THE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL BUILDING AND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERS’ CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS

Equasia Yard-Jean

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THE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL BUILDING AND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERS’ CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION to the faculty of the DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP of THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION at ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

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Date Submitted 3/18/2022 Date Approved 5/17/2022

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ABSTRACT

THE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL BUILDING AND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERS’ CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS

Equasia Yard-Jean

It is important for school leaders to understand how students who identify as belonging to specific races, ethnicities, or cultures experience school climate. The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the perceptions of school leaders on their culturally responsive leadership (CRSL) practices and discipline actions. This study focused on the perceptions of 142 school leaders (Principals and Superintendents) who work in public schools in New York State. The sample consisted of school building and district leaders who work in elementary, middle, and high school settings in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

The study was conducted utilizing the Culturally Responsive School Leader (CRSL) Survey, an anonymous self-reporting school building and district leader online survey, to gather information about principal and superintendents’ perception of the CRSL practices and discipline actions in their schools and districts. This study addressed the need identified by Voight (2013) stating WestEd’s research findings suggest that addressing school-climate issues, including the gaps in how different student groups experience school climate, may be an important and complementary strategy for reducing achievement gaps. Furthermore, that nurturing school environments that are safer and
supportive for all students, and that make all students feel part of a larger community, is an important step toward education equity and a promising step in the direction of closing the racial achievement gap.

The findings revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the role of the school leader (principal or superintendent) and their perceptions of their CRSL practices and discipline actions. Findings were further explained and supported by principals and superintendents’ comments on the challenges of implementing CRSL practices and discipline actions in their schools or districts through the open-ended response on the CRSL perception survey.

Ultimately, the study serves as a resource to assist the K-12 education leadership community identify where they are on the CRSL practices and discipline actions continuum to follow actionable steps to utilize as a guide to implement in schools district wide as they work towards transformational leadership.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my children Bryce, Khalea and Cameron. Khalea I have always been proud of you and your accomplishments and I love you dearly. Keep chasing your dreams and remember always do better than your best. Thank you Bryce for your patience with mommy when you wanted to play and I was doing “homework”. Now you have all of me and I know you will do great things. Cameron, thank you for being a great bonus daughter and keep forging ahead to find your place in this world. To my husband, you got your wife back!

Finally, I dedicate this work to God for instilling in me the tenacity, strength, patience and perseverance to achieve everything I have ever wanted to accomplish and I know you have greater things in store for me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my mentor, Dr. Joan Birringer-Haig for Dr. Haig’s thoroughness, availability, guidance and phenomenal support in the writing of my dissertation. To my committee Dr. Catherine DiMartino for your enthusiasm and support for my dissertation topic and Dr. Stephen Kotok for your suggestions and support.

I would like to thank Dr. Chris Verga for answering all of my questions, offering suggestions no matter what time of night it was and being my biggest cheerleader throughout this journey.

I would also like to dedicate my dissertation to my cohort who were the most supportive group of people I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

I am grateful to my husband, Eddy Jean, for helping to hold down the fort while I worked tirelessly to meet deadlines.

Finally, I would also like to thank everyone who believed in my abilities and encouraged me when I felt like I had nothing left to give.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Hundreds of years of oppressive and dehumanizing policies and legislation were deliberately contrived to maintain power and privilege, while Jim Crow laws and other subversive forms of oppression decimated economic and education opportunities for Blacks and Hispanics (Mayfield & Wade, 2015). The Coleman Report (1966) put race and ethnicity-based achievement gaps on the national radar over 50 years ago. The report found that on national exams the average Black 12th grader placed at the 13th percentile of the score distribution in comparison to White students in math. This means that 87 percent of White 12th graders scored ahead of the average Black 12th graders. Since then, according to a Stanford University report the racial achievement gaps in the United States are narrowing and have been declining steadily and unevenly but are now significantly smaller than they were in the 1970s. However, as documented by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2015) these gaps are still very large across much of the country. In fact, the difference in standardized test scores between White and Black students currently amounts to roughly two years of education. And similar gaps exist between White and Hispanic students. According to the Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University data archive out of 100 of the largest school districts there is no large school district in the United States where Black students are both performing moderately well and are on par with White students (Reardon, 2019).

Many reasons have been proposed to explain the racial/ethnic achievement gap and the most common explanation is that it is connected to socioeconomic status (Voight,
2013). However, social psychologist cites the stereotype threat as a possible contributor wherein test takers of stigmatized racial groups worry, they may confirm stereotypes about intelligence thus perform worse due to this stress (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Another explanation suggests that minority peer groups reward disengagement or that certain racial identities do not value academic success (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2006). It also may be due in part to discrimination on the part of school staff and their subjective interpretation of student behavior (Voight, 2013). Some researchers point to the disproportionate disparity in how African American students are disciplined. Pearman et al. (2019) have documented for the first time at the national level a direct link between unequal rates of achievement and unequal rates of discipline for Black and White students: as one disparity grows or shrinks, so does the other. The study linked the achievement gap between Black and White students to the fact that Black students are punished more harshly for similar misbehavior. For example, being more likely to be suspended from school than the latter (Pearman et al., 2019).

**Statement of the Problem**

Just as there is a racial/ethnic achievement gap, there is a racial/ethnic school-climate gap which may help to explain why the gap has remained unchanged (Voight, 2013). According to Voight (2013) the gap in perceptions of the racial school climate gap is less known. However, this gap exists across schools as well as within schools that are racially diverse. Black and Hispanic students report that their schools’ climates are less positive than do White and Asian students (Reginal, 2021). In addition, Black and Hispanic staff members report less positive school climates. Staff race/ethnic differences found in reports of school climate are likely due to differences in the types of schools
African American, Latino, White and Asian staff are employed in as well as their roles within the school (Austin et al., 2010). According to Austin et al., (2010) some other explanations may be due in part that African American and Latino/Hispanic staff tend to work in schools with less resources and lower academic performance. Another explanation that African American and Latino staff were less likely than Whites and Asians to be teachers and were more likely to be other staff. Finally, staff tend to mirror the demographics of the student bodies they served.

To address the racial/ethnic school climate gap the need for ethical and racially conscious principal leadership remains fundamental to improving racial/ethnic student achievement and racial/ethnic school climate (Gustafson et al., 2020; Khalifa et al., 2016). Leithwood (1995) and many other researchers (Hannay et al., 2013; Khalifa et al., 2014; Sergiovanni, 1992) have demonstrated the deep impact superintendents and other district-level administrators can have on education and school reform (Mattingly, 2003). As schools seek to improve racial equity, school climate will play a large role because it comprises several critical qualities of the school environment such as physical and social-emotional safety and school connectedness. Education reform efforts often minimize the importance of school climate and the feelings of belonging to student achievement, but research asserts they are interrelated (Reginal, 2021).

Over the last two decades the policy and research landscapes of school leadership have experienced major shifts. According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP] (2018), in today’s schools, school leaders are under enormous pressure to ensure all students learn and create a diverse, equitable and inclusive climate. However, teachers are not equipped on how to reach diverse
populations that will meet their individual needs. It is the responsibility of the principal to lead and coach teachers so that effective culturally responsive teaching and learning takes place (NAESP, 2016). There has been a heightened policy attention to educational equity and what leaders need to know, how they spend their time, and the outcomes for the student bodies they serve (Grisom et al., 2021). In May 2021, the New York State Board of Regents adopted a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Statement for New York State Schools. As part of the work the policy statement asks school districts to consider adopting the Culturally-Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) framework created by the New York State Board of Regents.

Data collected from the National Center for Education Statistics at the US Department of Education since the 1987–88 school year shows the shifting landscape of the principalship. According to these statistics the principalship has become more female, and the principal’s level of experience has fallen especially in high need schools (Grissom et al., 2021). The data showed the proportion of novice principals increased from 19% in 1988 to 31% in 2016. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021) reports that in 2018 students of color represented more than half of public-school students (Mcfarland et al., 2018) while teacher demographics have remained stagnant. This is important because research shows that student’s race, ethnicity, and cultural background significantly influence their achievement and sense of belonging (Aceves & Orosco, 2014).

Furthermore, despite dramatic changes in the racial and ethnic composition of students, the racial and ethnic diversity in school leadership has not changed much. According to Grissom et al. (2021), principals are becoming more racially and ethnically
diverse but representation gaps with students are growing. This has created a racial and
ethic gap between principals and the students they serve. Students of color are less
likely to encounter a principal who shares their ethnicity in comparison to their white
peers (Grisom et al., 2021). From an equity perspective, principals can have important
impacts on key populations such as low-income students and students and teachers of
color by working with teachers to implement culturally responsive teaching practices and
hiring more teachers of color who would be influential for students of color (Grisom et
al., 2021).

Culturally responsive leaders nurture and maintain high-quality teaching, and
foster an inclusive community that builds on teacher, student, and family assets
(Schlagers, 2018). A positive school climate has been associated with higher levels of
student achievement (Voight, 2013). Positive school climate requires leadership roles that
border on accountability by creating and sustaining a competitive school, empowering
others to make significant decisions, providing instructional leadership and developing
and executing strategic plans. Successful school leaders should be proactive in
promoting school quality, equity, and social justice (Nunyuia et al., 2018). Clearly
expecting all students to work hard and be able to succeed is a step toward culturally
responsive high expectations (Ross, 2013).

The U. S. Departments of Justice and Education’s School Discipline Consensus
projects endorse school climate renewal as a strategy to increase student learning and
achievement, enhance school connectedness, prevent bullying and other forms of
violence (Ross, 2013). Despite the goals of Brown v. Board of Education and its intent to
equalize resources, the resources tend to follow the White students (Gooden et al., 2015).
After 50 years of federal and state litigation to improve educational opportunities for students of color, most schools attended by students of color remain racially segregated and the students still experience inequities (Gooden, 2004). School segregation for black has increased dramatically since the height of desegregation efforts in the 1980’s (Orfield, 2009). According to a report by the Civil Rights Project (Orfield et al., 2012) 74% of Black students attend non-white schools. Black students are also in economically segregated schools. Less than one in three White students (31.3%) attend a high-poverty school, compared with more than seven in 10 Black students (72.4%). (Findings on school segregation and student performance come from the National Center for Education Statistics’ National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The California Department of Education’s Safe and Supportive Schools program (Cal-S3), in collaboration with WestEd, published a series of “What Works Briefs” to assist schools in their development of initiatives related to school climate, including schoolwide programs, targeted supports, and low-cost strategies that can be implemented (Voight, 2013). The Region IX Equity Assistance Center at WestEd offers services to support schools that are interested in using school-climate improvement as a means of reducing inequality.

Leadership standards are foundational principles of leadership and can inform the work of superintendents and school boards. They communicate what is important at the school and district levels and function to serve the needs of schools in ways that are beneficial to students. The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), (2015), have incorporated an equity and cultural responsiveness standard. The standards state that effective educational leaders strive for equity and educational opportunity and
culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success. Some key indicators include treating students fairly with an understanding of each student’s cultural context, confronting and altering instructional biases of student marginalization and addressing matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

To move a school towards cultural proficiency, school leaders must build the framework through culturally responsive pedagogy, which begins with the process of critical self-reflection (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). According to Reginal (2021), school leaders should address the following issues to close the racial school climate gap:

- Ensure a safe and supportive school environment so students can learn effectively
- Ensure equity, well-being, and belonging for all students belonging to different racial communities to ensure they are not treated differently.
- Ensure they diversify the teacher’s workforce.
- Ensure they are proactive in mitigating racist actions to foster healthy school environments where children can learn without worrying if they will be treated different because of their race.

Hattie (2009) described two types of principal leadership, instructional and transformational. The results of Hattie’s meta-analysis support instructional leadership as having the greatest impact on student outcomes. Principals who are instructional leaders create safe learning climates. Common dimensions of instructional leadership found in research that had the greatest impact on student achievement included being sure that an environment conducive to learning is in place (Taylor et al., 2014).

In 2013, the WestEd Health and Human Development Program, with funding from the California Department of Education, published a report titled *The Racial School*
Climate Gap. The report summarized several research studies they conducted that examined connections between student race, achievement, and school climate. The report demonstrated that just as there is a racial achievement gap, there is a racial school climate gap. The discovery from this work identifies the existence of significant racial differences in students’ and staff experiences of school climate.

Additional research is needed to highlight the connection between staff perceptions of school climate and the racial school climate gap. Inadequate research has focused on quantitative data that uses staff perceptions of school climate by race and school level. Findings have implied there is a meaningful gap in school climate for students and staff. However, there is a lack of research that focus on the perceptions of school leaders at the school and district leaders as it relates to school climate. What remains to be explored is where should school climate interventions be targeted to reduce inequity. Also, how does culturally responsive leadership influence school climate. The current study addresses these gaps in the literature by focusing attention on the perceptions of school and district leaders on their own implementation of culturally responsive leadership practices as it relates to school climate.

According to Voight (2013), within the same building, disadvantaged minority students are not having the same school experiences as their peers. Research evidence between schools suggest that schools attended by African American and Hispanic students tend to be less safe and less supportive. The fact that students attend schools of different quality may be a contributing factor in the school climate gap. One implication is that school administrators can remedy this gap through building-level policies and
practices. The current study examines what research says about the racial/ethnic school climate gap through culturally responsive leadership in schools.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this non-experimental study was to investigate the perceptions of New York State school leaders on their culturally responsive leadership and discipline practices (CRSL). First, the study compared building leaders and district leader’s perceptions of their implementation of CRSL practices in their schools and districts. Second, the study compared school leader’s implementation of CRSL practices that affect school climate between schools with opposing demographics. Third, the study investigated the relationship between the race/ethnicity of school leaders and their implementation and demonstration of their CRSL practices.

Culturally responsive school leaders’ perceptions are defined as leaders who understand, respond incorporate, accommodate, and celebrate the entirety of the children they serve including their languages and literacies, spiritual universes, cultures, racial proclivities, behaviors, knowledges, critical thought, and appearances (Khalifa et al., 2016). Culturally responsive school leadership practices are defined as behaviors that have a direct impact on school climate, curriculum, policy, pedagogy, and student achievement (Khalifa et al., 2016).

The theoretical lenses of Transformational Leadership and Culturally Responsive Leadership guide this study. The Transformational Leadership theory along with the Culturally Responsive Leadership theory, school leaders can explore the relationship of finding ways to value the lived experiences of students of color and adopt culturally responsive teaching and leadership practices as they relate to school climate.
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Culturally Responsive School Leadership was explored by Khalifa and his colleagues (Khalifa et al., 2016) and highlights practices, actions, and policies that influence school climate, school structure and student outcomes. This framework was derived from two earlier theories culturally relevant pedagogy which was explored initially by Ladson-Billings and her colleagues (Ladson-Billings, 1992) and culturally responsive pedagogies (Gay, 1994). These theories suggest that schools should foster a culture that takes all cultures into account with their informal curricula and policies. Gay (1994) also suggests that school administrators must have similar mandates regarding the entire school culture and climate.

This framework informs us that if school leaders provide an atmosphere where students feel safe enough to be themselves then they can concentrate on learning in a culturally safe environment. This approach to education fosters acculturation rather than assimilation. In this way one’s culture is not absorbed into the dominant paradigm but merges to construct a new dynamic (Fraise & Brooks., 2015). Khalifa et al. (2016) suggests culturally responsive leadership influences the school context and addresses the cultural needs of the students, parents, and teachers. School leaders are responsible for promoting a school climate inclusive of minoritized students, particularly those marginalized within most school contexts. Khalifa’s framework supports my study as school leaders reflect on their culturally responsive behaviors as guided by the culturally responsive leadership behavior framework to determine their level of implementation of culturally responsive practices. The present research is guided by this framework as it supports school leaders using culturally responsive positive schoolwide discipline
approaches as opposed to punitive responses for Black and Hispanic Students (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005).

The Transformational Leadership Theory was introduced by Burns (1978) who stated that transformational leadership occurs when a leader engages the individuals within the organization to a higher degree of motivation. School leaders have the responsibility to create a school that is conducive to change (Engels et al., 2008).

Transformational leadership is defined as the ability to lead students and staff through a creation of values and long-term goals in order to create a positive and successful school (McCarley et al., 2014). This theory supports the research study as this theory informs how the school leader leadership actions are predictive of school climate and together these predict overall school improvement. This theory will be used to determine a school leaders’ perception of their ability to lead students and staff in creation of a positive school environment. This theory along with the Culturally Responsive Leadership framework, school leaders can explore the relationship of finding ways to value the lived experiences of students of color. School leaders can adopt culturally responsive teaching and leadership practices as it relates to school climate.

