A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS’ AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS’ CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND EXPERIENCES WITH DIVERSITY IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT IN NEW YORK CITY

BY

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my mother, my tireless cheerleader.
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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly global and connected world, the classroom becomes a reflection of this marvel at a microcosmic level. Globalization, a reality in the 21st-century workplace, has spread its wings in the school environment. Consequently, school leaders must function and cope effectively in situations involving diverse and contrasting cultural practices. As this issue becomes larger, there is an increase in the concerns of many school leaders and the need for cultural awareness and sensitivity in their leadership practice. The absence of cultural intelligence and awareness can sometimes, if not, most times, hinder their effectiveness as leaders. Culturally intelligent leaders are needed due to the growing population of culturally diverse students in classrooms. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the cultural intelligence of school leaders and their daily interactions with students and teachers in culturally diverse settings. This researcher sought to answer the following questions: How culturally intelligent are middle school principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district? What are the experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with parents and students in culturally diverse settings? How does cultural intelligence impact the leadership practices of principals and assistant principals? Information and understanding of participants’ experiences were gathered using the phenomenological approach. The thematic analysis approach and manual open coding were used to analyze and synthesize data from the research. Key findings from this study were the factors impacting the relationships and experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with students and parents in diverse settings. Factors included previous experiences with diversity, views on culture, trust, communication, developing positive relationships, and struggles faced.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Leadership competencies, skills, traits, and behaviors have been given considerable attention over the years. In a paper on leadership competencies in implementing organizational change, Battilana et al. (2017) explored the relationship between a leader’s competence and communicating the need for change. They emphasized people-oriented managers were focused on communicating the need for change and cultural awareness. Many researchers have considered these attributes, coupled with cultural intelligence, as keys to the success of an organization. Kitsios and Kamariotou (2017) endorsed cultural awareness and cultural intelligence as essential to effective leadership. They affirmed a culturally competent leader is a significant factor in implementing innovative practices. Baltaci (2017) suggested a principal’s entrepreneurial characteristics are indicative of their cultural accumulations. Cultural intelligence, an important aspect of cultural accumulation (Baltaci, 2017), allows school administrators to carry out various activities essential to successfully leading a culturally diverse organization. Such activities include learning about different cultures and directing verbal and nonverbal behaviors toward acquired behaviors. This chapter includes an overview of the background of the study, the current state of the field, historical background, and deficiencies in the literature surrounding the problem.

Study Background and Foundation

The view of cultural intelligence as an invaluable tool to enhance or improve leadership competence and its effectiveness in decision making, performance, and commitment is rapidly becoming a widespread phenomenon (Osman-Gani & Hassan, 2018). This idea is new in educational institutions but is well established in the private
sector, as more businesses have become global. In a study to determine the level of cultural intelligence of elementary school principals who exhibit successful leadership characteristics, Meyerson (2012) suggested there was a need for culturally intelligent leaders due to the growing population of culturally diverse students in classrooms.

Principals of educational institutions all over the United States have been required to be aware of the importance of tools and strategies that will help them be effective educators of the 21st century. One such tool is cultural intelligence. They need to be cognizant of cultural intelligence, the importance of its impact on their work as educational leaders, and its impact on their abilities as competent and effective leaders. Mumford et al. (2000) affirmed successful leaders are aware that effective leadership depends on the ability to solve complex technical and social problems. Principals and assistant principals cognizant of effective leadership need to understand that being culturally intelligent will ultimately help them solve some complex issues faced daily. These issues include communication and fostering healthy relationships with the students and teachers at the schools.

