members of my school community, such as a custodian at one campus, told me I was smart enough to become a principal and I should do it.

Overwhelmingly, all of the principals interviewed explained how extended and nuclear family, along with members of the community, shared forms of cultural wealth and encouragement to propel them toward the principalship.

Mexican-American Voices and the Future of the Principalship

The principals interviewed shared their professional thoughts and experiences on the necessary knowledge to be a successful principal in Texas. Seven out of seven mentioned how a deeper understanding of the cultural backgrounds of their students and their families would assist them on the job as a principal. Ben Baca commented and provided his thoughts on this issue:

I think it all comes down to the adjustment of cultures. Principals need to have more cultural classes because of where the candidates are coming from. We now have a large portion of Hispanic parents who are pushing their kids to go to college; you are going to get kids from the top of the

culture and get kids from the lower ends of the economic culture. You have to adjust.

Marcos Estrada added to the dispositions needed by school principals and the expertise of school programs:

More cultural awareness classes should be taught. It is important for educators to know about the various cultures with which they will be dealing. Prospective administrators should learn about cultures and parent relationships, cultural curriculum, laws, budgets, ESL populations, special education, and other specialty programs.

This study focused on questions regarding the principals' perceptions of the impact of cultural wealth in their backgrounds, which made it possible for them to obtain the position of principal in the state of Texas. Elements of cultural wealth regarding ethnic background, gender, and cultural capital were recognized and scrutinized by all of the participants. Results from follow up interviews, time spent with the candidates, the researcher's reflexive journal and notes, peer reviewers, and numerous follow up phone conversations were used to triangulate the qualitative data. The voices of the Mexican-American male principals are congruent with and further support Yosso's (2005) earlier work. Cultural wealth is an important factor in a person's life and their personal and professional success.

Discussion of Results

This study is significant as it frames the critical conversation on how cultural wealth and capital is important in the development and sustainability of educational leaders in this country. Critical race conversations and topics of the impact of cultural wealth among practicing principals has been overlooked by vast numbers of researchers

in educational leadership due to its intangible and uncomfortable nature. The findings of this study are central to informing educational leaders, policy-makers, and those in charge of principal preparation programs of the conversations which impact the principalship today and way into the next census. A tremendous opportunity is present to foster the growth of Mexican-American male educational leaders in our schools and communities. Stifling critical race conversations in the principalship maintains the status quo of the position and continues to impact the development of principals and the students they serve.

The conversations of race in education and educational leadership continue to exist. To ignore them is to camouflage the difficult critical conversations of race and ethnicity still present in the hiring process of principals, whether to meet or fill a diversity quota or reach certain populations and communities. The cultural capital of principals must be taken into account as part of the skills and knowledge necessary to be transformational leaders.

Racial barriers and obstacles still play significant roles in our schools. Manifested in either covert or overt ways, racial conversations influence school leadership practices; they continue to be informed and driven from a dominant perspective. Being told you could not be college educated or be a professional because you were of Mexican descent motivated these seven principals to overcome racial, cultural, and professional obstacles placed in their paths. Strong family ties and financial responsibilities were cultural components of early career paths. The participants gained comfort from these connections and were the driving support for the Mexican-American principals to face the dominant white conversation in higher education and public schools. In theory,

governmental entities and their policies do not overtly engage in discriminatory practices. The reality for the principals in their career paths and practice is that the interpretation and practices around current policies allow for race, ethnicity, and culture to negatively impact decision making.

Socio-economic status was only one of the many obstacles these individuals faced. It added to the challenge, but it was not the defining factor nor did it deter them from becoming principals. Socio-economic factors provided a strong work ethic and family ties as the principals in this study worked to afford schooling when not in class. The social injustice faced during their schooling and career path was flipped into positive energy and cultural resistance which propelled these individuals to overcome racial conversation and marginalization. With a low socio-economic status, no college readiness, their cultural wealth ignored, and no school guidance, these men, like many students of Mexican descent today, were set up for failure. Their realities might have prevented them from obtaining the principalship. Instead, their cultural wealth, their resistance, male role models, community, and extend family support pushed them to succeed.