Conceptual Framework

Central to the current research study will be the connections evident in Burns’ (1978) transformational learning theory and Khalifa et al. (2015) culturally responsive leadership framework. The new movement in public schools is centered around social emotional learning with a focus on culturally relevant teaching. As a result, there is a need for culturally responsive leadership in improving school climate to coincide with the implementation of this ideology. School building leaders and school district leaders are
responsible for finding ways to close the racial/ethnic school climate gap. Leaders need to be able to reflect on their leadership behaviors and promote culturally responsive and inclusive school environments. Leaders have to engage the school community in their indigenous contexts and develop culturally responsive teachers that will have the ability to create culturally responsive classrooms.

Transformational leaders are proactive and raise the awareness of the school community in their implementation of culturally responsive practices. The leader inspires stakeholders and empowers teachers by appealing to their values and builds a team that moves beyond previously held expectations. By intrinsically motivating staff to rethink how they have done things in the past the transformational leaders are able to affect change and close the racial/ethnic school climate gap in their schools or districts as is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework Demonstrating the Theoretical Concepts, Variables, and Constructs in the Study*
Significance of the Study

It is important for school leaders to understand what a positive school climate would look and feel like for students who identify as belonging to specific races, ethnicities, or cultures in order to effectively affect school climate for all students. The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) standards (2015) were revised to recognize the central importance of human relationships and stress the importance of academic rigor as well as the support and care required for students to excel. School leaders are called to act ethically and promote equity and cultural responsiveness. Fifty percent of research mainly focuses on the student perspectives of middle and high school students, as it relates to school climate. Twenty-three percent of studies focused on teacher perspectives and 17% on multiple perspectives (teachers, parents, and students) (Wang & Degol, 2015). This data reinforces the need to fill the gap and examine the perspectives of school leaders as it relates to school climate and students of color.

This study will help to improve practice by providing school leaders an opportunity to reflect and become aware of where they are on the culturally responsive continuum and identify starting points in their schools and districts to address inequitable practices. The current study will help to improve policy by collecting data on school leaders and their implementation of culturally responsive practices as well as identify what percentage of school leaders perceive themselves to be culturally responsive. With this data, the researcher can determine what school leaders need to become culturally responsive in their schools. This will help us target issues that may contribute to negative school climates by students of color.
Connection With Social Justice

For the first time in U.S. history, a majority of K-12 public school pupils are students of color (Cordova-Combo et al., 2016). The need for school leaders to self-reflect and create culturally responsive and inclusive environments for Black and Hispanic students can serve as motivation for transformative action to meet this change in demographics. The current study focuses on the areas of equity, inclusion, belonging and culturally responsive practices as important areas in closing the racial/ethnic school climate gap. These practices challenge the barriers and current educational practices that exist and improve the practices of school building and school district leaders to ensure educational equity for all students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the current study’s focus:

RQ1. To what extent does a school leaders’ race, gender, and years of experience as a school leader influence their perceptions of their overall implementation scores of their CRSL practices?

H₀ - There will be no relationship in race, gender, and years of experience in school leadership and school leaders’ overall perception scores of their implementation of CRSL practices.

H₁ - There will be a relationship in race, gender, and years of experience in school leadership and school leaders’ overall perception scores of their implementation of CRSL practices.
RQ2. What is the relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and school leaders' perception scores of their (a) Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices, and (b) Culturally Responsive Leadership Discipline Actions?

Ho: (2a) There will be no relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and a school leaders' perception scores of their (a) Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices

H1 – There will be a relationship between a school’s race/ethnicity balance and a school leaders’ perception scores of their (a) Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices.

H0: (2b) There will be no relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and a school leaders' perception scores of their (b) Culturally Responsive Leadership Discipline Actions.

H1 – There will be a relationship between a school’s race/ethnicity balance and a school leaders’ perception scores of their (b) Culturally Responsive Leadership Discipline Actions.

RQ3. How do school building leaders and school district leaders compare in their perceptions of their culturally responsive practices scores: (a) critical self-awareness; (b) develops culturally responsive teachers; (c) promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment; and (d) engages students, parents an indigenous contexts)?

H0- There will be no significant differences in the perception scores of school leaders’ culturally responsive leadership practices when comparing school building and school district leaders.
H₁- There will be a significant difference in the perception scores of school leaders’ culturally responsive leadership practices when comparing school building and school district leaders.

RQ4. What differences are found in school leaders’ perceptions of their CRSL discipline actions when comparing school levels (elementary, middle school, high school, and district) and types of school communities (rural, suburban, and urban)?

H₀- There will be no significant differences in school building leaders’ perception scores of the CRSL discipline actions among school levels (elementary, middle, high school, and district).

H₁- There will be a significant difference in school building leaders’ perception scores of the CRSL discipline actions among school levels (elementary, middle, high school, and district).

H₀- There will be no significant differences in school building leaders’ perception scores of the CRSL discipline practices among types of school communities (rural, suburban, urban).

H₁- There will be a significant difference in school building leaders’ perception scores of the CRSL discipline practices among types of school communities (rural, suburban, urban).

H₀- There will be no interaction effect between school levels and types of school communities.

H₁- There will be an interaction effect between school levels and types of school communities.
Definition of Terms

*Cultural Proficiency*

Cultural Proficiency includes the policies and practices in an organization or the values and behavior of an individual, that enable the person or institution to engage effectively with people and groups who are different from them. Cultural Proficiency is a lens for examining one’s work and one’s relationships (Corwin, 2012). It is a developmental approach for addressing the issues that emerge in diverse environments (Nori-Robbins, 2005).

*Culturally Responsive Discipline*

Through ethnographic research of an ethnically diverse middle school in Phoenix, Arizona, King et al. (2006) developed a working definition of culturally responsive discipline that included programs and activities that met the behavioral needs of students through positive intervention and that alleviated the cultural conflict that can occur when educators do not fully understand and fail to integrate the cultures of their students into the school environment.

*Culturally Responsive Practices*

In culturally responsive practices the promotion of equality and difference meet the imperatives of antiracist education to suppress and eradicate racism in the environment (Mayfield & Garrison-Wade, 2015).

*Racial/Ethnic School Climate Gap*

The racial/ethnic school climate gap is the existence of significant racial differences in students’ and staff experiences of school climate (Voight, 2013).
School Climate

School climate is a broad term used to describe the school environment. There are several recurring themes: (a) order, safety, and discipline; (b) teaching and learning supports; (c) social relationships; and (d) school connectedness (Voight, 2013). Although it is difficult to provide a concise definition for school climate, most researchers agree that it is a multidimensional construct that includes physical, social, and academic dimensions (Loukas, 2007). The National School Climate Center (2021) defines school climate as the quality and character of school life. It is the result of the interpersonal connections among learners, families, teachers, and school administrators (Amedome, 2018).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is the process by which a leader fosters group or organizational performance beyond expectation by virtue of the strong emotional attachment with his or her followers combined with the collective commitment to a higher moral cause (Diaz-Saenz, 2011).
CHAPTER 2

Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study and the research questions that will guide the study. The current research investigates whether race/ethnicity, level of leadership, gender, and years of experience and/or the interaction between those four variables influence school building and school district leader’s implementation of culturally responsive practices. The purpose of this study was to investigate if there is a significant variation in the perceptions of school leader’s implementation of culturally responsive practices in predominantly Black/Hispanic schools vs. White/Asian schools. The second purpose of the study was to investigate school leaders’ implementation of culturally responsive practices in their approaches to discipline.

Chapter two will provide an understanding of the theoretical framework and introduce the reader to a review of the related literature. The chapter will conclude with a statement of how the present study contributes to the knowledge base on the implementation of CRSL practices. In the following chapter, the methods and procedures used to conduct the current research study will be explained.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study includes both the transformational leadership theory and the culturally responsive leadership framework. Together the theory and the framework will guide the study.
Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory was introduced by Burns (1978), who defined transformational leadership as a person’s ability to engage others for the purpose of building motivation. This theory is fundamentally different from other theories of leadership by its focus on the transformation of the followers into leaders and moral agents. Unlike the earlier theories of leadership, which did not include the ethical component, Burns’ theory is (1978) connecting transformational leadership with higher-order values perceives morality as a crucial component. During the mutual interaction between transformational leaders and followers, the level of morality and motivation are both raised (Burns, 1978). By describing the characteristics of transformational leadership using moral concepts, Burns actually defines this style of leadership as a moral leadership. It can be concluded that behavior is directed by the inherent system of moral values so that transformational leadership can be seen as a leadership style that leads to positive transformations and changes in the followers through the impact on the structure and strategy of the organization (Allen et al., 2015).

Leithwood (1994) studied the effects of transformational leadership on school restructuring and the findings supported the belief that transformational leadership strongly contributes to overall school improvement. Transformational leadership has the potential to greatly impact the organizational climate of a campus (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The school leader is considered one of the most influential factors in the development of the quality and character of a school (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Many schools’ organizational structures are greatly influenced by the principal. Assessing the impact of an individual leader on his or her school’s climate has become a crucial area of
focus (McGuigan & Hoy; Cohen et al., 2009). School climate is often considered the “heart and soul” of a campus (Freiberg & Stein, 1999, p. 11). There is a disparity between the research on school climate and actual school practice (Cohen et al., 2009) and a definitive need for more research in this area in order to constructively impact student outcomes.

Transformational leadership is comprised of four dimensions, which are idealized influence (attribute and behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Leithwood (1994) contributed to the conceptualization of transformational leadership in educational environments. It has been found that transformational leadership consistently predicted the willingness of teachers to devote extra effort and change their teaching practices or attitudes. According to Allen et al. (2015), the most consistent findings associated transformational leadership with organizational learning, organizational effectiveness, and organizational culture. Transformational leaders of the school focus on the restructuring of schools/classrooms and improving conditions in the school.

Transformational leaders are models of integrity and fairness, set clear goals, have high expectations, provide support and recognition, stir the emotions and passions of people, and get people to look beyond their self-interest to reach for the improbable (Pierce & Newstorm, 2008; Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership focuses on social values and appears in times of distress and change (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders have four global transformative skills, and as such, the school leader is able to: identify and sustain a vision of the school; stimulate the intellect of school stakeholders as this can only be accomplished by a person who knows the educational process of a school,
use a combination of interpersonal and technical skills; and demonstrate individual
consideration for others (Manium et al., 2017).

**Culturally Responsive Leadership Framework**

The culturally responsive school leadership framework was first developed by
Khalifa et al., (2015). The framework was based on Ladson-Billings (1995) culturally
relevant and Gay’s (1994) culturally responsive pedagogies. According to Khalifa (2016),
culturally responsive school leaders are responsible for promoting a school climate
inclusive of underrepresented groups of students, particularly those marginalized with
most school contexts. More recent terminology like culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris,
2012) includes elements of ongoing practices that address a continuing need and a
changing demographic. According to Khalifa et al., (2016) principals have served as
transformational leaders, wherein they have successfully promoted environments with
strong relationships of trust, vision, goals, and a sense of community.

The framework focuses on four major strands of CRSL behaviors. Khalifa et al.
(2016) define these strands as follows (a) **critical self-awareness** which is an awareness
of self and his/her values, beliefs, and/or dispositions when it comes to serving children
of color; (b) **culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation** in which the role of
the school leader is ensuring that teachers are and remain culturally responsive; (c)
**culturally responsive and inclusive environments** where school leaders must actually
promote a culturally responsive school context with an emphasis on inclusivity and the
ability of the school leader to leverage resources to identify and foster a culturally
affirming school environment; and (d) **engaging students and parents in community
contexts** is the ability of the school leader to engage students, families and communities
in culturally appropriate ways. This framework, along with the transformational leadership theory, forms the basis for the development of the Culturally Responsive School Leadership Reflection Questionnaire used in the present study.

**Other Leadership Theories**

Situational leadership theory states that effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the situation and an appropriate response, rather than a charismatic leader with a large group of dedicated followers (McClesky, 2014). Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) evolved from a task-oriented versus people-oriented leadership continuum (Bass, 2009). Situational leaders match their leadership style to the maturity level of their followers.

Transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges that occur between leaders and followers that maximize organizational and individual gains (Burns, 1978). These exchanges allow leaders to accomplish their performance objectives, motivate followers through contractual agreement, emphasize extrinsic rewards, while leaders focus on improve organizational efficiency. Transactional leadership allows followers to fulfill their own self-interest, and concentrate on clear organizational objectives (McClesky, 2014).

Most leadership reformers focus exclusively on instructional, transformational, and transactional leadership models to address the cultural needs of students (Khalifa et al., 2016). The current study extends this idea by combining transformational leadership qualities with culturally responsive leadership practices to address the needs of school leaders and teachers to engage in these practices. Furthermore, the theory and this
framework apply to the current study in that the researcher seeks a harmony between the theory and the framework whereas a school leader can affect school wide change and close the racial/ethnic school climate gap.

**Review of Related Literature**

This chapter will discuss the findings from the existing research literature base regarding culturally responsive leadership practices and discipline actions and transformational leadership. The research reviewed in this section comes from prominent literature in education theory, peer-reviewed journals, and national and state reports and websites. This chapter begins with discussion of two theoretical frameworks relevant to the study. The researcher will also discuss the combination and merging both frameworks and their implications on culturally responsive efforts by school and district leaders.

Furthermore, to elaborate on key aspects, the findings from the literature base have been divided into the following sections: Culturally Responsive Frameworks, Practices and Qualities of Culturally Responsive School Leaders, School Climate and Race, Culturally Responsive Leadership and School Climate, Transformational Leadership and School Climate, Culturally Responsive Discipline, Urban, Suburban and rural leadership. Each of the seven sections provide summaries of research studies and how each study is related to the current research, as well as the gaps in the literature are noted. The review of the related literature concludes with how the current study supports and extends the knowledge base on culturally responsive school leadership and the racial/ethnic school climate gap highlighted in the review.
Culturally Responsive Frameworks

A few frameworks have been suggested to address the cultural responsiveness of school leaders. Furman (2012) created a five-part framework of social justice leadership praxis to address both the reflective and active components recommended for a social justice leadership program which consisted of the following components Personal, Interpersonal, Communal, Systematic and Ecological. Gooden and Dantley (2012) state that a leadership preparation framework centered on race/ethnicity must consist of the following five essential ingredients: a prophetic voice, self-reflections serving as the motivation for transformative action, grounding in a critical theoretical construction, a pragmatic edge that supports praxis, and the inclusion of race language. The START (Self, Talk, Apply, Research, Time) with Race Framework (Gustafson et al., 2020), based on the works of Furman (2012) and Gooden & Dantley (2012), recognize that there is a need to advance racial/ethnic consciousness, racial/ethnic literacy, and racial/ethnic equity through intentional and purposeful practices of potential and current school leaders.

Influenced by his predecessors, Furman (2012) and Gooden & Dantley (2012) and Khalifa et al., (2016) saw the need to create a framework that would address the cultural responsiveness of school leaders. In synthesizing the literature on culturally relevant, responsive, sustaining pedagogy, Khalifa et al., (2016) developed four major strands that lay the foundation for the culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) framework. The four major strands are critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curricula and Teacher preparation, culturally responsive and inclusive school environments, and engaging students and parents in community contexts.
Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behaviors. CRSL behaviors are transformative for social justice and inclusion (Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015). They need to have an awareness of self, values beliefs, and disposition when it comes to serving children of color. The principal’s critical consciousness of culture and race really serves as a foundation to establish beliefs that undergird their practice (Khalifa et al., 2016).

Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers. According to Khalifa et al. (2016), it is the crucial role of the school leaders in ensuring that teachers are and remain culturally responsive. The school leaders must have to ability to articulate a vision that support the development and sustainment of culturally responsive teaching. Furthermore, leaders must have enough knowledge to recognize and challenge common patterns of inequities that lead to the disenfranchisement of poor urban youth. This means leaders have to be able to make difficult decisions to counsel out teachers who resist becoming culturally responsive.

Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environment. The third strand suggests that school leaders must promote a culturally responsive school with an emphasis on inclusivity. They would seek to challenge and support teachers who fell into familiar patterns of disproportionately referring minoritized student to special education or punishing students of color more severely than their white classmates for the same infractions (Skiba et al., 2002). This is where school leaders will have to have tough conversations about inequities in changing the school culture.