Educational leaders are not only responsible for developing strong academic programs, but they are responsible for creating formative and summative assessments used to track students’ progress. These educational leaders are responsible for emphasizing students’ academic achievements while placing the institutions in a positive light. Leader responsibilities extend to creating a positive school climate. Educational and organizational theorists have emphasized the importance of culture and school climate. They have linked culture and school climate to the leadership quality of school principals (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Watson (2016) cautioned if the culture and climate of an
educational institution were not hospitable, students’ achievement and success were at risk. In their study of the mediating role of cultural intelligence, Lie et al. (2016) cited the importance of cultural intelligence in job satisfaction. A leader’s knowledge of cultural intelligence can either positively or negatively affect job satisfaction in the workplace. Despite this knowledge, numerous school leaders have overlooked that a healthy school climate affects students’ achievement and employees’ work behavior (Bulach & Malone, 1994). With the rising population of culturally diverse students impacting public schools, there is a growing need for culturally intelligent school leaders.

**Current State of the Field in Which the Problem Exists**

The New York City Public School population is indicative of the country’s rich and vast diversity. Socioeconomically and racially diverse students enroll in public schools. The population consists of over 2 million students in over 4,000 schools across five boroughs and 32 geographic school districts (New York State Education Department, 2018). Approximately 83% of students attending public schools in the city are Asian, Black, or Latino, many of whom are English language learners and immigrants, or the children of immigrants (Muñiz, 2017). Muñiz (2017) indicated, based on citywide student demographics of 2015, the racial background of students was 27% Black, 15.5% Asian, 40.5% Hispanic, 14.8% White, and 2.1% classified as “other.”

In a recent article focused on the efforts to diversify New York City Public Schools, Saxena (2016) described diversity in the student population across the five boroughs. In the borough that is the focus of this study, Hispanics make up the biggest proportion of students at 61.7%. With this extensive racial and cultural diversity, school leaders are expected to treat everyone in an unbiased and fair manner. Many school
leaders, however, are not prepared to deal with this level of diversity, as it was only in recent years that leadership programs were created to target the issue of cultural intelligence in leadership (Gelineau, 2015) and in the education system. Although there have been significant changes in the leadership training programs in recent years, there is still the need for programs that equip school leaders with skills embedded socially, morally, and culturally to ensure schools are led by culturally intelligent leaders (Brown, 2012).

A recent study reported, “Fewer than half of respondents (44%) agree/strongly agree that their principals support teachers engaging in conversations about race and ethnicity” (Bryan-Gooden & Hester, 2018, p. 2). The response in Bryan-Gooden and Hester’s (2018) study indicated a lack of preparedness and training of the school leaders in cultural awareness. This lack of preparedness has been around for decades.

**Historical Background**

Johnson (2006) conducted a study with a primary focus on culturally responsive leadership. Johnson acknowledged culturally responsive leadership would promote conditions conducive to settings with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. The notion of various practices common to the characteristics and behaviors of a culturally responsive leader was discussed in this study. Earlier researchers, Reitzig and Patterson (1998) and Scheurich (1998), have endorsed this idea and further expanded it by outlining common practices of culturally responsive leadership based on their studies. These practices are similar to those of a culturally intelligent leader. Such practices include (a) emphasizing high expectations for student achievement; (b) incorporating the history, values, and cultural knowledge of students’ home communities in the school
curriculum; (c) working to develop a critical consciousness among students and faculty to challenge inequities in the larger society; and (d) creating organizational structures at the school and district level that empower students and parents from diverse racial and ethnic communities. In a review of the literature on the principal’s role in creating inclusive schools, Riehl (2000) identified two tasks used to determine whether administrators were prepared to respond to diversity and demonstrate multicultural leadership. These tasks included fostering new definitions of diversity and promoting inclusive instructional practices within schools.