The findings from this study show that having a strong male role model in the home to emulate assisted these men in developing their leadership qualities. Having a strong nuclear family home, and interactions and support from both parents, helped these young males reach their potential. Strong professional male role models provided the Mexican-American male principals professional patterns to follow. All of participants interviewed affirmed they were influenced by male coaches. Coaches in their schools

served as role models during their adolescent years. Strong male role models instilled discipline, leadership, and aspirations of success in their personal and professional lives.

The various forms of cultural wealth discussed by participants illustrated a strong nuclear family lead to overcoming obstacles and having support to advance in society. Extended family support was a positive factor identified in this study. This type of cultural wealth is not harnessed by schools or in the principalship. The principals in this study demonstrated how their own community support was a crucial factor in creating principals. This type of network can be harnessed to further create leaders in our communities. All of the Mexican-American males in this study had a support network with at least one person who encouraged them to get an education. The Spanish language and heritage of the participants, along with being bilingual, was another form of cultural wealth that assisted the Mexican-American males in obtaining their positions.

Implications for Further Research

There are numerous proposals for further research identified. This research identified seven Mexican-American male principals' perspectives as instruments to define the cultural wealth utilized during their career path to reach the position of the principal. First, the findings of this study help current educational leaders and policy-makers become more aware of the importance of facilitating cultural conversation and racial conversation with the increased numbers of Mexican-American male principals. A single study of seven Mexican-American male principals in one state does not provide a complete view of this issue. A much broader study of Mexican-American male principals across the southwestern United States needs to be conducted in order to obtain the practices in a more regional view of this issue. A nationwide study of this topic

should be undertaken to gain a national perspective on the impact, experiences, challenges, and dispositions of Mexican-American male principals.

Secondly, there are few studies that investigate the cultural wealth of principals and how this phenomenon can produce and support a more diverse and inclusive principalship across the state and the country. Future qualitative and quantitative studies would be appropriate to further study the implications of Critical Race Theory in the principalship. Topics of cultural wealth, cultural, and social capital in the development and creation of Mexican-American male and female educational leaders will add to the body of knowledge. The significant increase in the population growth of Hispanics across the country merits these topics to be further investigated.

Further research is needed on how institutions, such as public schools and colleges, can facilitate the cultural wealth of these underrepresented groups. Public institutions need to publicize the need for qualified educational leaders from diverse backgrounds. Cultural wealth needs to be at the center of a publicity campaign that encourages minority students to become educational leaders in order to give back to their communities.

It is a recommendation of this study that the nature of cultural wealth be further studied; as a global society, the increase of its use in the principalship will impact and develop more inclusive school environments. Additional research must be conducted on the various types of cultural wealth in educational leadership and how it can be harnessed by communities in order to assist them in creating educational leaders from their own ranks. The results of these studies must be shared with parents and community leaders on a continuous basis. As community demographics shift, the need to place additional

Mexican-American male principals in school districts with an identified need will be more prevalent.

It is important to identify the methods and dispositions toward Mexican-American males to enhance the recruitment and retention efforts of school districts and preparation programs. The student body in the field of education is changing and so must the ideas and thinking of the leadership to help guide minority males into the paths of educational leadership. Studies must be conducted in examine how to get more Mexican-American males to join the profession of education to increase the pool for Mexican-American male principal candidates.

Lastly, more studies need to be conducted on the barriers that Mexican-American males face in their pursuit and retention of the principalship position. These types of studies can inform policy-makers, superintendents, and educational leaders on the types of racial and real obstacles that Mexican-American males overcome.

Relationship to Theory

Cultural wealth does impact and affect the number of principals that a society produces. Critical Race Theory and its application in educational leadership is an important and missing topic in the field. Critical Race Theory is an intellectually and politically dedicated undertaking in American legal scholarship that studies race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The cultural wealth first and second generation Mexican-American males have and bring to their communities must be harnessed as the demographic shifts in the country, along with the growing Latino populations across the United States, position them in the leadership pipeline. The application of Critical Race

Theory in educational leadership is a relatively new field of study and merits continued exploration to transform the mindset and direction of the principalship.