Engages Students Parents and Indigenous context. Khalifa et al., (2016) explains this strand highlights the ability of the school leader to engage students, families and communities in culturally appropriate ways and even advocate for community-based
issues. Creating structures that accommodate the lives of parents or creating school spaces for marginalized student identities and behaviors.

This framework supports the study because it suggests that, in order for school leaders to be culturally responsive, they must reflect and self-assess their knowledge of other cultures and their implementation of their practices in schools with students of color. The current study asks school building leaders and school district leaders to reflect on their implementation of culturally responsive practices in their schools or districts and determine where they are on the continuum so they can act and create a vision for next steps. Also, the current study will highlight the gaps in school leaders’ perceptions of their cultural responsiveness with all stakeholders of the school community.

**Practices and Qualities of Culturally Responsive School Leaders**

There is little guidance for school leaders on how they should help teachers work with students from cultural backgrounds different from their own (Ladson-Billings, 2002). The increasing diversity in schools calls for new approaches to educational leadership in which leaders exhibit culturally responsive organizational practices, behaviors, and competencies. Madhlangobe and Gordan (2012) conducted a qualitative case study to examine and describe how a culturally responsive school leader performed her leadership roles in a culturally and linguistically diverse high school. A panel of experts on equity and social justice nominated eight school leaders who were judged to be culturally responsive. Four of the school leaders, two elementary school assistant principals, one elementary school principal, and a high school assistant principal, agreed to participate in the preliminary study for the purpose of selecting a single culturally responsive leader for the primary study. Based on the preliminary study, an assistant
principal of a public high school in Central Texas, was chosen as the school leader for the primary study.

The researchers observed teachers in their classrooms, conducted multiple interviews with teachers and parents, and gathered artifacts from administrative offices, classrooms, and common areas. The authors found that the assistant principal (A.P.) practiced culturally responsive leadership on three levels: personal, environmental, and curricular. The A.P. culturally responsive leadership included six themes: caring, building relationships, being persistent and persuasive, being present and communicating, modeling cultural responsiveness, and fostering cultural responsiveness among others.

In more diverse contexts, we have observed emergent new ways of leading that are responsive to socio-political realities and serve to benefit larger numbers of learners as well as those students who have been systemically underserved over time (Santamaria, 2014). Santamaria and Santamaria (2012) completed a comparative multiple case study about the culturally responsive leadership practices implemented from indigenous leaders from the United States and New Zealand. The purpose of the study stated that rapidly changing demographics in the United States, Australasia and other similar countries demand innovative, complex, visionary, collaborative, culturally grounded and immanently future focused leadership practices. The study serves to engage dialogue while providing a platform to explore the intersectional, cross-cultural, and collaborative elements underlying applied critical leadership. Applied critical leadership (ACL) offers an example of culturally responsive leadership in education where the practice is drawn from positive attributes of a leader’s identity (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012).
The researchers informed their study by using data from prior research investigation of indigenous leadership practices and practices of leaders of color in urban settings in New Zealand and the United States, studies of the leadership practices of leaders of color promoting social justice and equity and an inquiry to better understand the leadership practices of Māori and Pasifika principals in NZ. Researchers drew data collected over the course of three years in the US and NZ based on common experiences and shared oppressions of leaders of color in both countries (i.e., interviews, surveys, observations, documents written by participants).

Findings from the research is that by way of sustainable culturally responsive leadership, leaders can counteract educational injustice through applied critical leadership (ACL) in a few ways.

1. Leaders can enter leadership spaces with the willingness to learn the cultural, linguistic, and socio-political context surround the learning environment.

2. Second, leaders can defer and seek participation and accountability with established leadership (e.g., elders, community leaders).

3. Being present at community gatherings and providing opportunities for a variety of authentic interactions.

4. Recognizing biases while tapping into positive aspects of our own identity.

5. Practicing decision making within physical spaces, and cultural conditions to complement cultural norms.

6. Connecting deeply to the community by grounding and sharing leadership practice in ways that ensure its sustainability in supporting improvement and positive educational change.
A culturally responsive environment where identity development is intentionally nurtured support the holistic development of students of color (Cohen & Garcia, 2008). Mayfield and Wade (2015) conducted a qualitative study of a Western middle school to identify specific culturally responsive practices schoolwide that were successfully closing academic opportunity gaps between White and Black students. A growth model was used to analyze individual growth of students longitudinally. A school was selected with a median growth rate above the average for the state of 57% in 2008 for minorities and 55% in 2010. Twenty-seven staff members from the middle school volunteered to participate in the study, including the principal, two assistant principals, and three deans of student management. The data were collected through observations, interviews, and focus groups.

The findings noted that culturally responsive practices were confirmed in five of six areas from the conceptual framework: leadership, parent engagement, learning environment, pedagogy, and shared beliefs. There was little evidence of culturally responsive practices in student management.

1. **Culturally Responsive Leadership**: The school leadership ensures the middle school maintains a relentless focus on acknowledging and respecting difference.

2. **Culturally Responsive Parent Engagement**: Parents are an integral part of school life and are empowered in ways few minority parents are. For example, each year Black parents conduct a professional development to train teachers on how to work with parents of color.
3. *Culturally Responsive Learning Environment*: The learning environment is rich with cultural artifacts and a large map is in front of the school showing the various places the students are from.

4. *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*: High expectations and expanded opportunities for all students provided academic choices and empowered students to explore a variety of interest.

5. *Culturally Responsive Student Management*: There were few instances where a student’s cultural influences were considered when responding to student misbehavior such as pants sagging, lack of writing utensils, and lack of respect or insubordination. There was a disconnect between what teachers shared in focus group and what was actually observed. Mayfield and Wade (2015) concluded that school leaders intentionally shaped school practices and it was based on the data collected from the focus group that the school leaders were doing most of the culturally responsive weightlifting to get teachers to follow suit.

Tienken and Scheurich (2020) conducted a quantitative study on the American superintendent. The 2020 American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Decennial Study of the Superintendent is an extension of national decennial studies of the American school superintendent that began in 1923. The researchers surveyed 1218 superintendents across the country. Most questions remained the same from the original survey; however, based on societal changes, the survey has been adjusted accordingly. On the 2020 survey, equity was a focus in ten different areas. Superintendents were asked to comment on equity.
issues within their school districts as well as strategies superintendents used to promote equity in their districts. Mountford and Richardson (2021) reexamined the data set using an equity lens. The finding on the current profile of superintendents were as follows. Superintendents were mostly likely to be male, White and ages 40-50. Five percent of superintendents worked in urban districts which tended to have the largest racially/ethnically diverse enrollments. Although nearly 90% of school superintendents said conversations about race/ethnicity and equity are either extremely or very important, only 21% said they were “very well prepared” for that responsibility, according to preliminary findings from AASA, The School Superintendents Association’s 2020 Decennial Study. Less than 54% of superintendents reported that equity and diversity were addressed monthly and 50% of those superintendents did not feel they were effective. Only 27.93% of respondents included parents and community members when dealing with issues of equity and diversity.

The research on culturally responsive school leaders has tended to focus on four broad areas (Khalifa et al., 2016): critical self-reflection, community advocacy and engagement, school culture and climate, and instructional and transformational leadership. Marshall and Khalifa (2018) conducted a case study to examine the role of instructional leaders in promoting culturally responsive practice in ways that make school more inclusive for minoritized students and communities. The study took place over a period of six-months in a mid-sized, Midwestern school district that was attempting to implement culturally responsive leadership practices. Five district level employees participated in the study, which included four instructional coaches and one director, and
the Director from the Office of Educational Equity and the instructional coaches are connected with the districts’ community engagement efforts.

The findings from the study were instructional leaders can play significant and useful roles in promoting culturally responsive teaching and pedagogy in schools. Districts can establish positions in which instructional leaders can work to strengthen the culturally responsive pedagogy of every teacher in a district. In addition to these findings, five key themes emerged from the study. First, the district coaches perceived their ability to be equitable and culturally responsive was easier when district policies supported those behaviors. They found it more challenging if the high-level district administrators (e.g. superintendent, assistant superintendent, etc.) did not have policies that would support this work. Second, the study found that trust has a strong relationship with the coaches’ ability to promote cultural responsiveness. Third, it was necessary for the instructional coaches to unlearn certain behaviors and notions that were associated with traditional forms of schooling that were not culturally responsive. Fourth, the district level Q-Comp coaches believed they improved and learned more about their roles as culturally responsive leaders when they learned in professional developments with cultural and community liaisons. The fifth finding suggests that all of the traditional tools that instructional leaders use must reflect the commitment to an ethos of culturally responsive education. The researches stated the study has implications for both research and practice. CRSL is not only a school-level function, but it can also be a district-level practice.

School Climate

One organizational outcome that can be measured is the effect school leaders have on school climate, particularly in schools where the majority of students are Black and
Hispanic. The importance of school climate was first recognized by a New York City principal, Arthur Perry, who published Management of a City School in 1908. In his book, he encouraged other educators to provide students with a quality learning environment. However, school climate became more researched around the 1960’s when Halpin and Croft (1963) developed an organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire to study the effects of school organization climate on student learning and development. It has been found that climate shapes the quality of the interactions of all school stakeholders. School climate represents the quality of teaching and learning, the institutional structural features of the school environment and school community relationships (Wang & Degol, 2015).

Although it is difficult to provide a concise definition for school climate, most researchers agree that it is a multidimensional construct that includes physical, social, and academic dimensions (Loukas, 2007). Wang and Degol (2015) reviewed school climate as a construct and discussed the impact it had on student outcomes. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the existing literature on school climate and bring to light the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the ways researchers have approached the topic. The study focused on literature related to the four domains and 13 dimensions of school climate: Domain 1: Academic (i.e., teaching and learning, leadership, professional development); Domain 2: Community (i.e., quality of relationships, connectedness, respect for diversity, and partnerships); Domain 3: Safety (i.e., social, and emotional safety, physical safety, discipline, and order); and Domain 4: Institutional Environment (i.e., environmental adequacy, structural organization, availability of resources).
The study found that 48% of the studies used a correlational design to relate school climate to other variables and 5% used quasi-experimental designs. Twenty-eight percent of studies used qualitative research methods to study school climate while fifteen percent focused solely on validating and developing measures of school climate. Ninety-two percent assessed school climate through self-report surveys and 8% used interviews or focus group data. In addition, 50% of the research focused on student perspectives, mainly for middle and high school students, and on school climate. Twenty-three percent of studies focused on teacher perspectives and 17% on multiple perspectives (teachers, parents, and students).

The study found that the quality of the academic environment is an important predictor of student achievement. Teacher perceptions of efficacy and effective principal leadership have been consistently linked to standardized test scores, GPA, and grades (Wang et al., 2016). Hence, high academic rigor and effective leadership promote mastery learning goals and produce an academic climate conducive to learning.

Secondly, the study found in the community domain that a large sample of high school students indicated that those who perceived greater racial/ethnic fairness and experienced less racial/ethnic discrimination had higher GPAs (Mattison & Aber, 2007). In the domain of safety, results were inconclusive with the association between safety and student achievement and were found to have a weak relation as compared to all other school climate variables.

In domain four, the institutional building structure environment has been inconsistent in its conclusions. However, substandard structural features of school
buildings have been demonstrated to influence student performance and attendance, impacting the quality of the learning environment.

**School Climate and Race/Ethnicity**

According to Thapa et al. (2013), research has shown that race/ethnicity itself is a significant factor in explaining the variation in perceptions of school climate. Positive school climate has been considered important for racial minority and poor students (Thapa et al., 2013). A study by Watkins and Aber (2009) used quantitative survey data from 842 African American and White middle school students. African American, poor, and female students perceived the racial climate in more negatively than did their White, non-poor, and male counterparts, respectively (Thapa et al., 2013). In addition, research confirms that race/ethnicity is an important predictor in explaining perceptions of school climate. It is important for school leaders to understand what a positive school climate would look and feel like for students who identify as belonging to specific races, ethnicities, or cultures in order to effectively affect school climate for all students.

It is important to note that the climate of a school is not necessarily experienced in the same way by all its members. Rather, there is variability in individual perceptions of a school’s climate, and researchers propose that it is the subjective perception of the environment that influences individual student outcomes (Loukas, 2007). WestEd (2013) conducted a quantitative study to explain the racial/achievement gap. Between 2007 and 2012, WestEd researchers conducted six empirical studies on race, achievement, and school climate using student and staff data from the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS) System. The data was collected biennially in two thirds of California public schools from
2004 to 2010 from about 500,000 students and 50,000 staff members annually. The purpose of the survey was to gather data on the perception of their school environments as well as student’ grades, truancy and risk behaviors. The researchers found there continues to be a racial/ethnic achievement gap. Schools serving large numbers of African American and Hispanic students exhibited lower average standardized schools. The second finding was there is a racial/ethnic school-climate gap in which there was a significant racial difference in the students’ experiences of school climate. White and Asian students reported high levels of safety, support, and connectedness at school. Also, White students were the most likely to report having had a caring relationship with an adult at a school and that their school had high expectations for students while Hispanic students were least likely to make these observations. The study suggested that the school’s African American and Hispanic students attending these schools will have fewer positive outcomes and a less positive school experience than their White and Asian counterparts whether within or between schools.

Voight (2015) conducted a quantitative study to examine within-school racial/ethnic disparities in students’ experiences of school climate. It further examined the relationship between a schools’ racial/ethnic climate gaps and achievement gaps and other school structures and norms that may help explain why some schools have larger or smaller racial/ethnic disparities in student reports of climate than others. The study used student and teacher survey data from over 754 middle schools in California that administered the California Health Kids Survey to Grade 7 students and the California School Climate survey to teachers in in either the 2008-2009 or 2009-2010 school year.
The results of the study showed that for both racial/ethnic comparisons and from most school climate dimensions, significant gaps existed with schools with significant numbers of both Black and White Students ($p = 0.001$). Black students reported lower levels of safety and connectedness ($p = 0.001$ and adult-student relationships ($p = 0.05$). The statewide gap in experiences of safety and connectedness and adult-student relationships between Black and White students suggested that these overall gaps were due more to disparities within schools rather than inequalities between schools segregated by race/ethnicity.

Shirley and Cornell (2016) conducted a quantitative study to investigate student perceptions of school climate to racial/ethnic differences in school discipline. Four hundred students from a suburban public middle school in the state of Virginia completed a school climate survey. Approximately 60.5% of students identified as Caucasian, 20.2% as African American, 9.5% as Hispanic, and 3.6% as Asian. The principal was African American, and the majority of the teaching staff was Caucasian. The study consisted of 192 boys and 208 girls. Students completed the School Climate Bullying Survey (SCBS; Cornell & Sheras, 2003) as part of the school bullying prevention program Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP; Olweus & Limber, 2000). Each student was assigned a code number known to only a single code officer who did not have access to the completed surveys.

Results indicated that African American students were more likely to receive a discipline referral than Caucasian students ($p < 0.01$). Sixty-three percent of African American students received referrals, versus 26% of Caucasian students. In addition, African American students were more likely to receive suspensions than Caucasian
students, \((p < 0.01)\). Twenty-seven percent of African American students received suspensions versus 6\% of Caucasian students. There were racial/ethnic group differences on the willingness to seek help scale and the aggressive attitudes scale. African American students were less willing to seek help from teachers and adults in school than Caucasian students \((p = 0.02)\). African American students made up 20.2\% of the school’s student population yet, 60.3\% of African American students were referred for discipline as compared to 27\% of Caucasian students, who made up 60.5\% of the student population. In addition, 20.7\% of African American students were suspended from school as compared to 6\% of Caucasian students.

**Transformational School Leaders and School Climate**

Amedome (2018) conducted a quantitative study to examine the leadership and its potential influence on the climate of selected Senior High Schools in Hohoe Municipal in Ghana. The objectives were to identify the dominant leadership styles exhibited by the heads (the equivalent of a Principal in Ghana) of selected Senior High Schools (SHS); find out how teachers perceive the leadership styles of their heads of schools, to evaluate the organizational climate in the selected schools and to establish the relations between leadership styles and school climate. They used proportionate sampling to select 100 teachers in three selected senior high schools. For this study, the number of participants from each of the schools was determined by their number relative to the entire population. The study was conducted using a descriptive survey method. The study focused on heads and teachers of selected SHS in Ghana. The study’s primary data sources were collected from the questionnaires that were administered to respondents of the selected schools. Two questionnaires were adapted for the purpose of this study. The
Leadership Styles Survey questionnaire developed by Georgia’s Leadership Institute for School Improvement and Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire – Rutgers Elementary (OCDQ-RE) developed by Wayne K. Hoy were administered to the teachers to appraise the heads leadership styles and to assess the school climate respectively.