Although most research on multicultural education focuses on culturally responsive teaching in a classroom setting (McCarty & Lee, 2014; Paris, 2012), recent studies have focused on culturally responsive leadership. Santamaria and Santamaria (2016) cited the importance of building, creating, and sustaining culturally responsive leadership in their article, which focused on creating equity in diverse contexts through culturally sensitive leadership practices. Santamaria and Santamaria indicated actions of culturally responsive leaders depict the actions of leaders who are culturally intelligent. Therefore, actions are intentionally focused on addressing inequities based on race, gender, and class. Additionally, these leaders seek to engage parents and community members in the education process and are aware of the varying cultural differences among their population. This type of leadership is based on leadership philosophies, practices, and policies that create inclusive schooling environments for students and families from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. A culturally responsive leader exhibits an ethic of care and a commitment and connection to the larger community, regardless of race or culture (Johnson 2007; Reitzig & Patterson, 1998).
A 2014 study from the University of California at Los Angeles identified New York City as having some of the most segregated schools in the country, with a high concentration of Black and Latino students isolated in their neighborhood schools (Chiles, 2014). Kucsera and Orfield (2014) discussed the segregation in the New York school system and made a desperate call for segregation to end. They pointed to the changing demographics that forced families and education officials to confront these ancient zoning practices, which assign students based on their home address. There have been calls from educators and parents for a racially balanced education for every U.S. child. One such call came from Shifrer et al. (2010). In their research, which focused on disproportionality among racial and ethnic minority students, they reiterated the idea of having children from various ethnic groups learn together. The American Psychology Association’s Presidential Task Force on Educational Disparities (2012) made a call for integration and learning together. In their recommendation for educational practice, they suggested teaching and learning should be important tools used to build linguistic, social, and cultural experiences students from diverse backgrounds bring with them to the classroom.

With the rezoning of the New York City public school districts, parents are given the freedom to send their children to schools of their choice in neighborhoods where the education system is considered better. These changes in population and in ethnic and cultural backgrounds have created a different demographic and racial concentration of students in New York City public schools. Implications of the changes for principals and assistant principals are incredibly important. School leaders are required to be equipped
with tools, skills, and strategies to effectively manage a culturally and ethnically diverse school system.

Principals and assistant principals have not always been equipped to deal with cultural diversity in the school system. For years, school reforms brought on by school boards and governmental agencies have failed to curb the practices of racially biased discipline or segregation in schools. In a recent survey of the New York City teachers, 89% of participants agreed issues of race and ethnicity are relevant to students’ educational experience (Bryan-Gooden & Hester, 2018). In this survey, educators agreed cultural training and culturally intelligent leaders are needed to serve the city’s diverse population adequately.

**Deficiencies in Evidence**

Although the volume of literature on cultural intelligence has been increasing steadily since its initial conceptualization by Earley and Ang (2003), the examination of leader cultural intelligence remains scarce, including its relationship with school leadership. According to Rosenauer et al. (2016), the few researchers investigating this relationship mostly concentrated on leadership qualities for business management. Further research is needed to better understand the cultural intelligence of middle school principals and assistant principals and their experiences with diversity.

**Problem Statement**

Globalization is rapidly becoming an integral part of the education system. School leaders are required to interact with people from a wide range of cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds, and managing and interacting with diversity is more important now than ever (Mazur, 2010). The problem educational institutions face is principals and
educational leaders with little or no knowledge of cultural intelligence, and therefore, are inept in creating a climate of inclusion and acceptance necessary in culturally charged settings.

Principals and assistant principals need to understand cultural intelligence and interaction with diversity to make a positive difference and be successful in their schools (Jyoti & Kour, 2015). In extensive research, Jyoti and Kour (2015) argued human capital and performance are hard to replace and are significantly affected by culture. School populations, their communities, and their environments are becoming increasingly diverse. With the growing phenomenon of the continuous flow of personnel integrating into the international market, schools need leaders who are competent and capable to lead in culturally diverse environments. Leadership styles and the cultural intelligence of these leaders are of extreme importance. With this increase in the global market, school leaders need to make organizational changes to remain effective. One such organizational change is creating a positive climate through cultural recognition and acceptance.