Race conversations continue to exist in this country and they cannot be ignored. If race is an issue that is ignored, then it has a tendency to fester. In Texas, the white race is rapidly becoming a minority in many communities but still holds the political power and privilege to make decisions which directly affect the Mexican-American majority. CRT demands that racism and race conversations be acknowledged and discussed in an open forum. Policy-makers cannot make decisions behind closed doors in the “good old boy system” without listening to the educational stakeholders that it impacts. Those who promote Critical Race Theory reason that affirmative action approaches and procedures should be utilized in order to level the hiring field and encourage social justice (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

CRT is a concept not discussed with regard to the knowledge base of the principalship. This framework and topic must be discussed by those who study educational leadership. This research area needs to be examined from a strength based perspective. It is essential for educational leaders to acknowledge the importance of their own cultural wealth and of the cultural wealth brought to the school setting. A cultural wealth framework provides the lens that shifts away from the deficit view of minority populations and instead it emphasizes an array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed by marginalized groups that often go unrecognized (Yosso, 2005). Cultural wealth is a prevalent facet found in schools with most ethnic groups. School leaders in this study harnessed their familial, cultural, and social capital to advance their education, overcome marginalization, and successfully complete the pathway to the

principalship. School leaders in various roles and contexts will not accomplish as much in moving their schools forward if they do not acknowledge, harness, and utilize the wealth and culture of their communities.

In the United States, no important conversation is held without bringing up the issue of race. Any document that is processed for the federal government, insurance forms, school forms, and school data all have an ethnicity survey for the individual to identify his or her racial status. It is human nature to sort and categorize people into groups. School principals deal with this on a constant basis. With shifting demographics and cultural changes in schools and leadership as a catalyst, Dimmick and Walker (2005) advocate the importance for the state of Texas to have a varied group of principal aspirants to meet the increased demands of diversity. This study views the racial issue of school leadership through the lens of CRT, a strength based framework where cultural wealth can be harnessed for positive change.

CRT is a reflective process. It makes an individual seek out their core values about a deeply humanistic issue. Race is an issue many societies have struggled with over the years. If racism is not addressed or dealt with in the proper manner and respect it deserves, it can quickly erode a society's moral and ethical code.

This study advocates for the important cultural alignment and congruent dispositions between school leadership and the campus demographics as they impact student success. Pierre Bourdieu's (1979) work, *The Inheritors*, clearly outlines how, when the cultural capital of the home is lined up with that of the school, students reap the benefits from this advantage, which seem normal to them and their parents. Bourdieu

further states that students who require this alignment are not academically deficient but in need of an alignment of curriculum and culture.

This study also advocated for the alignment of students' cultural wealth and the schools' leadership. To be successful in a global economy and in the future, it will be critical for Texas to have cultural alignment between Texas districts' demographics, our schools majority stakeholders, and campus leadership teams. The inclusion of Mexican-American families, their communities, and a holistic paradigm centered on values, identities, and the cultural wealth of this population is important to the development of our country and virtues of citizenship.

This study strongly advocates for cultural alignment of school leadership and student body to help close the achievement gap. The achievement gap in the United States is highly correlated with the socio-economic status of students, which denotes that student prosperity and achievement are correlated. This further leads to one of the main causes of the achievement gap, which is social disparity and the associated cultural capital differences (English & Pappa, 2011). It is essential that school leaders help to facilitate the cultural match between themselves and their students.

A final argument for this study is to utilize cultural wealth to align leadership with student demographics to further promote equity and social justice. The philosophy of social justice needs to be adhered to facilitate the success of all students. The philosophy of social justice is that education is a public service and a social guarantee and a right to all children to further opportunity and equity. Social justice in the field of educational leadership demands that education should identify and value the major differences in cultural identity and group experiences that put some children and their families at the

fringes of society. Subscribing to social justice and cultural alignment of leadership would help to remove social barriers and work to eliminate them (English & Pappa, 2011).

Limitations

In research, there were certain unmanageable factors that were acknowledged as limitations. Therefore, a limitation of the study is that the researcher exhibited no control over and possibly had an adverse impact on the findings of this research project. The honesty of the principals answering the interview questions cannot be controlled, as some people were uncomfortable discussing race and the principalship. The role of the interviewer, as a white male representing the dominant view in educational leadership while interviewing Mexican-American males, was also a limitation. This study contained several limitations that may make it difficult to replicate. The study was limited to a single group of principals in the state of Texas. The experiences and opinions of this group of seven Mexican-American male educational leaders cannot represent all Mexican-American male principals. The context of each school, community, and the contextual role of the principal could not completely explain the phenomenon of cultural wealth.