The study revealed democratic leadership style was predominately used by heads of the selected senior high schools (SHS), and the school climate of the selected schools was positive and there is an inverse relationship between school climate and leadership style of the head. The majority (67.7%) participants perceived their Heads to exhibit Democratic leadership style and 31.2% to exhibit Laissez Faire style of leadership. This result implied that the majority of Heads give orders only after consultation with various stakeholders as a result their polices face little opposition when being implemented. In evaluation of school climate and the relationship between leadership style of Heads and school climate, there was an inverse relationship between school climate and leadership style of headmaster/headmistress such that when leadership exhibited by the Head worsens, it results in negative school climate and when leadership style improves, it results in a positive climate in the school. Among all the leadership styles, transformational leadership was found to have the most positive effect on school climate. In this study, the democratic and transformational leadership styles were associated with open school climate which creates positive school climate while laissez-faire and transactional leadership styles were associated with closed, familiar, and controlled climate which creates a closed school climate.

Leithwood et al. (1999) described transformational leadership as the ability to restructure, develop a shared vision, and distribute leadership, while building a school
culture and climate that promotes successful academic change. McCarley et al., (2014) did a quantitative study to examine the relationship between teacher perception of the degree to which a principal displays the factor of transformational leadership and the perceived school climate. A purposeful sample of 399 teachers, representing five high schools in a large urban school district in Southeast Texas, were administered the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Secondary Schools to evaluate the climate of their respective school. The five high school principals were contacted, and a meeting was held to discuss the purposed of the study and process for collecting the teacher surveys. A district representative e-mailed an electronic survey to all high school teachers. A district representative provided the gender, demographic information and campus location for each teacher based on the electronic identification address. The results of the analysis indicated there was a positive significant correlation between transformational leadership and the supportive \((p = 0.001)\), engaged \((p = 0.003)\), and frustrated elements (nonverbal communication of teachers, administrative paperwork, non-teaching duties assigned in excess) of school climate \((p = 0.005)\) respectively.

Allen et al. (2015) conducted a correlational study to examine the relationship between transformational leadership, school climate, and student mathematics and reading achievement. Survey data were collected from a purposeful sample of elementary school principals and a convenience sample of their respective teachers located in a small suburban school district in southeast Texas. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995) was used to measure the degree in which a principal displays the factors of a transformational leader.
based on teacher perceptions and principals own self-assessment. The survey measures five areas of transformational leadership: idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. School climate was measured using the School Climate Inventory-Revised (SCI-R). The STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness) assessment is used to measure student achievement levels. For purposes of the study, only mathematics and reading scores for Grades 3-5 were examined. Findings indicated a statistically significant positive relationship (p<.05) between the five factors of transformational leadership and the seven dimensions of school climate (order, leadership, environment, involvement, instruction, expectation, and collaboration).

**Culturally Responsive School Leaders and School Climate**

Blitz (2020) conducted a mixed methods study to assess the climate of a racially/ethnically diverse high-poverty elementary school. The research was designed as an exploratory study of school climate to establish a baseline to inform the development of culturally responsive trauma informed practices as a whole school approach. To assess the perspectives of school personnel on racial/ethnic school climate and social-emotional responsiveness, the interdisciplinary research team utilized principles identified by Teaching Tolerance to eliminate the “school to prison pipeline” (Teaching Tolerance Toolkit). The research team used these principals to provide a conceptual definition of a culturally responsive trauma-informed school environment and identify areas for future growth and development. Unstructured interviews were conducted in the teachers’ lounge at the school.
Findings showed that four themes emerged from the qualitative data: race/ethnicity and culture; trauma, loss, and stress in the students’ lives; attributing student’s disruptive behavior to poor parenting; mutuality and partnership among administrator’s teachers and classroom staff. The quantitative findings showed that Principle 1, adopt a social-emotional lens, was $M = 3.82$, the highest of all principles, which indicated that the school personnel perceived the adults are “usually” responsive to the social and emotional needs of students. Principle 3, moved the discipline paradigm from “punishment to opportunities to teach desired behavior,” received an aggregate mean of 3.35 indicating that these behaviors were seen about half the time. Within that principle, frequently praising students was the highest, at $M = 3.54$ however, the lowest behavior was using positive interventions to help students manage their own behavior was not far behind ($M = 3.10$). Principle 4, resist the criminalization of school behavior, had a combined mean of ($M = 3.34$). Addressing truancy through partnerships with family and community members from diverse and marginalized groups rated lowest ($M=2.48$). Principle 5, know the students and continually develop cultural responsiveness was only observed about half the time with an aggregate mean of 3.22. One of the lowest rated items was adults talking about the impact of oppression on students’ lives ($M = 2.76$). As a result of this study, Blitz et al., (2020) suggested that strategies are needed that recognize and respond to students’ individual and collective experiences, support the most vulnerable and enhance educational opportunities.

Young et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative study to examine administrators’ perceptions of their ability to implement a diversity plan. The study was conducted in a demographically diverse school district. Thirty-four people were interviewed, twenty-
two principals, and eight teachers. The researchers used multiple methods for data collection: open ended interviews, onsite observations, a document analysis of the district’s diversity plan and reflexive journals. All 22 principals participated in the first round of interviews, divided into focus groups of four.

The study was an examination of principals’ perceptions of their role in carrying out the Mayflower school district’s strategic diversity plan. As a result, from a push by parents for the implementation of a diversity plan, the district administrators assigned the implementation of the diversity the plan off on the principals. Results of the study found that principals were unsure about their responsibilities in carrying out their district’s strategic plan. Principals stated they had no idea what resources would be available to them, why the plan was important, and what “diversity” might mean to their schools. In their desire to make sense of the plan, two themes became apparent: (a) their leadership struggles during the implementation phase and (b) the need for an educational component to instruct the principals about strategic diversity plans and diversity self-efficacy training. Survey results indicated principals were unable to articulate what diversity meant in terms of strategic implementation and saw no value in addressing their changing student demographic.

Beachum & McCray (2004) and Low (2010) both suggested that the language and clothing associated with Hip-Hop identities often received hostile receptions in mainstream society or traditional schools. Khalifa (2013) conducted a 2-year ethnographic study of an alternative school and reported on how a culturally responsive school leader recognized and validated Hip-Hop student identities. The study took place from the fall of 2006 to spring 2008 in a district that served
marginalized students of color and was exclusionary toward Hip-Hop behaviors and identities. During the first year of the study, the researcher’s involvement was restricted to that of a participant observer. In the second-year, interviews and field notes were collected. In addition to principal interviews, 13 teachers and staff, 9 parents, 10 current and former students and 3 district-level administrators were interviewed at least twice. According to school data reported in the local paper, Black students were 10-15 times on average more likely to be suspended than their White classmates. The Black student population in the district made up 12.3% yet Black students accounted for over half of all district suspensions.

According to the students in Khalifa’s study, the principals in the traditional schools often supported the exclusionary practices of teachers of students who identified as Hip-Hop culture. Khalifa (2013) stated that many educators often believed that they were in a position to determine which student identities they will accept and validate in schools, despite how indigenous or authentic they may be. The findings revealed a principal resisted the normalized impulses of teachers to exclude Hip-Hop students. The result was the formation of a school space, largely informed by inclusionary practices of the school principal, within which, Hip-Hop behaviors, speech, clothing, and identities could exist. Two major themes emerged from this study. The first is both the broader school culture and individual classrooms are likely to be hostile toward Hip-Hop identities. The second major theme demonstrated the possibility of culturally responsive leadership in one school principal’s inclusion of Hip-Hop student identities. The principal created safe spaces wherein the students could perform their indigenous, authentic identities. However, in creating this space, he was able to get students to modify what he
identified as negative behaviors. This led to low performing students experiencing academic success.

**Culturally Responsive Discipline**

In 2011, the federal government called for public school leaders to reevaluate their discipline policies and practices to combat disproportionality, which reflected discriminatory practices, and to ensure fairness and equity for all students. To address disproportionality of suspensions and expulsions, the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, in collaboration with other federal partners and experts from the field, released the Supportive School Discipline Initiative (SSDI; 2011), promoting awareness and supporting discipline policies and practices that keep students engaged in school while holding them appropriately accountable for their misbehaviors (Parsons, 2017).

Boneshefski and Runge (2014) addressed the disproportionately frequent discipline practices of ethnic minority students and the benefits of implementing culturally responsive leadership practices to support corrective action. The researchers created a formula with risk indices and risk ratios to determine if a school has disproportionality in its discipline practices. For the study, a midsized elementary school was chosen with grades from prekindergarten through fifth grade, which was located in a small urban setting in southwest Pennsylvania. This school had participated in the Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support initiative since the summer 2007. A core team was trained at that time, and implementation began in fall 2007. The approximate student population across those years was 725 and student demographics were as follows: 50% Caucasian, 40% African American, and 10% other. The three-tiered School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems (SWPBIS) framework at this elementary school
was developed by a core team to create an environment that promoted positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students.

Standardized behavioral expectations were taught to all students at the start of each school year, and booster sessions to reteach the expectations and rules were provided as needed. When the students were observed behaving according to the expectations, they received reinforcement in the form of a Trojan Treasure Note (TTN). Office discipline referral (ODR) data were collected by school staff and disseminated to a university partner to calculate risk indices and ratios. Risk indices for each group were calculated using ODR and student enrollment data. Student ethnicity labels documented by the ODRs were White, African American, and other. The calculated risk indices for White, African American, and other students are 0.31, 0.56, and 0.89, respectively. These data suggest that White students are underrepresented in the discipline data, and African American students and students from the Other group are overrepresented in the discipline data. Risk ratios were then calculated from the risk indices using White students as the comparison group. The calculated risk ratios indicated that African American students are 1.80 times more likely to receive an ODR than their White peers and other subgroup were 2.87 times more likely to receive an ODR than their White peers. With the ODR data indicating that ethnic minority students are being disproportionately disciplined in comparison with White students, the core team could begin to address the issues in the SWPBIS framework that may lead to these exclusionary practices.

Results of these calculations were shared by the university partners to the building- and district-level leadership teams. As a consequence, professional
development with the regional training and technical assistance agency was planned for all faculty in the building to help staff understand the culture gap between the adults and the students in the building. Regardless of the nature of data used to develop a comprehensive culturally responsive plan for addressing disproportionality, regular reviews (e.g., monthly) of ODR data should continue to evaluate the efficacy of systems change efforts.

According to Parsons (2017), African American males are over-represented in disciplinary sanctions. To combat this issue, Parsons (2017) stated that school personnel should implement School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (SWPBS), also known as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and should consider employing a more culturally responsive model. Parson stated that there are six culturally responsive practices that could help reverse the trends of disciplinary sanctions for students of color. The first two are to enhance a staff member’s cultural knowledge and cultural self-awareness. The third practice is supporting the validation of other cultures. The fourth practice is for school staff to use of cultural relevance to create discourse around disciplinary sanctions. Establishing a practice of cultural validity will provide the educator with knowledge of the child’s circumstances and use that knowledge to help with misbehavior to devise a plan of action. Finally, the practice of cultural equity will minimize teachers’ subjective judgements through reviewing data, PBIS training and discourse around cultural responsiveness, equity, and fairness.

Banks & Obiakor (2015) conducted a case study in an urban school in the center of a large metropolitan area. The school had a population of 324 students and a poverty rate of 95%. A team of 60 Eastwood staff members participated in a Three-day training
on School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Services (SW-PBIS) to reduce office
discipline referrals by 20-60% and to decrease inappropriate behaviors while increasing
appropriate behaviors. The staff learned how to build capacity by using data-based
decision making, teaching, and developing a set of behavioral expectations, and
acknowledging appropriate behaviors. As a result, staff began to ask for more in-service
training on how to infuse culturally responsive strategies into their SW-PBIS training.
Findings were collected after the training which stated that in order to minimize the
continual marginalization of culturally and linguistically diverse students, culturally
responsive strategies needed to be integrated into the SW-PBIS model.

Fallon et al. (2015) collected data from 330 staff members from 23 states who
were surveyed about their acceptability, feasibility, efficacy, and accessibility of training
culturally and contextually relevant Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS)
recommendations. The purpose of the study was to review the literature on behavior
supports and culture and develop a list of practices. State coordinators were identified
via a database provided by the Office of Special Education Program’s Technical
Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Researchers
emailed state coordinators of SWPBS in 30 states and asked them to randomly recruit up
to five schools that were past the planning phase of SWPBS implementation. Twenty-
three state coordinators agreed to send the survey to 91 randomly selected schools.
Thirty-six school principals replied to the study with the intent to distribute the survey to
their staff. The survey consisted of 12 items related to demographic information and 19
items taken directly from suggestions for culturally and contextually relevant SWPBS in
Fallon et al. (2012). The survey was organized into three domains general, classroom teacher, and professional development practices.

Descriptive statistics were used to identify how school personnel perceived the guidelines for culturally and contextually relevant practices in SWPBS across the four components of social validity: acceptability, feasibility, efficacy, and accessibility (for professional development domain only). The results from the survey indicate that overall, respondents found the suggested general classroom teacher, and professional development practices in culturally and contextually relevant SWPBS to be acceptable, feasible, efficacious, and moderately accessible. As all items were rated positively and consistently across respondents, these results suggest that school personnel would likely support the implementation of culturally and contextually relevant practices in SWPBS settings.

Practices derived from Fallon et al. (2012) stated that specifically addressing culture and context tended to be viewed favorably by respondents but were perceived as slightly less acceptable and feasible and only moderately efficacious and accessible (e.g., “Consider the acceptability of decisions and priorities from the perspective of students, families, teachers, school, and the community”; or “Learn, include, and use students’ culture and language in instruction and interactions”). Recommendations for professional development related to culturally and contextually relevant SWPBS practices were viewed by respondents to be relatively acceptable and feasible, but participants seemed less confident that professional development targeting these practices would be effective in improving the behavior for all students. Fallon et al. (2012) noted that it was possible
that respondents’ relatively low ratings of the potential efficacy of these items reflected their limited empirical support.

**Urban, Suburban and Rural Leadership**

A casual-casual comparison study was done by Erwin et al. (2011) using data from 784 Texas public elementary, middle, and high schools. Principals from 248 urban, 272 suburban, and 259 rural schools participated in the study. The purpose of the study was to determine how leadership skills varied by type of campus (urban, suburban and rural). Data was collected from a 2006 – 2008 Texas state approved principal performance assessment, Principal Assessment of Student Success (PASS). Principal leadership skills identified in the pass were compared and data were disaggregated by campus type (urban, suburban, rural).

Of the 14 skills assessed, only nine were consistently identified among the top skills of sampled Texas principals. Regardless of school type (urban, suburban, and rural), sampled principals were rated highest in the same four of the 14 skills assessed (Leadership, Sensitivity, Information Collection, and Organizational Oversight). However, the absence of Problem Analysis, Curriculum Design, Measurement and Evaluation, and Resource Allocation also had strong implications. Four of the nine are programming domain skills requiring systemic campus leadership and holistic perspective, enabling principals to develop frameworks, design anticipated outcomes, implement supervision, set goals, and utilize inferential thinking. The researchers implied that it was possible that assessors found those skills more difficult to quantify. Additionally, findings suggested the need for professional development aimed at nurturing systemic practices among campus leaders.
Eckert (2019) examined three high schools one urban, one suburban and one rural using a multiple-case study design. The purpose of the study was to better understand collective leadership development. Using a multiple-case study design, data consisting of interviews with 64 teachers and administrators, document analysis, and observations were collected from each of the three high schools to describe and explain variation in collective leadership development, practice, and student outcomes. Findings were variations between schools existed in collective leadership capacity, practice, and student outcomes. This variation is explained by antecedent factors that include principal support of teacher leadership, initial teacher capacity, school conditions, work design, and leadership development experiences. Overall, the rural and suburban schools demonstrated higher levels of collective leadership development than the urban school, particularly related to work design, developmental experiences, increased capacity, and outcomes.