The increase in workforce diversity has magnified the problem of school leaders’ lack of cultural diversity (Johnson, 2007); therefore, their inability to make these changes. Additionally, principals reported graduate programs have not been preparing them to handle diversity. To emphasize the importance of cultural intelligence in any organization, Albrecht (2004) considered this phenomenon one of the key factors affecting intraorganizational relationships. Over the years, this unpreparedness has led to retention and dissatisfaction among culturally diverse teachers and dissatisfaction among parents and students. Principals and teachers are not only required to be academically savvy and intelligent, but also emotionally and culturally intelligent.
The concept of cultural intelligence is significant in today’s multicultural classrooms. In a 2010 article about cultural intelligence in school, Ramis and Krastina affirmed that, most times, teachers and principals find themselves a part of the majority culture and, therefore, without the specific knowledge they need to help minority students succeed. Additionally, Ramis and Krastina identified that interaction between a teacher and student within an academic context could not be separated from the students’ cultural or historical background. Moreover, Dhaliwal (2010) confirmed important educational areas (e.g., policy development and implementation, curriculum development and implementation, pedagogy, training programs, and professional development) could be significantly lacking if principals and educational leaders do not possess high cultural intelligence. The cultural intelligence of these leaders and their interactions with the population are of extreme importance. This study could provide some insight into the education sector on the importance of the growing phenomenon of cultural intelligence and the role it plays in school systems.

**Audience**

Students suffer if the identified problem of this study (i.e., school leaders’ lack of cultural intelligence and uncertainty of how to effectively address and deal with culturally charged situations) remains unaddressed. A study conducted by Collins et al. (2016) resulted in findings that a principal’s level of cultural intelligence significantly affects eighth-grade students’ scores in mathematics.

This study should be of immense value to principals, assistant principals, and other school administrators who are serious about leading effectively in a culturally diverse setting. If this problem were solved, the public-school system and the individual
students would benefit. Additionally, school leaders stand to benefit because their leadership skills might improve, and the improved scores of their students could indicate positive and effective leadership.

**Specific Leadership Problem**

If the problem of school leaders’ lack of cultural intelligence and uncertainty of how to effectively address and deal with culturally charged situations is left unsolved, then students may suffer. Collins et al. (2016) found a principal’s level of cultural intelligence significantly affected eighth-grade students’ scores in mathematics. This study may be valuable to principals, assistant principals, and other school administrators serious about leading effectively in a culturally diverse setting. Therefore, if this problem were solved, the public-school system would benefit and the individual students. Additionally, the school leaders stand to benefit because their leadership skills would be improved, and the improved scores of their students could indicate positive and effective leadership.

**Purpose of the Study**

Recent research conducted by Solomon and Steyn (2017) to examine the role of cultural intelligence on leadership styles revealed culture significantly influences leadership styles. The leadership problem, therefore, is school leaders, specifically principals and assistant principals, who are lacking in cultural intelligence and are unable to practice or use culturally responsive leadership. This specific leadership problem has been around for over a decade and has become more pronounced since globalization has made its way into the classrooms and the education system. In a study discussing globalization in the classroom, Yeon (2018) established that globalization emerged as a
trend in education and therefore leaders in the education sector must be sensitive to diversity and varying cultures.

In many New York City schools, school administrators are neither culturally sensitive nor culturally intelligent because of a lack of training in cultural diversity. Gundersen (2013), while examining globalization in schools, agreed educators and school administrators are expected to provide a culturally diverse experience for students in their care; however, they are not given the tools or the training to deliver such a culturally rich experience. Knickman et al. (2012) endorsed the claim that school leaders are not fully equipped with the knowledge and tools to lead in culturally diverse settings.

**Methodology and Research Design Overview**

As stated by Padilla-Diaz (2015), “All qualitative research has a phenomenological aspect to it, but the phenomenological approach cannot be applied to all qualitative researchers” (p. 103). Creswell (2013) stated this method of research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry. It explores a social or human problem (Creswell, 1998). In a qualitative study, the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning participants have or hold about the problem or issue rather than the researcher’s meaning they bring to the research (Creswell, 2007).