Recommendations for Practice

This study examined the perception of cultural wealth and its affect upon the career path of seven Mexican-American male principals in the state of Texas. This discussion on recommendations for practice is completely conjecture but will provide a blueprint for methods that policy-makers can consider when wrestling with the diversity,

direction, and future of minority principal candidates. The study will help to add to the research base about Mexican-American male principals.

First, school districts need to identify, align, and increase the ways cultural wealth of minority groups can impact the creation of community and civic leaders. This study revealed that high school guidance counselors and coaches have influence over the career paths chosen by Mexican-American male students. School districts and regional service centers should establish mentoring and recruitment programs that actively recruit Mexican-American male principal candidates. This research highlighted the non-existence of formal minority recruiting programs for Mexican-American male principals or Latino/a principals in the state of Texas. This study also uncovered the importance of educational leaders and their understanding of their own cultural wealth and that of their students. School districts must establish systemic programs that constantly train principals and staff in cultural competency that match the students' demographics and their needs to school policies and conversations.

Regarding these findings, it is imperative that principal preparation programs make cultural training and comprehension regarding the groups in Texas a major part of the certification programs process. These programs should develop internships that expose and provide culturally diverse experiences to aspiring principals. These internships would give aspiring principals critical and relevant cultural experience to sustain the job. Internships enable perspective principals the opportunity to learn the importance of cultural competence regarding the operations of a school district. This study illuminated the barriers that Mexican-American male principals faced on their journey to the principalship in the state of Texas. Principal preparation programs can

utilize the findings of this study to create policies and procedures that capitalize upon the cultural wealth of aspiring Mexican-American males and those of other minority groups striving to become principals.

It is imperative that principals understand their own cultural background and acknowledge their privilege and dominant perspective in their personal narratives to respect and recognize the importance of other cultural groups. Principals must be cognizant of the importance of understanding the culture wealth of their students in order to serve them at a higher level. Principals must listen to the past and future voices shaping their communities; these narratives and experiences are valuable resources to the educational leadership field.

Researcher's Reflection on Practice

This section contains a reflection from the researcher's reflexive journal on how the researcher's professional practices have been influenced and changed because of the critical race discourse and findings of this study. The researcher's story is reviewed here in order to enlighten the reader about the researcher's own biases, experiences, and perspectives in educational leadership. The researcher placed himself in the center of the discussions of race and the principalship. All of the data was interpreted through the lens of the researcher, a white male. It is imperative that the readers know the researcher's journey and how this study has impacted his professional practice.

The researcher has 25 years of experience in education with 16 years in educational leadership. The researcher grew up white and middle class in a small West Texas town with a strong Mexican-American culture and presence. He has been described as above average height with an athletic build. The town the researcher grew

up in had a population of about 60% Mexican-American and 38% white; there were two percent or less black and Asian-Americans. All of the data regarding race and ethnicity were analyzed through the perceptions, experiences, and dispositions of the researcher and his own existing racial paradigm and the growth Critical Race Theory provided.

The school that the researcher attended was completely integrated, but the different ethnic groups lived in different sections of town. The researcher was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico and moved to Texas at an early age. Neither of the researcher's parents were college graduates and his father was a first generation American. The researcher's family was middle class with an average income. Every year during his childhood the researcher spent the school year in Texas; when school was released for the summer, the researcher's family immediately left for Chicago. In Chicago, the researcher lived a different life which exposed the researcher's family to different ethnic and cultural groups. In Chicago, the researcher was exposed to numerous friends who were first generation Americans and had come from various parts of Europe, with languages in Russian, Croatian, Italian, Czechoslovakian, Yiddish, and included many others. As an adult, the researcher spent several weeks each year in Albuquerque, which exposed him to different cultures. While spending numerous hours in New Mexico, the researcher grew to appreciate the many different Native-American cultural groups and their beliefs.