The rural high school demonstrated support between the district, school, and student levels More than either the rural or urban high school, at the suburban school, work was designed for collaboration and leadership development. In the urban context, teachers and administrators believed school culture was improving, but there were residual concerns about relational trust and school politics as eight years earlier all 13 administrators were replaced due to poor performance. The researcher suggests the synthesis of evidence from urban, suburban, and rural high schools expands research on teacher leadership development and broadens the focus beyond individual teacher leaders or administrators to collective leadership.
Logan and Burdick-Will (2017) provided an assessment of variation in schools with and between urban, suburban and rural areas for all public schools in the U.S. in 2010 – 2011. The researcher collected the data from all public elementary schools from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES also reports for most schools the number of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, which the researchers used as an indicator of poverty. The Common Core of Data also include the total number of students and the precise geographic location of each school. Testing data are calculated from the percent of students who meet state proficiency levels in reading and mathematics on tests administered by each state, reported to and made available by NCES. The researchers used 4th graders to represent the achievement levels of elementary students because this is the elementary grade level for which test scores are most often available. When test score data were not available for 4th graders, they used scores from 5th graders.

Findings presented here reinforce previous studies that documented continuing segregation in metropolitan schools, inequalities between urban and suburban schools, and disparities between relatively advantaged White and Asian students in comparison to Black and Hispanic students. However, the researchers extended the scope of segregation studies to include a systematic comparison to rural schools. Rural schools were compared to schools in the nearest, most relevant urban and suburban schools. The main finding is that rural schools – despite being disproportionately white – face similar disadvantages as do urban schools. Therefore, it is not obvious whether the same policies that are traditionally proposed to support urban schools would apply equally to rural ones.
Relationship Between Prior Research and Present Study

Culturally responsive and transformational leadership practices are essential in affecting the climate in schools of Black and Hispanic students as well as school leaders’ disciplinary practices that affect the perceptions of the school climate for students of color as evidenced by the literature review discussed in this chapter. Prior research showed that the incorporation of culturally responsive discipline practices improved school climate for all stakeholders in the school community. However, the present study demonstrated that combining transformational leadership styles and culturally responsive leadership practices creates a major support system for students of color and teachers of students of color. The biggest hurdle for school leaders is the lack of knowledge of how to implement culturally responsive leadership practices due to cultural deficits and lack of training. The current research showed that school leaders’ perceptions of where they are in the continuum of their cultural responsiveness in their school communities will highlight the areas school leaders need the most support. The main purpose for this research is to collect data and information from school leaders on their perceptions of their responsiveness and compare school demographics to determine if there is a racial/ethnic school climate gap based on those perceptions. The current research will be compared to the studies presented in the literature review and it will add to the existent literature.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the theoretical framework that shaped the research, and the review of the literature on the effects of culturally responsive leadership practices on school climate, transformational leadership on school climate, and culturally responsive
discipline. In summary, culturally responsive leaders should critically self-reflect on their leadership behaviors in order to develop teachers, promote inclusive environments and engage students and parents in their indigenous contexts (Khalifa, 2016). This involves leading in a way that is responsive to socio-political realities and serve to benefit those students who have been systemically underserved over time (Santamaria, 2014).

This involves creating a culturally responsive environment where identity development is intentionally nurtured to support the holistic development of students of color (Cohen & Garcia, 2008). Additionally, principals and superintendents must become transformational leaders in order to enact change in their learning environments. A transformational leadership has the ability to restructure, develop a shared vision, and distribute leadership, while building a school culture and climate that promotes successful academic change (Leithwood et al., 1999).

The federal government called for public school leaders to reevaluate their discipline policies and practices to combat discriminatory practices, and to ensure fairness and equity for all students (SSDI, 2011). This prompted some school leaders to develop a comprehensive culturally responsive plan for addressing disproportionality and discriminatory practices as it relates to discipline in their schools and districts.

Moreover, as school leaders in urban, suburban and rural districts face different challenges. Literature related to the urban, suburban and rural principalship focuses on many challenges, low SES/high minority population, difficult community relations, demographic shifts, and a lack of awareness of minority cultural differences, resulting in deficit views regarding minority students’ learning and behavior differences (Erwin, 2011). Although urban, suburban, and rural school leaders face different obstacles, there
is a need for effective culturally responsive leadership, in each type of school. This chapter concluded with the relationship between prior research and present study. The next chapter will discuss the methods and procedures used to complete the research. In addition, the researcher will support, refute or extend on the studies discussed in the literature in chapter two.
CHAPTER 3

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for this quantitative study regarding school leaders’ perceptions of their culturally responsive practices with special focus on effects by gender, ethnicity, and level of school leadership. Chapter 3 discusses in depth the hypothesis and research questions that the study will analyze and answer in subsequent chapters. This chapter will provide a description of the current study’s research design, study participants, offer a narrative of the data analysis with various tests to be conducted using SPSS software, and provide descriptive statistics of the sample population. Additionally, this chapter will review the instruments that are used for analysis, as well as an explanation of the survey validity and reliability. The methodology and processes described inform and outline the procedures the researcher will take to analyze and interpret the data in the following chapter.

Methods and Procedures

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In order to explore the relationships among school leaders culturally responsive leadership practices and race/ethnicity, the following research questions, and hypotheses were used:

Research Question 1

To what extent does a school leader’s race, gender, and years of experience as a school leader influence their perceptions of their overall implementation scores of their CRSL practices?
**Ho:** There will be no relationship in race, gender, or years of experience in school leadership and school leader’s overall perception scores of their implementation of CRSL practices.

**Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and school leaders' perception scores of their (a) Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices, and (b) Culturally Responsive Leadership Discipline Actions?

Ho: (2a) There will be no relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and school leaders' perception scores of their (a) Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices.

H₁: (2b) There will be no relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and school leaders' perception scores of their (b) Culturally Responsive Leadership Discipline Actions.

**Research Question 3**

How do school building leaders and school district leaders compare in their perceptions of their culturally responsive practices scores: (a) Critical self-awareness, (b) develops culturally responsive teachers or principals, (c) promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment, and (d) engages students, parents an indigenous context?

H₀- There will be no significant differences when comparing the CRSL perceptions scores of school building and school district leaders: Critical self-awareness.
H₀- There will be no significant differences when comparing the CRSL perceptions scores of school building and school district leaders: Develops culturally responsive teachers or principals

H₀- There will be no significant differences when comparing the CRSL perceptions scores of school building and school district leaders: Promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment

H₀- There will be no significant differences when comparing the CRSL perceptions scores of school building and school district leaders: Engages students and parents in indigenous context.

**Research Question 4**

What differences are found in school leaders’ perceptions of their CRSL discipline practices when comparing school levels (elementary, middle school, high school, and district) and types of school communities (rural, suburban, and urban)?

H₀- There will be no significant differences in school building leaders’ perception scores of the CRSL discipline practices among school levels (elementary, middle, high school, and district).

H₀- There will be no significant differences in school building leaders’ perception scores of the CRSL discipline practices among types of school communities (rural, suburban, urban).

H₀- There will be no interaction effect between school levels and types of school communities.
Research Design and Data Analysis

The current study employed a non-experimental research design. There are no active independent variables, and the independent variables are attributes. The researcher evaluated the implementation of culturally responsive behaviors of superintendents and principals, as it relates to their self-assessment of their perceived culturally responsive leadership behaviors.

The first statistical techniques that was employed to address each hypothesis was to run an analysis of normal distributions by reviewing the descriptives using SPSS. The researcher will check boxes for skewness and kurtosis. This technique is appropriate for the sample size of at least 100 respondents (Privitera, 2018).

Culturally responsive school leadership occurs when school leaders merge curriculum innovation with social activism. It is anchored in the belief that school leaders must clearly understand their own assumptions, beliefs, and values about people and cultures different from themselves in order to lead effectively in settings with diverse student populations (Johnson, 2006; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). The following research questions helped to evaluate the perceptions of school and district level leaders.

The first research question, “To what extent does a school leaders’ race/ethnicity, gender, and years of experience as a school leader influence their perceptions of their implementation of CRSL practices?”, was measured with a multiple regression analysis. The analysis was chosen in an attempt to determine the statistical relationships between three independent variables and one dependent variable. The independent variables included race/ethnicity, gender, and years of experience as a school leader. Race/ethnicity, gender, and years of experience as a school leader was dummy coded for
the analysis. The continuous dependent variable included the overall implementation scores of CRSL practices as measured by the CRSL survey.

The second research question, “What is the relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and school leaders' perception scores of their (a) Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices, and (b) Culturally Responsive Leadership Discipline Actions?” was measured through two simple linear regression analyses. These analyses were chosen in an attempt to determine if there is a relationship between one independent variable and two continuous dependent variables. The independent variables included racial/ethnic balances of seventy-five percent or greater Black and/or Hispanic student demographics and seventy-five percent or greater White and/or Asian demographics or Other. The racial/ethnic balances were dummy coded for the analysis. The dependent variables will include (a) Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices, and (b) Culturally Responsive Leadership Discipline Actions as measured by the CRSL survey.

The third research question, “How do school building leaders and school district leaders compare in their perceptions of their culturally responsive practices scores: (a) Critical self-awareness, (b) develops culturally responsive teachers or principals, (c) promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment, and (d) engages students, parents an indigenous context? ” was measured through a one-way between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) analysis. This analysis was chosen in attempt to compare the mean differences between two categorical groups on four continuous dependent variables. The two groups in the independent variable of leaders are school building leaders and school district leaders. The four continuous dependent variables will include: (a) Critical Self Awareness, (b) Develops culturally responsive
teachers, (c) Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environment, (d) Engages Students, parents, and indigenous contexts as measured by the CRSL survey.

The fourth research question, “What differences are found in school leaders’ perceptions of their CRSL discipline actions when comparing school levels (elementary, middle school, high school, and district) and types of school communities (rural, suburban, and urban)?” was measured through a two-way between subjects ANOVA analysis. This analysis was chosen in an attempt to compare the mean differences between four categorical groups, and three categorical groups on one continuous dependent variable. The four groups in the independent variable of school level are elementary, middle school, high school, and district leaders. The three groups in the independent variable of school community are urban, suburban, rural. The dependent variables will include the overall scores of culturally responsive leadership practices as measured by the CRSL survey.

**Reliability and Validity of the Research Design**

The sample was drawn from a normally distributed population. A possible threat to the current non-experimental study design is statistical validity. The researcher’s sample size was 142 participants. The sample consisted of non-equivalent groups (e.g., school leaders versus district leaders) in which the variables being compared lacked equivalence in the sample size. For example, the sample include 41 school district leaders and 101 school building leaders. There is also a possible threat of inadequate samples from the cultural populations being sampled. For example, only three of the participants were Asian and 18 were Hispanic as compared to the other cultural groups White 78 participants and Black which had 40 participants. Another possible threat to the study
may be an external validity threat. Due to the small sample size, it may not be
generalizable to the larger population outside of New York State. Also, the threat of the
Covid-19 pandemic may influence the results of the study as there is currently a push for
culturally responsive teaching and leadership. In order to address the possible threats in
the current study, all assumption tests were addressed through critical reviews of
histograms, QQ plots, and boxplots. The researcher analyzed the skewness and kurtosis
of each group’s distribution and ensure a Levene’s test value greater than 1.

The researcher ensured the reliability of the research design by calculating the
Cronbach’s alpha values of all instruments used in the current study. A reliability
analysis was carried out on the perceived task values scale comprising of 29 items.
Cronbach’s alpha showed the questionnaire to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.96$. All
items appeared to be worthy of retention, as deleting any one item would not increase the
alpha.

**The Sample and Population**

**Sample**

This study will focus on the perceptions of at least 142 school leaders (principals,
and Superintendents), who have experience working in New York State public schools as
shown in Table 1. The researcher used a convenience sampling method to obtain emails
for the sample via the New York State Education Department (NYSED) website public
reports portal.
Table 1

Sample and Population of School Building Leaders and School District Leaders

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<th>Category</th>
<th>White</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample consisted of male and female school leaders who work in elementary, middle school, high school, and district office settings. The schools are located in New York State as shown in Table 2.
Table 2

Participating Schools/ District Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Demographics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% or greater African American and/or Hispanic</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% or greater White and/or Asian</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Office</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population

The population used for the study was school building and school district leaders in public schools. The current study can be generalized to leaders who work in urban, suburban, and rural schools in New York State and represent the target population. However, due to the small sample size the study may not be generalized on a larger scale.

The researcher compared the sample to the U.S. Department of Education’s The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator workforce (2016). For the most part, principals are a racially/ethnically homogenous group. In the 2011–12 school year, a majority of
public-school principals were White (80 percent), while 10 percent were Black, and 7 percent were Hispanic.

The researcher also compared the sample to the New York State Department of Education’s, Education Diversity Report (2019). The report found in New York State that out of 12,309 school building and district leaders, 85% of district leaders and 69% of building leaders identified as White in 2018-19. Hispanic or Latino and Black or African American school leaders accounted for nearly 30% of New York State’s school principals and assistant principals, but just under 10% of school district leaders. In the 2018-19 academic year, 6% of school district leaders identified as Black or African American, compared to nearly 18% of school building leaders. Finally, 2% of school building leaders identified as Asian/Native American or Pacific Islander, compared to 5% who were school district leaders. The current study participants’ demographics were similar to that of the New York State Department’s Education Diversity Report for Black, White, Asian and Hispanic as shown in table 3.

**Table 3**

*Race/Ethnicity of participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instruments

The researcher developed an instrument to be used for the study based on the *Culturally Responsive School Leadership Framework* (2015) and the *Guiding Principles A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* (2014) and served as the template for this survey. The CRSL framework was created by Khalifa Muhammad (University of Minnesota), Mark Anthony Gooden (University of Texas) and James Earl Davis (Temple University) and includes four domains (a) Critical Self Awareness, (b) Develops culturally responsive teachers or principals, (c) Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environment, (d) Engages Students, parents, and indigenous contexts. The Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline was developed the U.S. Department of Education and the researcher focused on three of the domains (a) climate and prevention, (b) clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences, (c) equity and continuous improvement. The title of the instrument developed is: *Culturally Responsive School Leadership Self-Assessment Survey*.

The survey (see Appendix 2) consists of seven demographic questions, seven multiple choice questions on a Likert scale focused on culturally responsive practices and school discipline practices as it relates to school climate, and one short response question. There is a word change in the survey that states teachers or principals in domain 2. Principals will respond based on the lens of developing teachers and superintendents will answer the question based on the lens of developing principals. This instrument assisted in further exploring the racial school climate gap through the lens of school building and district administrators and their perceptions of their cultural responsiveness. The
instrument also supported the transformational leadership theory as shown in table 4. Survey questions represented one of the four elements of transformational leadership: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized influence.
### Table 4

**CRSL survey questions and its relation to transformational leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Transformational Leadership</th>
<th>Defined As</th>
<th>Corresponding Question #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Consideration</td>
<td>The degree to which the leader: - attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. - provides empathy and support and keeps communication open - places challenges before the followers. - celebrates the individual contributions that each follower can make to the team.</td>
<td>Q2, Q4, Q13, Q15, Q16, Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28, Q29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>The degree to which the leader: - challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits followers' ideas. - nurture and develop people who think independently. - learning is a value and unexpected situations are seen as opportunities to learn. - allows opportunities for the followers ask questions, and think deeply and figure out better ways to execute the tasks.</td>
<td>Q3, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q17, Q19, Q23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>The degree to which the leader: - articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. - challenges followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand. - visionary aspects of leadership are supported by communication skills that make the vision understandable, precise, powerful and engaging.</td>
<td>Q6, Q18, Q20, Q22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized influence</td>
<td>The degree to which the leader: - provides a role model for high ethical behavior, instills pride, gains respect and trust.</td>
<td>Q1, Q5, Q14, Q21, Q24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to establish validity of the study I asked four colleagues to take the survey and review the questions for clarity and consistency. One is an assistant principal; one is a deputy superintendent, and the third and fourth colleagues have certifications in school leadership, and both have a doctorate from St. John’s University. In order to establish reliability, the researcher had 25 school administrators complete the survey and the researcher will run a Cronbach Alpha test and establish an internal consistency.

**Procedures for Collecting Data**

After the research study was approved by the Institutional Review Board, a survey of Culturally Responsive School Leadership practices was sent via email through Microsoft forms to New York State school superintendents and principals. The researcher acquired school leader email addresses through the New York State Education Department Public Reports Portal. The invitation letters were sent to school leaders who are listed on the New York State website and who hold the title of superintendent or principal. Approximately 5,200 invitation letters were sent out to school leaders. The data collection took place over a 5-day time period.