In a book discussing the use of qualitative methods in psychology, Rennie (1999) defended the practice of using qualitative research as a representation of human science. Rennie further stated that qualitative research places emphasis on the particulars of human experiences and social life. Given this statement, the qualitative method is the best fit for this study, as its main emphasis was on an important aspect of human relationships.
Additionally, several other authors and scholars have defended the use of qualitative research methods in their works. One defense came from Wildemuth (2009). In an article on social research methods in library science, Wildemuth believed qualitative researchers’ purpose is to understand behavior and institutions by getting to know the real person involved (e.g., their values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and emotions). Wildemuth continued by stating this type of effort is not usually present in quantitative research, thus making qualitative research much closer to the human subject than the quantitative method. Gorman and Clayton (2005) also endorsed the use of qualitative methodology as valid to extract information from a human perspective when they stated qualitative methods validate the facts given from quantitative research through real-life examples. In a discussion of qualitative research, Silverman (2017) shared several stories from human subjects to emphasize the importance of getting the story behind the research while revealing quantitative methods often miss these stories and thus the human aspect with regard to the phenomenon being studied.

In addressing the importance of qualitative method in the research world, Gorman and Clayton (2005) set the framework for understanding this method of investigation by addressing four questions, two of which were of major significance to this study. These questions were, “How does it differ from the quantitative framework?” and “How does it contribute to the information work?” In the book, Gorman and Clayton provided a detailed description of features that distinguish qualitative method from quantitative method and highlighted its potential for significant contributions to the information world. Thus, Gorman and Clayton made a case for the use of qualitative methods as opposed to quantitative methods of research.
Another defense of using qualitative over quantitative methods came from Berg (2009), who discussed qualitative research for social sciences. Berg pointed out a distinct difference between qualitative and quantitative methods, which makes qualitative method suited for this type of study. Berg emphasized that qualitative research often refers to meanings, concepts, characteristics, and descriptions of things and quantitative, in contrast, refers to counts and measures of things. Berg pointed out the motivation for doing qualitative research as opposed to quantitative comes from the observation that the ability to talk distinguishes humans from the natural world. Consequently, this research, as with most qualitative research, was designed to understand people and the social and cultural contexts in which they live.

The researcher followed a phenomenological approach to reveal meaning and understanding of the essence of the phenomena and gain information about participants’ experiences. According to Padilla-Diaz (2015), the phenomenological approach was a new qualitative research method developed in the mid- to late-1970s and has primarily been a tool for educational research. Padilla-Diaz believed all qualitative research has a phenomenological aspect to it. Its roots are in Sweden at the University of Gothenburg. The focus is on the experience of a phenomenon rather than on the phenomenon itself. In a delineation of phenomenological research, Moustakas (1994), specified the description of a phenomenon is comprised of what a person experienced and how that person experienced it. Moustakas considered the experience and behavior of the individual as inseparable. Ponce (2014) posited the aim of phenomenological research is to investigate the different ways in which people experience, perceive, apprehend, understand, and conceptualize various phenomena.
The emphasis of this study was on the experiences of individuals. Data were collected by way of interviews, questionnaires, and written descriptions by subjects. This approach allowed the researcher to get a thorough understanding of principals’ and assistant principals’ experiences with the cultural intelligence phenomenon and allowed participants to share insights on their experiences with diversity.

**Research Questions**

Within the context of this study, three research questions were investigated:

1. How culturally intelligent are middle school principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district?
2. What are the experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with teachers and students in culturally diverse settings?
3. How does cultural intelligence impact leadership practice of principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district?