Education was always an important issue in the home of the researcher. The researcher was the youngest of three children who were all expected to go to college. The researcher was an athlete in high school who was influenced by his male coaches. The researcher graduated from a mid-sized regional university in 1985 and married his high

school sweet heart. The researcher taught economics and government to high school seniors for nine years. He was hired as an assistant principal the same year his son was diagnosed with neuroblastoma. The researcher spent several months living in Houston while his son was being treated for cancer. Treatment was ongoing for nearly two years, and his son recently graduated from high school. The time spent in Houston exposed the researcher to the great number of cultural groups in Texas and made the researcher further aware of the concept of globalization. The researcher worked for a strong Mexican-American male principal named Mr. Rios, who in essence became his mentor. While working with Mr. Rios, the researcher noticed what a positive role model he was for students. In a parent meeting concerning discipline with Mexican-American parents, Mr. Rios was being very strict about enforcing discipline for their son who was acting up and had been a problem on numerous occasions. The mother called Mr. Rios a “coconut.” It seemed to have no effect on Mr. Rios. After the meeting, the researcher asked him what she meant by that comment and he said, “Brown on the outside, white on the inside.” After two years, Mr. Rios got a job offer to go back into the classroom and coach baseball. This experience provided the opportunity and space for reflection upon the additional cultural pressure that is placed on Mexican-American principals. While working with Mr. Rios, the researcher realized what a great role model he was for Hispanic students. It was at this time the researcher realized the state of Texas could benefit from more Mexican-American male role models.

As principal, the researcher formed a team that brought the campus to an exemplary academic status and kept the campus at a high performance level until 2008. The researcher worked in the school for eleven years before working at a Regional

Education Service Center conducting staff development for campus leaders for three years before becoming a superintendent. These are only some of the experiences that have provided the researcher with a unique view of the principalship and its multi-faceted nature.

This study impacted the researcher's professional practice during this process. It provided the researcher a greater and richer understanding of the undisclosed and undercurrent conversations in the selection process for school principals. As a practitioner in the field, the researcher has a greater understanding and value for cultural wealth and values the important role it plays in recruiting and retaining principals. The researcher has utilized, and will continue to capitalize upon, his understanding of cultural wealth to support and retain Mexican-American male principals. The results of this study have impacted the researcher and given him a better understanding of the Mexican-American male administrator, hence, as a superintendent, giving the researcher a deeper understanding and a broader perspective on Mexican-American males and how they can serve and be an asset to school districts. The knowledge of cultural wealth gained through this study enabled the researcher to maximize student achievement by training principals to practice cultural leadership alignment. As a scholar, practitioner, and researcher, this superintendent had realized cultural perspectives for Mexican-American male principals throughout the regions of Texas have presented both strengths and weaknesses, struggles and successes, and is a vital component to their success as educational leader.

Summary

The intent of the study was to examine the ways in which Mexican-American males were exposed to race conversations during their careers as principals. Critical Race

Theory and cultural wealth were used to frame and examine how these seven Mexican-American males obtained the position of principal. Understanding the various forms of cultural wealth presented by the participants warrants educators to become more inclusive; this benefits students, teachers, parents, fellow educators, and principals to engage, align, and connect with their communities. Future studies have an obligation to continue uncovering the impact race has on principals and their practice and conversations in the principalship. The continued exploration of cultural wealth facets in educational leadership will make a contribution to the knowledge base in educational leadership and support the development of principals who are currently in the minority.

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Appendix A

IRB Proposal

Researcher's Name's:

PI: Valle, Fernando; Co-PI: Horak, John

Proposed Title:

The Career Paths and Cultural Capital of Mexican-American Male Principals: A Critical Race Discourse on the Journey Toward the Principalship

Section

Narrative

I. Rationale

While a great deal of research exists on the career paths of Latino superintendent aspirants only a small amount of studies exist on the career paths of Latino principals (Rueda, 2002, Gonzalez, 2008). A study of the literature illustrates that the majority of studies on the principalship focus on the viewpoint of the White male. Institutions of higher learning will continue to struggle in recruiting and training minority principal candidates without a greater understanding of the social construct that aids these candidates in their quest to become principals (Ortiz, and Marshall, 1988). A greater understanding of the aspects of the "cultural capital" that assists these male principal aspirants on their journeys as school leaders is needed if we are to increase the numbers of Mexican-American principals (Yosso, 2006). In the State of Texas White principals make up 68.2% of the principal population (National Education Statistics, 2008). Among children ages 17 and younger the number of Latino children grew by 39% during the last decade (Pew Research Center, 2011). In the state of Texas 40 years ago the state was largely rural and white, 40 years in the future the state will be largely Hispanic and urban. The population of Mexican-American students is proliferating and this brings about the need for additional principals. This requirement for additional principals means that there is an additional need for Mexican-American principals to help meet the need of this growing segment of the population. This study will help identify the barriers that Mexican-American principals face in obtaining the position of principal in the state of Texas.