**Research Ethics**

To address ethical issues, the researcher applied for IRB approval from St. John’s University. Once IRB approval was obtained, an invitation letter, a link to the survey and an informed consent letter which included the purpose of the study and the ethical procedures that will be followed was sent to each superintendent and principal, requesting their participation in the survey (see appendixes). In addition, consent to participate in the study was included at the beginning of the survey where it was stated that by taking the survey, they are consenting to the informed consent. All ethical
concerns and considerations will be addressed and accounted for guaranteeing the participant’s anonymity, confidentiality of the responses, no risk of harm, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All participants who willingly participated had their responses remain confidential and kept secure on a locked, password protected laptop, which was kept in a locked file cabinet. All participation by all participants was voluntary and was given the option of opting out if they did not wish to continue.

**Conclusion**

The following chapter will begin with an overview of the descriptive information about the participants and will highlight the results of each of the statistical analyses. The results will include illustrations, descriptions, and tables to demonstrate the findings. The hypothesis for each research question will be either rejected or retained.
CHAPTER 4

Introduction

The purpose of this non-experimental study was to investigate the perceptions of New York state school leaders (Principals and Superintendents) on their culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) practices and CRSL discipline actions. Elementary, middle school, high school principals and district and school district leaders representing urban, suburban, and rural school districts completed the CRSL Practices perception survey. The sample consisted of 41 school district leaders and 101 school building leaders. Their responses were used to examine their perceptions of their CRSL practices and CRSL discipline practices. This chapter presents findings from the four research questions in the current study as well as one open-ended question from the survey. These results and findings provide context for the discussion and conclusion in the last chapter.

The scores for principals and superintendents were all very similar and lacked enough variance to be significant. The mean score for school leaders in five of the seven categories were between 2.4 and 2.8 aligning school leaders as emerging in their CRSL practices and discipline actions. However, the results from the open-ended question explain and support these findings.

Research Question 1

To what extent does a school leaders’ race, gender, and years of experience as a school leader influence their perceptions of their overall implementation scores of their CRSL practices?
Hypothesis

H\(_0\): There will be no relationship in race, gender, or years of experience in school leadership and a school leader’s overall perception scores of their implementation of CRSL practices.

For the first research question, a multiple linear regression was the statistical analysis that was utilized to determine the significance of the null hypothesis. A multiple linear regression was selected as the statistical analysis as it examined if there was a relationship between the three independent variables on the dependent variable. For the first research question, the three independent variables were race/ethnicity, gender and years of experience as a school leader. The CRSL overall score was the dependent variable. The alpha level of .05 was chosen to test the significance of the null hypothesis.

Prior to the analysis, the data were screened and there were no missing values, no coding errors, and no deleted cases. When viewing the variables, race/ethnicity, and years of experience as an administrator were determined to be polychotomous variables, more than two levels, which required dummy coding for the multiple regression. Gender is a dichotomous variable, so it was dummy coded 0 (males) and 1 (females). CRSL scores was a continuous variable.

There were assumption tests conducted before the statistical analysis was run in SPSS. The \(n\) quota assumption was satisfied, as there were 142 participants in the study. A scatterplot was not run because there were no continuous independent variables, only dummy coded variables (race/ethnicity, gender, years of experience as an administrator). There was no multicollinearity in the data as the VIF scores were below 10 (Gender = 1.001, years as an administrator 1.020, race/ethnicity = 1.001) and tolerance scores were
above 0.2 (gender = .999, years as an administrator = .981, race/ethnicity = .999). The values of the residuals were independent as the Durbin-Watson statistic was close to 2 (Durbin-Watson = 2.115). The variance of the residuals was constant as the values showed no obvious signs of funneling. Therefore, the assumption of homoscedasticity was met. The values of the residuals were normally distributed as the P-P plot demonstrated the dots close to the diagonal line. Finally, there were no influential cases biasing the model demonstrated by the Cook’s Distance values all being less than 1.

A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine what variables predicted CRSL perception scores. There was no significance between gender, race/ethnicity, and years of experience as an educator and CRSL practices scores, so the null hypothesis was retained.

Table 5

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Years of Experience Predicting CRSL Practices Scores (N = 142)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Variable</th>
<th>CRSL Practices</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.129</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>-.404</td>
<td>.687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.637</td>
<td>.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>1.363</td>
<td>.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.164</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>-.150</td>
<td>-1.725</td>
<td>.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero to 5</td>
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<td>-.052</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>-.333</td>
<td>.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six to 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.119</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>-.103</td>
<td>-.903</td>
<td>.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteen to 19</td>
<td></td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td>.522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20</td>
<td></td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.966</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Reference for racial/ethnic identity is White; reference for gender is female; reference for years of experience is 11-15 years.
**Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and school leaders' perception scores of their (a) Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices, and (b) Culturally Responsive Leadership Discipline Actions?

For the second research question, two simple linear regressions were the statistical analyses that were utilized to determine the significance of the null hypotheses. A simple linear regression was selected as the statistical analysis because it examined if there was a relationship between the independent variable on each of the two continuous dependent variables. For the second research question, the independent variable was Race/ethnicity balance. The CRSL practices scores and the CRSL discipline actions scores were the dependent variables. The alpha level of .05 was chosen to test the significance of the null hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 2(a)**

Ho: (2a) There will be no relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and school leaders' perception scores of their (a) Culturally Responsive Leadership Actions.

Prior to the analysis the data were screened and there were no missing values, no coding errors, and no deleted cases. When viewing the variable, race/ethnicity balance (demographics) was determined to be a polychotomous variables (more than two levels), which required dummy coding for the simple linear regression. CRSL practices perception scores and CRSL discipline perception scores were continuous variables.

There were assumption tests conducted before the statistical analysis was run in SPSS. The $n$ quota assumption was satisfied, as there were 142 participants in the study.
A scatterplot was not run because there were no continuous variables, only dummy coded variables (race/ethnicity balance). There was no multicollinearity in the data as the VIF score was below 10 (race/ethnicity balance = .996) and tolerance scores were above 0.2 (racial/ethnicity balance = 1.0). The values of the residuals were independent as the Durbin-Watson statistic was close to 2 (Durbin-Watson = 2.047). The variance of the residuals was constant as the values showed no obvious signs of funneling. Therefore, the assumption of homoscedasticity was met. The values of the residuals were normally distributed as the P-P plot demonstrated the dots close to the diagonal line. Finally, there were no influential cases biasing the model demonstrated by the Cook’s Distance values being less than 1.

A simple linear regression analysis was performed to predict what variables predicted CRSL practices perception scores. There was no significance between race/ethnicity balance scores and CRSL practices scores, so the null hypothesis was retained.

Table 6

Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Race/Ethnicity Balance Predicting CRSL Practices Scores (N = 142)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>CRSL Practices Scores</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black and Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>.476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse</td>
<td></td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>.663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Reference for race/ethnicity balance is White and Asian.*
**Hypothesis 2(b)**

H$_1$: (2b) There will be no relationship between a school's race/ethnicity balance and school leaders' perception scores of their (b) Culturally Responsive Leadership Discipline Actions.

Prior to the analysis the data were screened and there were no missing values, no coding errors, and no deleted cases. When viewing the variable, race/ethnicity balance (demographics) was determined to be a polychotomous variables (More than two levels), which required dummy coding for the simple linear regression. CRSL framework perception scores and CRSL discipline perception scores were quantitative variables.

There were assumption tests conducted before the statistical analysis was run in SPSS. The $n$ quota assumption was satisfied, as there were 142 participants in the study. A scatterplot was not run because there were no continuous variables only dummy coded variables (race/ethnicity balance). There was no multicollinearity in the data as the VIF score was below 10 (race/ethnicity balance = .997) and tolerance scores were above 0.2 (racial/ethnicity balance = 1.0). The values of the residuals were independent as the Durbin-Watson statistic was close to 2 (Durbin-Watson = 2.099). The variance of the residuals was constant as the values showed no obvious signs of funneling. Therefore, the assumption of homoscedasticity was met. The values of the residuals were normally distributed as the P-P plot demonstrated the dots close to the diagonal line. Finally, there were no influential cases biasing the model demonstrated by the Cook’s Distance values being less than 1.

A simple linear regression analysis was performed to predict what variables predicted CRSL practices perception scores. There was no significance between
race/ethnicity balance scores and CRSL discipline perception scores, so the null hypothesis was retained.

Table 7

Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Race/Ethnicity Balance Predicting CRSL Discipline Action Scores (N = 142)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black and Hispanic</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>.558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td>.952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Reference for race/ethnicity balance is White and Asian.

Research Question 3

How do school building leaders and school district leaders compare in their perceptions of their culturally responsive school leadership practices scores: (a) critical self-awareness, (b) develops culturally responsive teachers or principals, (c) promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment, and (d) engages students, parents an indigenous context?

Hypothesis

H₀- There will be no significant differences when comparing the CRSL perceptions scores of school building and school district leaders: Critical self-awareness.

H₀- There will be no significant differences when comparing the CRSL perceptions scores of school building and school district leaders: Develops culturally responsive teachers or principals.
H₀- There will be no significant differences when comparing the CRSL perceptions scores of school building and school district leaders: Promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment

H₀- There will be no significant differences when comparing the CRSL perceptions scores of school building and school district leaders: Engages students and parents in indigenous context.

For the third research question, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was the statistical analysis utilized to determine the significance of the null hypothesis. A MANOVA was selected as the statistical analysis because it examined if there was a relationship between the independent variable on four continuous dependent variables. For the third research question, the independent variable was Role. The CRSL critical self-awareness, developing culturally responsive teachers/principals, promotes a culturally responsive/inclusive environment and engages students and parents in indigenous contexts scores practices scores were the dependent variables. The alpha level of .05 was chosen to test the significance of the null hypothesis.

Prior to the test, variables were screened for missing values and coding errors. No cases were deleted, there were no missing values and no coding errors. Assumption tests were then conducted. The dependent variables critical self-awareness, developing culturally responsive teachers/principals, promotes a culturally responsive/inclusive environment and engages students and parents in indigenous contexts, were continuous variables. The independent variable, role, had two categorical groups (principal and superintendent). There were no relationships between the participants in each group thereby verifying independence of observations for the categorical independent variable.
There was an adequate sample size of 142 participants. There were no univariate or multivariate outliers. Multivariate normality was identified through histograms and checking the skewness and kurtosis values. Linear relationships were established by using a scatterplot matrix. Homogeneity of variance-covariance was fulfilled by a non-significant Box’s M test result, $F(10,28060.464) = 9.193, p = .549$. Homogeneity of variance was not violated as evident by a non-significant Levene’s test, critical self-awareness: $F(1,140) = .386, p = .535$, promotes culturally responsive/inclusive environment: $F(1,140) = .060, p = .807$, developing teachers and principals: $F(1,140) = .229, p = .627$, engages students and parents: $F(1,140) = .107, p = .744$

MANOVA results indicated significance for the role category. There was a statistically significant difference in perceived culturally responsive practices based on a leader’s role, Wilk's $\Lambda = .929$, $F(4, 137) = 2.626, p = .037; \eta^2 = .071$, which is considered small. The null hypothesis was rejected. Reviewing the univariate ANOVA results did not identify significant differences between principals and superintendents on the dependent variables as shown in Table 8. The MANOVA is regarded as a more sensitive analysis to determine significant differences. However, the ANOVA did not identify significant differences so the results should be viewed with caution.
Table 8

One-Way Multivariate Analysis Summary for CRSL Practices for Principals and Superintendents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Wilks’ λ</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>2.626</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.037*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically Self-Reflects</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.814</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotes CR Environment</td>
<td>1.811</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.181</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops Teachers/Principals</td>
<td>1.768</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages Students and Parents</td>
<td>2.162</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .05

Research Question 4

RQ4. What differences are found in school leaders’ perceptions of their CRSL discipline practices when comparing school levels (elementary, middle school, high school, and district) and types of school communities (rural, suburban, and urban)?

H₀: There will be no significant differences in school building leaders’ perception scores of the CRSL discipline actions among school levels (elementary, middle, high school, and district).
H₀- There will be no significant differences in school building leaders’ perception scores of the CRSL discipline actions among types of school communities (rural, suburban, urban).

H₀- There will be no interaction effect between school levels and types of school communities.

The researcher was interested in examining the CRSL perceptions of school building and school district leaders in New York State. Participants were conveniently selected from three different types of school communities: Urban (coded 1), Suburban (coded 2), and, Rural (coded 3). Also, the researcher examined school leaders from four levels of education: Elementary (coded 1), and Middle School (coded 2), High School (coded 3), District Office (coded 4).

All 142 participants completed a CRSL and discipline survey, of which the score served as the dependent variable. The school community and school level were the two categorical independent variables with three and four levels respectively. A score of zero meant that a person had never implemented the practice in their schools or districts, whereas the maximum score of 4 reflected the leader always implements the practice in their school or districts (Range 0-4).

A two-way between-subjects ANOVA was chosen to analyze the data and answer the research question. This was an appropriate statistical analysis to use since there were two independent variables with categorical levels and a continuous dependent variable. The rationale for choosing the two-way between-subjects ANOVA was to compare the mean differences between groups that have been split on two factors, and to understand if
there was an interaction between the two independent variables on the dependent variable. An alpha level of .05 was chosen to test for significance.

The data were screened, and it was found there were no missing values, no miscoded values or outliers found in the data. The assumption tests for a two-way between-subjects ANOVA were conducted prior to running the statistical analysis. The dependent variable (CRSL discipline perception scores) was measured on a continuous scale. The two independent variables school community (urban, suburban, rural), and school level (elementary, middle school, high school, and district office), were categorical with three and four levels respectively. There was independence of observations as there were different participants in each level of each group. The test for normality indicated that the data were normally distributed. This was evident by examining the histogram results and the non-significant Shapiro-Wilk test results: urban, (p = .622), suburban, (p = .915), rural, (p = .983), elementary, (p = .926), middle school, (p = .460), high school, (p = .295), district, (p = .812). The test for homogeneity of variance was not significant as evident by the Levene’s test result, F(10,131) = .936, p = .503), therefore the assumption was met.

Results for the study as shown in table 9, indicated that there was not a significant interaction effect between school community and school level, F(5,131) = 1.049, p = .392. The null hypothesis for the interaction effect was retained. There were no significant differences between school levels. The null hypothesis was retained. Also, there were no significant differences between school communities. The null hypothesis was retained.
Table 9

*A Two-Way Multi-Variate Analysis of CRSL Discipline Action Scores Based on School Community and School Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Community</td>
<td>1.055</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.528</td>
<td>1.869</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Level</td>
<td>2.159</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.720</td>
<td>2.551</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Community * School Level</td>
<td>1.480</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.296</td>
<td>1.049</td>
<td>.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>36.966</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1148.796</td>
<td>142</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>41.310</td>
<td>141</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there were no statistical differences between the groups, the means as shown in table 10 demonstrated that there were differences of importance: urban superintendents had the highest CRSL discipline perception score means, and suburban superintendents had the lowest CRSL cultural perception score means. Also, middle school principals had the highest CRSL cultural perception score means and high school principals had the lowest CRSL cultural perception score means. Rural school leaders (principals and superintendents) had the highest CRSL cultural perception score means. Suburban school leaders (principals and superintendents) had the lowest CRSL cultural perception means.
Table 10

Summary of Means and Standard Deviations for CRSL Practices Scores and Discipline Actions Scores (N = 142)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Community</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.480</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.535</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.560</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District Office</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.547</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.553</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District Office</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.655</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.502</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District Office</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.566</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>.478</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.522</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District Office</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.568</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.541</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings from the Open-ended Question

What are the challenges for implementing culturally responsive leadership practices in your school or district?

The results of the open-ended question supported the findings of no statistical significances in the data. The majority of the school leaders shared significant challenges in the implementation of CRSL practices. The mean average scores for five of the seven categories fell between 2.4 and 2.8 which means the majority of NYS school and district leaders are emerging in their CRSL practices as shown in table 12. Only in the areas of
climate and prevention and consistent expectations and consequences did leaders on average perceive themselves to be proficient as shown in Table 11.

Table 11

*Culturally Responsive School Leadership Survey Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Scale Score</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>I have not begun to implement this practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>1.00 – 1.99</td>
<td>I have just begun to demonstrate or implement this practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>2.00- 2.99</td>
<td>I sometimes demonstrate or implement this practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>3.00-3.75</td>
<td>I demonstrate or implement this practice most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplary</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>I consistently demonstrate or implement this practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12

*Mean Scores of School Leaders’ CRSL Practices and Discipline Actions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Critically Self Reflects</th>
<th>Promotes CR Envr.</th>
<th>Develops Teachers/ Principals</th>
<th>Engages Students and Parents</th>
<th>Climate and Prevention</th>
<th>Consistent Expect and Conseq.</th>
<th>Equity and Continued Improve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.702</td>
<td>2.883</td>
<td>2.496</td>
<td>2.723</td>
<td>3.004</td>
<td>3.159</td>
<td>2.516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The open-ended question sought to garner the perspectives of school building leaders and school district leaders to investigate the challenges of implementing CRSL and CRSL discipline practices in their schools and districts. One hundred and forty two school leaders responded to the open ended-question. The researcher coded their answers using qualitative methods to interpret and organized the responses into meaningful
themes to support the quantitative findings. The researcher will discuss the major themes identified from this question for principal and superintendent perspectives:

**Superintendents**

From the superintendent perspective, seven major themes were identified from this question: a) mindset, b) community support, c) politics, d) covid 19, e) time, f) public, misinformation, and g) no challenges as shown in table 9. The researcher has highlighted the superintendents’ perspectives on a few of the major themes as shown in table 13.

**Table 13**

*Perspectives of 41 NYS superintendents on the Challenges of Implementing CRSL Practices and Discipline Actions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mindset</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Support</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covid 19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Misinformation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Challenges</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mindset.** Superintendents identified mindset as a challenge, which encompassed changing teachers or leaders’ mindsets or fixed mindsets or the deficit thinking of stakeholders. One superintendent stated:

“The challenge is educating the individuals who consistently exhibit deficit thinking. However, as we begin to educate our stakeholders, they tend to understand equity.”
Another superintendent stated:

“Breaking through preconceived notions, thoughts and beliefs is a major challenge.”

**Community Support.** Superintendents identified community support challenges as follows:

“Getting the community to prioritize equity as a district goal.”

“Divided community.”

“No challenges, maybe getting the community to understand the true meaning of equity.”

**Politics.** Superintendents believed that the political climate has gotten in the way of implementing CRSL framework practices in their districts. For example, some responses were:

“The politicization of the issue gets in the way of supporting the diverse needs of all students.”

“Our local political environment is fraught with land mines around this important work.”

“Parents are hypersensitive in today’s politicized climate to any change, ‘what are you trying to indoctrinate my child into’ I have heard more than once.”

**Public Misinformation.** A few superintendents determined that Critical Race Theory opponents have impeded the process of CRSL framework practices by believing it is one of the same.
“Implicit bias of a faction of staff and community members, public misinformation regarding this work, public perceptions of equating CRT with CRS.”

“The current climate on CRT is impeding progress as all attempts at DEI work is considered "brain washing" students. It is important work for schools in preparing students for a diverse world.”

**Principals**

From the principal perspective many themes were identified, and the findings from eight major themes were identified from this question: a) time to implement, b) professional development needs, c) lack of school district support, d) no challenges, e) starting point, f) curriculum and resources, g) community and parent resources, and h) lack of staff diversity as shown in table 10. The researcher highlighted some of the principals’ perspectives on a few of the major themes as shown in table 14.

**Table 14**

*Perspectives of 101 NYS principals on the Challenges of Implementing CRSL Practices and Discipline Actions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to Implement</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Buy In</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Needs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum and Resources</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of School District Support and Polices</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Challenges</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting Point</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and Parent Resistance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Staff Diversity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Time to Implement.** The majority of NYS principals expressed that they did not have the time to implement the new initiative into their schools.

“Time is always the issue with so many things to complete through mandates and then the low hanging fruit of implementing stronger curriculum and day to day supports to staff and students.”

“Time. It has to be part of everything we do - the air we breathe. If culturally responsive leadership practices only exist during particular workshops or PDs, we will not make any headway. In every decision, in every conversation about curriculum, in every disciplinary event, it must be at the forefront of our minds.”

**Professional Development Needs.** The second biggest challenge for principals was professional development to support the initiative of CRSL. Also, the time to provide the professional development to begin the initiative in their schools. In addition, developing teachers and principals had the lowest means $M = 2.4965$ of all seven subcategories.

“Professional Development in this area is hard to find and we have limited days to use throughout the school year.”

“More sessions centered on the use of CRL practices. In addition, being able to connect and work with leaders identified as CRLs is needed.”

**Staff Buy In/Mindset.** Principals are finding it challenging to convince staff to buy in to the best practices as a result of biased mindsets. An unwillingness to undertake change can often reflect attitudes of complacency on the part of educators, that their school is doing an adequate job in educating its students, or resignation that they can do no more to educate them more effectively (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). Also, suburban
principals face challenges associated with predominantly White faculties who lack
awareness of minority cultural differences, resulting in deficit views regarding minority
students’ learning and behavior differences (Erwin et al., 2011).

“In implementing some of the CRSL practices I was initially met with pushback
from veteran teachers who felt that there was a message behind the PD. It wasn't
until there was recognition of their hard work and advocacy and how we can
continue to do better that they realized the message.”

“Biases of staff members with nonchalant attitudes based on our limited diversity
in school community and political views.”

“The families and teachers who believe in a consequence-based discipline policy.
It is very difficult to change the mindset of those who are firm believers in law-
and-order tactics for dealing with children.”

Lack of School District Support and Policies. Many principals shared they did
not feel supported by their districts and there were competing agendas in implementing
the initiative. Also, some cited the lack of stability at the district level impedes the work
at the school level.

“I think everyone is on board to implement such practices, but it hasn't been top
priority from the top and hasn't trickled down yet. It appears that there are other
priorities that the district is trying to get to. Personally, I am a first year AP and
feel I don't have the authority to make such decisions on a grand scale but try to
implement as much as I can at the building level.”

“Constant district leadership turnover.”
“The district has used suspensions as the main form of discipline for so long, it is difficult to have a change in mindset to move towards more restorative and/or culturally relevant measures.”

“There are competing priorities which can hamper efforts to implement culturally responsive practices, particularly regarding behavior. If a student violates the discipline code in certain ways, they receive an automatic consequence, regardless of the principal's desire for a more restorative approach.”

“limited/no support from district.”

“One challenge is that the curriculum is district driven.”

**Starting Point.** Some principals shared the challenges of not being sure what CRSL practices were and what it should look like in their schools. Also, where they should begin to do the work and the need for more support in its implementation while they are still learning what culturally responsive curriculum is.

“The challenge is sustainability. How can we go from learning to implementation into one's lifestyle?”

“Where to begin and the willingness/openness of the all-staff members.”

“It is difficult to do the work while you are also learning. I work with my equity team to develop ways of looking at the curriculum and activities to talk about racism.”

“I’m now learning many of these practices and as a new administrator it has been difficult to create staff buy-in. The pandemic has also created an alternate stress laden environment where we’re all just trying to create a sense of normalcy in a completely fluid environment.”
**Community and Parent Resistance.** Tintiangco-Cubales & Duncan-Andrade., (2021) use the term community responsive pedagogy in their discussion of effective teachers of ethnic studies programs. They describe these practices as developing critical consciousness, developing agency through direct community experience, and growing transformative leaders. This suggests that leaders have to fight resistance by directly working with the community. Some principals have faced the resistance from the community and parents as a result of the political climate.

“We have a contingent of parents who are against CRS. They believe, regardless of our awareness efforts, that we are trying to indoctrinate students.”

“Intolerance by parents.”

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the researcher explored and analyzed all data that were collected from the survey to determine any statistically significant findings in the perceptions of school and district leaders. In addition, the open-ended question in the survey addressed the challenges of implementing CRSL practices and actions and eight themes emerged for superintendents: mindset, community support, politics, Covid 19, time, public misinformation, and no challenges. In addition, eight themes emerged for principals: time to implement, professional development needs, lack of school district support, no challenges, where to begin, curriculum and resources, community and parent resources, and lack of staff diversity. Each theme in this chapter is discussed and explores the experiences and perceptions of school leaders in their implementation and modeling of CRSL behaviors. Chapter 5 will discuss how the results of this study are interpreted in
the context of the theoretical framework. Limitation of the results will be provided. In addition, recommendations for future research will be discussed.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from the four research questions in the current study. The results and findings from Chapter 4 provide context for the discussion and conclusion in this last chapter. The discussion of findings will connect with the theoretical framework and includes connections to the literature review from Chapter 2. Finally, limitations of the research will be discussed, as well as recommendations for future practice and research.

Implication of Findings

The data analysis from question one revealed that although there were no statistically significant results between race/ethnicity, gender, and years of experience as an administrator, the research did find there were some notable discoveries. A surprising finding was that school building and district leaders perception scores means were close in proximity White M = 2.71, Black M = 2.79, Hispanic M = 2.76. These findings can be explained by the research from Ullman and Hecsh (2011) that asserts that being a person of color does not mean that he or she will be more culturally responsive than a White person. The authors assert that being a member of a historically marginalized racial or culture group is not coterminous with understanding the everyday realities of contemporary youth from the same racial or culture group. One possible explanation is culturally responsive transformational leaders educate themselves about the students they serve. Leaders who lead schools or districts with demographics different from their own race/ethnicity groups may feel the added responsibility of ensuring they identify with
their students. As opposed to leaders who may lead schools with a demographic (race/ethnic identify) similar to their own backgrounds may take their “cultural responsiveness” for granted. They may believe they are naturally implementing culturally responsive leadership practices when in fact they are not.

The data analysis from question 3 revealed a statistically significant relationship between a school leaders’ role and the four subcategories of CRSL practices. However, the results were inconclusive as the ANOVAs for the subcategories were not statistically significant. The data analysis from question four revealed that although there were no statistically significant findings there were some interesting differences between urban, suburban, and rural school leaders. The current study found rural school leaders (principals and superintendents) had the highest CRSL perception score means. One possible explanation is that patterns of test performance tend to favor White students, because a large majority of White students are suburban. At the same time, because White students are such a large share of rural students, they are also disadvantaged by the poverty and poor test performance of rural schools (Logan & Burdick-Will, 2017). Furthermore, the researchers state Black, Hispanic, and Asian students are disadvantaged by their higher likelihood of attending urban schools. Native American students, in contrast, are disadvantaged by their much higher likelihood (44%) of attending rural schools. As a result, it would benefit rural school and district leaders possibly to be just as culturally responsive as urban school and district leaders and more culturally responsive than suburban school and district leaders.

The data from the open-ended question highlighted that principals and superintendents had very different challenges in their implementation of CRSL practices.
Principals discussed a need for superintendent support in terms of resources and guidance. This is aligned with the study conducted by Young et al. (2021) where the principals in the district stated that the school principals were unaware of what resources were available to them. The superintendents placed the initiatives upon the school principals and left it to the principals to find the resources to carry out the district plan. One possible explanation is that according to the school principals in the current study, there are not many professional development programs that focus on CRSL to train school and district staff due to CRSL practices are fairly new in its implementation in schools around New York state. This may have impeded school superintendents from providing any resources to their school building principals.

Another possible explanation is the political pushback superintendents shared as one of their major challenges from parents and the community. Some superintendents stated their school districts had a White majority or no students of color and the need to implement CRSL practices is not seen as necessary by the community. Furthermore, a superintendent who works in a district that is not diverse, may not see the need to implement CRSL practices in their districts if their schools do not have enough students who are considered marginalized. This is a character trait of a situational leader and not a transformational leader where a situational leader lets the situation guide their leadership, but a transformational leader inspires others to engage in high ethical behavior and to follow the vision. According to Parveen and Tariq (2014) situational leadership theory assumes that leaders behave according to the situation, and this can help leaders to retain his/her teachers on their current jobs for long periods of time.
Both superintendents and principals shared that the pushback from community members and parents was due largely to misinformation that CRSL and Critical Race Theory (CRT) are synonymous. A possible reason that supports this challenge is the data from the current study shows NYS school leaders fall into the category of emerging in their CRSL practices. School and district leaders who are proficient or exemplary in their CRSL practices follow the practices of transformational leaders. As stated in the theoretical framework, transformational leaders are able to motivate their followers and communicate optimism about future goals and appeal to the morality of the stakeholders to do what is right. When superintendents are able to motivate school boards, community, and parents then principals in their school districts will be able to receive the funding and resources they need to implement CRSL practices from the school districts.

Not knowing where to begin is a challenge that is in alignment with the study conducted by Young et. al. (2010) that examined principals’ perceptions of their roles in carrying out the districts strategic diversity plan as requested by the parent community. The school district assigned the plan to the principals; however, superintendents did not define the roles and responsibilities of principals in implementing this plan. This supports the data that NYS school leaders classify as emerging on the continuum in their CRSL behaviors. One possible explanation is that superintendents do not know where to begin themselves or fully understand the concept although they did not identify that as a challenge. According to the study conducted by Mountford and Richardson (2021), 50% of school superintendents did not feel they were effective when addressing equity and diversity issues.
Another challenge is mindset. Some superintendents stated that school leaders they supervise exhibit deficit thinking. According to Zakeralhosseini et al. (2021), deficit thinking refers to the notion that students (particularly those of low income, racial/ethnic marginalized background) fail in school because such students and their families have internal defects (deficits) that thwart the learning process (for example, limited educability, unmotivated; inadequate family support). In fact, the single most important factor in the academic achievement of minority pupils is the explicit rejection of deficit thinking by the school-based administrator (Zakeralhosseini et al., 2021). One possible explanation is there is a cultural mismatch in the make-up of the staff and the students. Some school leaders shared that there needed to be more diversity on the staff if CRSL practices are to be fully implemented. On the other hand, some principals and superintendents shared their school community is not diverse and does not see the need for CRSL practices in their schools. The aforementioned challenge can also be linked to a challenge identified by school building leaders who state the lack of professional development is impeding the progress of the implementation of CRSL practices. If we are to change the mindset, then more professional development needs to be provided to change the mindset.

**Relationship to Prior Research**

The current study confirms past research by Young et al. (2010) by looking at the challenges principals and superintendents face in their implementation of CRSL practices and discipline actions. Principals in this study did not know what resources were available to them. Also, they shared the lack of support by superintendents in carrying out the school district’s diversity plan. Principals in the current study also stated they did
not feel supported by the superintendents and stated they lack the resources to implement the culturally responsive curriculum and practices.

This study also extends on the past quantitative study by Tienken and Scheurich, (2020) on the American superintendent. Less than 54% of superintendents in the study addressed equity and diversity issues on a monthly basis in the school districts. Superintendents in the current study only sometimes included parent and community voices in their CRSL decisions as evidenced by their perception scores in five of the seven subcategories which fell into the emerging implementation of practices.

The current study extends on a study conducted by Logan and Burdick-Will (2017) that studied disparities among urban, suburban, and rural schools. The study found that rural schools—despite being disproportionately White—face similar disadvantages to urban schools and the issues of concentrated poverty and poor test performance are similar in both rural and urban schools. According to Voight (2013) the racial/ethnic school climate gap is associated with the racial/ethnic achievement gap.

The current study supports the findings from the study conducted by Erwin et al. (2011) that found that regardless of school type (urban, suburban, and rural), sampled principals rated highest in the same four skills assessed and lacked the same four skills in their leadership. This suggests that regardless of school community type school building and district leaders share the similar proficiencies and deficits in their leadership skills. The current study also showed that school and district leaders in urban, suburban and rural areas had similar means in their perspectives of the CRSL practices.

The results from the current study extended on the research of the WestEd (2013) study that stated their findings suggested that the overall gaps between Black and White
students were due more to disparities within schools rather than inequalities between schools segregated by race/ethnicity. The current study did not yield any statistically significant findings as it related to the CRSL practices and actions of school and district leaders between schools that were majority White or Asian, Black or Hispanic or had a diverse population.

The current research study filled in a gap in the current research by focusing on the perceptions of school and district leaders. As many studies focused on the perceptions of teachers and students very few studies focused on principals, even less on superintendents in the areas of culturally responsive school leadership. In addition, the researcher did not find any studies that addressed the challenges of implementing CRSL practices in school buildings and school districts from the perception of school leaders, furthermore, the challenges of implementing CRSL practices by comparing principals and superintendents. In addition, studies that focused on comparing urban, suburban and rural schools and districts focused on school achievement. The current study adds a lens of looking at school climate from a culturally responsive lens.