Scholars argue that additional research is needed that is informed by theoretical concepts such as diversity and culture (Young, Crow, Murphy & Ogawa, 2009). The questions that will guide this study are: 1) What career paths led you to the principalship? 2) In what ways do internal and external motivational factors influence Mexican-American males to become school principals? 3) How does race and racial group membership enter and structure the journey toward the principalship for Mexican-American males? 4) What forms of “cultural and social capital” facilitate Mexican-American males to become school principals?

II. Subjects

Population: The population of participants for the proposed study will be Mexican-American public school principals from the state of Texas. The criterion for selection is 1) the participants are currently in the role of public school principal in the state of Texas and 2) self-identify as a Mexican-American.

Recruitment Method: Participants for the proposed study will be recruited by both researchers (PI & Co-PI) involved in this study from the state of Texas.

- a.) The PI’s conducting this study acquires email addresses and contact information for potential participants from public school websites.
- b.) The PI’s will email or mail a recruitment letter for acceptance to participate (see Appendix A) with an attached post card (see Appendix B) to all principals in the state.
- c.) Potential subjects with a willingness to participate in the study can return the attached postcard. Principals that return the post card within 60 days and have checked off the boxes on the post card that a) identify them as a principal and b) self-identify as a Mexican-American, will meet the criteria for the proposed study.

- d.) The PI's will follow up with potential participants who have returned the post card. The potential participants will be contacted via e-mail and/or phone and by the PI's and will be provided with a consent letter (see Appendix C) for the participants to review and sign.
- e.) Once the consent form and has been signed and collected, the PI's will set up a date and time that is most convenient for the participants to take part in the proposed study.

III. Procedures

This research study will be based on the participants' free will to volunteer through informed consent. The participants will be provided with an explanation of the research and how the data will be collected and secured. Participants will be fully aware of their right to refuse to participate without consequence.

- a) *Data Collection:* Those who are interested in participating in the study will be provided with a consent form to review and sign. A face to face or phone interview will be set up by the PI's at the principal's convenience and choice of location. The data collected will include a (1) one hour video recorded interview session. All data and information gathered during this interview will be kept confidential by the researcher's. A follow-up telephone interview, with the participant's approval, will be scheduled at a later date and will serve to clarify prior recorded responses and extend or amend participant comments as required. The follow-up phone interview will be expected to last no longer than 30 minutes. The scheduled phone call will be made at the most convenient time for the participant. All of the information obtained in the follow up interview will be kept confidential.

- b) *Interview:* The participants will be interviewed during the 2011-2012 school year. Interview questions regarding professional and cultural experiences as self-identified Mexican-American public school principals (see Appendix D) will guide the research and jumpstart the conversation. The participants will be given the option to choose pseudo names for schools and school districts, places of work, and educators named during the interview if they so choose to the information confidential.

- c) *Data Storage:* The data collected both in initial and follow up interviews will be stored in a secure office in the College of Education building at Texas Tech University. The data will be kept under lock and key in a secure file cabinet. The video recordings will be erased and destroyed after three years in secure storage. The transcripts of the interviews will only be identified through a code number and kept under secure storage by the PI on this project. Access will be restricted and only the two Co-PI's listed on this project will have access to the data.

IV. Adverse Events and

Liabilities:

Since there are no risks beyond those of everyday life, no liability plan is offered.

V. Consent: See Appendix D

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter

Dear Colleague,

My name is Fernando Valle and I am currently involved in collecting data for a research study in Educational Leadership on **principals** who are **self-identified Mexican-American** male for the College of Education at Texas Tech University. The purpose of this study is to collect data on the career paths of Mexican-American principals. If you feel you fit the criteria for this study, 1) a principal and 2) self-identified Mexican-American male, your career path as a Mexican-American public school principal could; assist in impacting the preparation and retention of Mexican-American male principals, further assist in the practical usability of findings from the field, and add to the limited body of knowledge on studies with Latino principals.