**Limitations of the Study**

The researcher of the current study has limitations that must be acknowledged. The first limitation was with the number of superintendents in New York State (732 at the time of sampling) as compared to the number of principals in NYS (4,615 at the time of sampling). This could have affected the research as the researcher had less than half of the number of superintendents (41) complete surveys as compared to the number of principals (101). It may be possible there may have been some statistical significance when comparing superintendents to principals if the number of superintendents was
closer to the number of principals who participated. Also, there was only a 2.6% response rate. A larger sample size may have also revealed statistically significant findings.

Another limitation was Asian school and district leaders had to be omitted for question 1 as only three leaders of Asian descent responded to the study. However, this two percent response rate did match the current number of Asian administrators in NYS as only 2% of administrators identify as Asian.

One possible extraneous variable that may have influenced the outcome of the dependent variable was the threat of internal validity. Due to the political climate around CRT, some administrators who are opposed to this theory may have believed that the CRSL survey was related to this theory and may have not participated. Administrators who have these beliefs may have not chosen to take the survey and its possible these administrators average CRSL perception scores would have categorized their implementation at never or minimal on the scale. Their participation could have possibly led to statistically significant results.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Although results from the study did not show any statistically significant findings there were interesting results that should be considered for future research. The study showed mean differences whereas urban superintendents had higher CRSL discipline scores than suburban or rural superintendents. Also, middle school principals had higher perception scores than elementary, high school or district level leaders. Finally, rural school and district leaders had higher perception scores than urban and suburban school and district leaders. Interestingly, suburban school and district leaders had the lowest perception scores. Further qualitative research should be considered to investigate how
school building and district leaders construct their environments in rural, urban, and suburban school districts and how it plays a part in the implementation of CRSL practices. Moreover, Future studies can compare middle school leaders on their CRSL practices in urban, suburban, and rural schools since they were found to have CRSL means in the proficient range.

Also, future research should consider studying the effect of the racial/ethnic climate gap in suburban schools that are predominantly Black and Hispanic to determine the suburban/urban effect as it relates to CRS leadership. While resistance in change management has been the focus of many studies (Velasco & Sansone, 2019) little research has been done about the unique challenges and kinds of resistance encountered by transformational leaders in diversity and inclusion change initiatives. Although, this study explored challenges of implementation of CRSL practices by school and district leaders, a qualitative study should be done on a larger scale.

Finally, as this study focused on the challenges of implementing CRSL practices and discipline actions. Futures studies can focus on the successful implementation of CRSL practices and discipline actions in schools building and districts. This will provide information on transformative practices of school leaders in CRSL to implement in their school building or districts.

**Recommendations for Future Practice**

Although more research on the actual cause of racial disparities in general is needed, future research should continue to analyze the impact school leadership has on the racial/ethnic climate gap using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The finding from the four research questions and the open-ended questions indicated that
school and district leaders are emerging in their CRSL behaviors (practices and actions). Thus, school building and district leaders should seek to create a CRSL team to create professional development (PD) that would improve the understanding of CRSL and help to change staff mindset from a deficit mindset to a growth mindset. In order to achieve this transformational practice school building leaders, need to consider how to incorporate PD time into the school week as this was a major challenge for all school leaders.

In addition, as professional development of teachers and principals had the lowest mean scores at 2.496, school district leaders should include professional development days at least twice per year where there is an opportunity for district wide training in CRSL practices. Also, as the principals don’t feel supported superintendents should have CRSL PDs for principals incorporated into their monthly meetings that they can then replicate into their own school PDs.

Recommendations to policymakers in the field are to encourage school communities at large and parents to embrace CRSL practices for all students as a best practice. School leaders could partner with school boards to hold a town hall about CRSL to address the challenge of public misinformation. Transformational leaders listen to the voice of the community, and this will give them the opportunity to engage parents and the school community and listen to their concerns and convince them to buy into the practice.

In addition, school and district leaders should create parent workshops to help them understand what Culturally responsive practices are and educate on the difference between CRT and culturally responsive practices. This will allow school leaders to
become more transformational and share their visions with the community at large and parents convince them CRSL practices serve all students in the school community not just some. In order to address parental deficit mindsets school and district leaders have to ask themselves for teachers: “What types of staff-development experiences lead to the development of critical, intercultural knowledge and skills related to school and classroom practices? For parents and community members: To what extent can staff development effectively address these beliefs and what is the best strategy for combating these beliefs? For school leaders: How can staff development in CRSL practices be linked to school-wide reform efforts to close the racial/ethnic school climate gap experienced by students?

Another recommendation is to address the challenge of the time to implement the practice into the school. Policy makers in education and school officials need to understand that CRSL is not an initiative but a best practice and should be treated as such. Implementing these best practices into every thread of the school day will not take any additional time to implement because it should complement other best practices. As a transformational leader is a role model for the school community, the leader can show through their behaviors how its incorporated into the leadership as a best practice and not as a separate entity.

A final recommendation for school district leaders is to address the school district policies as they pertain to discipline that may not be culturally responsive. Some school building principals find it challenging to implement CRSL discipline practices because it goes against the policy of the district that is more punitive and less restorative. School superintendents along with school boards, principals and parents should form a
committee to revisit the discipline codes and replace the old ones to be more culturally responsive for all students.

**Conclusion**

This non-experimental quantitative research aimed to examine the perceptions of school building and district leaders as a way to look deeper into the racial/ethnic school climate gap. Although none of the research questions revealed statistically significant findings there were many important findings of differences between the variables. However, the open-ended question revealed rich information and possible insight into why the perception scores for 15 out of 24 questions and five out of seven subcategories averaged emerging in their perceptions of their CRSL practices. The current study further illustrated through the open-ended survey question many challenges that hindered the work of school and district leaders as they struggle to be transformational.

The findings from the current study led to a number of recommendations for future research and practice. One addressing the deficit mindset of school leaders, educators, parents, and community members. Reform efforts are undermined by educators’ deficit views and by their beliefs about the children who become the targets of reform (Valencia, Valenzuela, Sloan, & Foley, 2001). This may happen because according to Garcia and Guerra (2004) these educators do not view themselves as part of the problem, and there is little willingness to look for solutions within the educational system itself.

Any future research in the area should work towards the purpose of labeling CRSL practices as best practices and not as an initiative. The research can also lead to improvements in school leadership preparation in training school and district leaders to
become more culturally responsive to combat deficit mindset. School and district leaders are encouraged to implement the CRSL practices proficiently to begin to positively affect the experiences of all students from all cultural backgrounds.
APPENDIX A
IRB Approval

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Jan 31, 2022 12:07:42 PM EST

PI: Equasia Yard-Jean
CO-PI: Joan Birringer-Haig
Dept: The School of Education, Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Initial - IRB-FY2022-192 THE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL BUILDING AND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP AND DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

Dear Equasia Yard-Jean:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for THE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL BUILDING AND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP AND DISCIPLINE PRACTICES.

Decision: Exempt

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

Any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology
Dear Principal,

My name is Equasia Yard-Jean, and I am an assistant principal at a NYC high school. I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership at St. John's University. I am conducting a study for my dissertation titled: The Perceptions of School Building and School District Leaders’ Culturally Responsive School Leadership and Discipline Practices. The purpose of the study is to determine if there is a relationship in district-level leaders’ and school-building leaders’ perceptions of their culturally responsive leadership practices.

I know many of you are extremely busy; however, this survey will take approximately FIVE minutes to complete. If you are a principal, you can forward the survey link to your assistant principal, and they can complete it in your stead.

I am looking for at least 200 School Building Leader participants (Principals and Assistant Principals) that represent urban, suburban, and rural school districts throughout New York State.

My mentor, Dr. Joan Birringer-Haig and I are requesting your support of my doctoral study in order to gain valuable information concerning the perceptions of school building leaders’ self-assessment of their culturally responsive school leadership practices. There are no perceived risks associated with your participation beyond those of everyday life. While there is no direct benefit for your participation in the study, it is reasonable to expect that a result of your participation will provide researchers and practitioners with information about culturally responsive district leadership practices. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you may choose to not answer questions or withdraw from the survey at any point. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential, as will the name of your district. No identifying email addresses or information will be collected.
If you have any further questions about my study, I would be pleased to further explain my doctoral study to you. I am available at any time of day or evening. Please respond either to this email or by calling me at [Redacted]

In order to participate in the survey, please click on the link below. Your time and support of my doctoral study is greatly appreciated. Completing the survey will indicate your consent.

Sincerely,

Equasia Yard-Jean

Doctoral Candidate, Administrative and Instructional Leadership
St. John's University
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, NY 11439
Dear Superintendents,

My name is Equasia Yard-Jean, and I am an assistant principal at a NYC high school. I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership at St. John’s University. I am conducting a study for my dissertation titled: The Perceptions of School Building Leaders and School District Leaders Culturally Responsive School Leadership and Discipline Practices. The purpose of the study is to determine if there is a relationship in district-level leaders and school-building leaders’ perceptions of culturally responsive practices.

I know many of you are extremely busy; however, this survey will take approximately FIVE minutes to complete. If you are a superintendent, you can forward the survey link to your deputy/assistant superintendent, and they can complete it in your stead.

I am looking for at least 200 participants (District-level leaders) that represent urban, suburban, and rural school districts throughout New York State.

My mentor, Dr. Joan Birringer-Haig and I are requesting your support of my doctoral study in order to gain valuable information concerning the perceptions of district level leaders’ self-assessment of their culturally responsive school leadership practices. There are no perceived risks associated with your participation beyond those of everyday life. While there is no direct benefit for your participation in the study, it is reasonable to expect that a result of your participation will provide researchers and practitioners with information about culturally responsive district leadership practices. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you may choose to not answer questions or withdraw from the survey at any point. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential, as will the name of your district. No identifying email addresses or information will be collected.
If you have any further questions about my study, I would be pleased to further explain my doctoral study to you. I am available at any time of day or evening. Please respond either to this email or by calling me at [redacted].

In order to participate in the survey, please click on the link below. Your time and support of my doctoral study is greatly appreciated. Completing the survey will indicate your consent.

Sincerely,

Equasia Yard-Jean

Doctoral Candidate, Administrative and Instructional Leadership
St. John's University
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, NY 11439
APPENDIX D

Culturally Responsive School Leadership Self-Assessment Survey

Informed Consent

By completing this survey, you are consenting to the informed consent information provided in the email. All ethical concerns and considerations will be addressed and accounted for guaranteeing the participant’s anonymity, confidentiality of the responses, no risk of harm, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Directions
Please read and answer each question. Please answer questions 1-7 to provide demographic information.

1. What race/ethnicity do you most closely identify with?
   - Black or African American
   - Hispanic
   - Asian
   - Native Hawaiian
   - American Indian
   - White
   - Other

2. What is your Gender?
   - Woman
   - Man
   - Non-binary

3. What is your role in your school or district?
   - Superintendent or designee (assistant/deputy superintendent)
   - Principal or designee (assistant Principal)
4. Years in role as an administrator (i.e., Assistant Principal + Principal + Superintendent)?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-19
- 20+

5. What level of education are you currently working in?

- Elementary (K-5)
- Middle School (6-8) (5-9)
- High School (9-12)
- District Office

6. My school or district is a(n)

- Urban school district
- Suburban school district
- Rural school district

7. In my current school or district my students' demographics are

- 75% or greater African American or Hispanic
- 75% or greater White or Asian
- None of the Above
**Directions**
Please read and answer each question. For Questions 8 – 15 please be reflective and provide genuine feedback of your perception of your implementation of culturally, responsive leadership and discipline practices as it relates to your current school or district.

**Response Choice**
Never
Minimal (I have just begun to demonstrate or implement this practice)
Emerging (I sometimes demonstrate or implement this practice)
Proficient (I demonstrate or implement this practice most of the time)
Exemplary (I consistently demonstrate or implement this practice)

8. Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behaviors

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<tr>
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<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I educate myself about the students I serve communities, culture, and histories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in my school or district</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use equity audits to measure inclusiveness, policy, and practice</td>
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<td>I purposely learn about the lived experiences of the students I serve outside of school and use this knowledge to build curriculum that leverages prior knowledge and skills.</td>
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9. Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environment

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<tr>
<td>I model CRSL for staff in building/district interactions</td>
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I promote a vision that includes inclusive instructional and behavioral practices

I use student voice to promote a culturally responsive and inclusive environment

I use school/district data to discover and track disparities in academic and disciplinary trends

10. Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers

I continually create culturally responsive professional development opportunities

I develop teachers' abilities to use school data to see cultural gaps in achievement, discipline and enrichment and remedial services

I have created a CRSL team that is charged with constantly finding new ways for teachers/principals to be culturally responsive

I am engaging/reforming the curriculum to become more culturally responsive

11. Engage Students, Parents, and Indigenous contexts

I connect directly with students in my school/district daily
I serve as an advocate for community-based causes in the communities my students represent

I actively seek multiple perspectives and contributions from families to provide feedback, and concerns that impact the school community

I consistently solicit students’ input on the curriculum (e.g., interests, people, or concepts).

12. School Climate and Prevention

I prioritize the use of evidence-based prevention strategies, such as tiered supports to address misbehavior in my school or district

I promote social and emotional learning as a way to address misbehavior in my school or district

I provide regular training and supports to all school/district personnel as a way to address misbehavior

I set high expectations for behavior and adopt an instructional approach to discipline in my school or district

I ensure that any school-based law enforcement officers' roles focus on improving school safety and reducing inappropriate referrals to law enforcement in my school or district
13. Clear, Appropriate and Consistent Expectations and Consequences

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<th>Proficient</th>
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<tr>
<td>I ensure that clear, developmentally appropriate, and proportional consequences apply for misbehavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>I create policies and/or protocols that include appropriate procedures for students with disabilities and due process for all students</td>
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<td>I remove students from the classroom/school only as a last resort, ensure that alternative settings provide academic instruction and return students to class as soon as possible</td>
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14. Equity and Continuous Improvement

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<tr>
<td>I train all school staff or principals to apply school discipline policies and practices in a fair and equitable manner</td>
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<td>I use proactive, data-driven, and continuous efforts, including gathering feedback from <em>families</em> to prevent, identify, reduce, and eliminate discriminatory discipline and unintended consequences in my school or district</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use proactive, data-driven, and continuous efforts, including gathering feedback from <em>students</em> to prevent, identify, reduce, and eliminate discriminatory discipline and unintended consequences in my school or district</td>
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</table>
I use proactive, data-driven, and continuous efforts, including gathering feedback from teachers/principals to prevent, identify, reduce, and eliminate discriminatory discipline and unintended consequences in my school or district.

I use proactive, data-driven, and continuous efforts, including gathering feedback from school personnel to prevent, identify, reduce, and eliminate discriminatory discipline and unintended consequences in my school or district.

Open-ended Response

15. What are the challenges for implementing culturally responsive leadership practices in your school or district?
APPENDIX E

Permission for Use of CRSL Framework for Study Survey

Andrea Magana
Tue 10/19/2021 6:57 PM

To: Yard-jean Equasia

Good evening!

We received your inquiry regarding using the CRSL Framework for your survey & study. It's so awesome to hear that you want to use the CRSL Framework. Let me check in with Dr. Khalifa and get back to you as soon as I can.

Best,

--
Andrea E. Magaña
Marketing Manager

Adjusted Equity Solutions | CRSL Institute

Andrea Magana
Tue 10/19/2021 8:20 PM

To: Yard-jean Equasia

Just checked in with him and he's approved it! Feel free to use the CRSL Framework and let me know if you have any other questions.

Andrea

On Tue, Oct 19, 2021 at 7:18 PM Yard-jean Equasia wrote:
Thank you so much! I really appreciate it! Have an awesome week!

Adjusted Equity Solutions | CRSL Institute
www.ajusted.org | www.crsli.org
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https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12444244


https://doi.org/10.1086/700678


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<tr>
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<th>Equasia Yard-Jean</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Baccalaureate Degree</strong></td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts, City University of New York at York College, Queens, NY, Major: Psychology</td>
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<td>Date Graduated</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Degrees and Certificates</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Other Degrees and Certificates</strong></td>
<td>Extended Certificate in Gifted Education (2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional School Building Leader Certificate (2020)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional School District Leader Certificate (2020)</td>
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