Your participation is voluntary and would take approximately (1) hour in the initial face to face or phone interview and (30) minutes in a follow up phone interview. Neither your name nor your organization's name will be identified in any way. Pseudonyms will be used to keep collected data confidential. When discussing any questions, you can choose not to respond if you feel uncomfortable answering and can withdraw from this study without penalty at any time. Only myself and the Co-PI, John Horak—Texas Tech University Educational Leadership doctoral student will have access to the information. You may check off both of the appropriate boxes on the self-addressed prepaid post card provided and mail it at your convenience. We will contact you with additional participation information.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me by email at f.valle@ttu.edu or by calling 956-533-9676. You may also contact the Co-PI, John Horak at john.horak@ttu.edu or at 432-978-9758.

Sincerely,

Dr. Fernando Valle
Texas Tech University
College of Education
f.valle@ttu.edu
956.533.9676

Appendix C

Post Card

- Yes, I am a self-identified **Latino/a Hispanic Principal**
- Yes, I would like to **participate** and **find out more about this study**

Thank you for your interest in our study titled The Career Paths and Cultural Capital of Mexican-American Male Principals: A Critical Race Discourse on the Journey Toward the Principalship. A member of the research team will be in contact with you very soon. If you have any questions please contact Fernando Valle at f.valle@ttu.edu or at 956-533-9676.

Thank you,

Research Team

Appendix D

Consent Form

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your interest to participate in a study entitled: The Career Paths and Cultural Capital of Mexican-American Male Principals: A Critical Race Discourse on the Journey Toward the Principalship by Dr. Fernando Valle, Assistant Professor in the Educational Leadership and John Horak, Doctoral Student in Educational Leadership in the College of Education at Texas Tech University.

The purpose of this study is to collect the career path reflections of Mexican-American public school principals. If you agree to serve as a participant, you will be asked to provide information as to your own career path experiences in obtaining the principalship position through either a face to face or phone interview scheduled at your convenience and location of choice.

The initial interview would involve a discussion surrounding a general set of interview questions to jumpstart the conversation about your career path reflections in obtaining the position of principal in the state of Texas. The interview would last no longer than one (1) Hour. With your approval, a follow up telephone interview, lasting no more than thirty (30) minutes will be used to clarify previous comments and extend or amend responses as needed. Your name will not be mentioned in this study and pseudonyms will be used to keep data collected confidential. You can choose not to respond to any questions and you may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. All data collected and responses will be kept in a secure and locked setting.

This interview is completely voluntarily. I will answer any questions you have about the study and I may be contacted at f.valle@ttu.edu or at 956.533.9676. John Horak may also be contacted at 432-940-2424 or at john.horak@ttu.edu . For questions about your rights as a subject, contact the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research Studies, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409 or you can call 806.742.3884.

For the Participant:

I am willing to participate in this research.

Name (Please Print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Preferred Contact Number
Contact

Preferred Time of Day/Day of Week for
Contact

Note: This consent form is not valid after 12/30/2012.

Appendix E

Interview Questions

1. Can you share with us your career path towards the principalship?
2. Who were the key people (family, friends or colleagues) that provided you with support as you followed the path towards the principalship?
3. Who do you consider your mentor during your quest to become a principal? Have you mentored anyone towards the principalship?
4. How did your ethnicity impact your career path toward the principalship?
5. What part of your *background enabled you to gain the position of principal?*
6. What do you feel that Mexican-American male principal candidates need to know before they interview for their first principal job?
7. Did you experienced social injustices as a candidate for the principalship?
8. In what ways would you describe your professional/personal resilience in aspiring to the principalship?
9. What do you feel educational leadership preparations programs need to know to prepare future Latino principals?
10. What were been your biggest obstacles in obtaining the principalship and how did you overcome them? Would you recommend the principalship to others?

Appendix F

Follow-Up Interview Questions

1. Were you hired in part because you were male in order to do discipline?
2. Do you define yourself as a Hispanic or Mexican-American?
3. How do you feel that you impacted your community as an educational leader?
4. How did you get your college knowledge?
5. What practices, laws, or policies are hurting Mexican-American students today?
6. How do you see the future of the principalship regarding Latino principals?
7. What generation American are you?
8. What language did you grow up speaking at home?