**Study Limitations**

Several limitations were considered. One limitation was that experiences of principals and assistant principals may be different and subsequently may not reflect experiences of administrators in the other districts. Additionally, the population was small and there may be a lack of available and reliable data, thus adding to the limitations of the study (Giorgi, 2009). Because research participants were required to clearly articulate their thoughts and feelings about the experiences studied, it became difficult for them to express themselves due to embarrassment or other factors. Furthermore, cultural biases may be reflected in participants’ explanations or descriptions of lived experiences. It is generally believed researchers’ subjectivity is implicated in any research, particularly
in phenomenological research. Giorgi (1994) stated nothing could be accomplished without subjectivity. Finlay (2009) focused on six important questions centered around phenomenological research methods. One such question was: Should researcher subjectivity be set aside or be brought to the foreground? With this question in mind, Finlay concluded subjectivity in phenomenological research is necessary, as it brings out the interconnectedness between the researchers and the researched, which characterizes phenomenology.

The researcher used thick descriptions, describing the phenomenon in sufficient detail. This technique allowed the data obtained and conclusions drawn to be easily transferable to other times, settings, conditions, and people. Self-reported data limited validity and reliability because the researcher relied on what was said in interviews or questionnaires.

**Study Delimitations**

This study took place in a single urban school district in a small part of a particular state. Results cannot be generalized in other districts across the United States unless this study is replicated in a variety of ways and covering several other areas not covered in this research.

**Definitions of Key Terms**

*Culture*. Culture refers to the way of life embraced by a group of human beings that is transmitted from one generation to another. Culture also refers to the behaviors
and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group (e.g., the youth culture and the drug culture; Rothman, 2014).

*Cultural globalization.* Cultural globalization refers to the process by which a culture's experiences, values, and ideas are disseminated throughout the world through various means. Watson (2016) defined cultural globalization as “a phenomenon by which the experience of everyday life, as influenced by the diffusion of commodities and ideas, reflects a standardization of cultural expressions around the world” (para. 1). Watson (2016) believed cultural globalization was propelled by efficiency or appeal of wireless communications, electronic commerce, popular culture, or international travel.

*Cultural intelligence.* Cultural intelligence is a theory within management and organizational psychology, positing that understanding the impact of an individual’s cultural background on their behavior is essential for effective business. Cultural intelligence measures an individual’s ability to engage successfully in a culturally diverse environment or social setting. Cultural intelligence is measured on a scale, like that used to measure an individual’s intelligence quotient. Earley et al. (2006) believed people with higher cultural intelligence are regarded as better able to successfully blend into any environment, using more effective business practices than those with a lower cultural intelligence.

*Culturally responsive school leadership.* Culturally responsive leadership is derived from the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy. In a study conducted on culturally responsive school leadership, Khalifa et al. (2016) believed culturally responsive leadership involves those leadership philosophies, practices, and policies that create inclusive schooling environments for students and families from ethnically and
culturally diverse backgrounds. They stated some common practices include: (a) emphasizing high expectations for student achievement; (b) incorporating the history, values, and cultural knowledge of students’ home communities in the school curriculum; (c) working to develop a critical consciousness among students and faculty to challenge inequities in the larger society; and (d) creating organizational structures at the school and district levels to empower students and parents from diverse racial and ethnic communities.

*Globalization.* According to James (2015), globalization is the extension of social relations across world-space, defining world-space in terms of the historically variable ways it has been practiced and socially understood through changing world-time.

*Middle school principals.* This term refers to individuals who are employed full time as middle school principals. They may serve any combination of grades, such as Grade 6 through 8 or Grade 6 through 12. The term “middle school principals” may include those principals who serve in a school that spans Grades 1 through 8.

**Summary**

This phenomenological study was conducted to better understand or explore the cultural intelligence of principals and assistant principals and their experiences with diversity. Although there is growing research on leadership and cultural intelligence, there is a considerable lack of research on the cultural intelligence of school administrators. Findings from this research can add insight into the growing phenomenon of cultural intelligence and how this relates to school administrators.

This chapter presented an overall background, historical background, and current state of the field in which the problem exists. Deficiencies in the evidence regarding this
problem, along with the specific leadership problem, audience, and a statement of the problem, were presented. The chapter included a brief overview of the purpose of this study and the methodology to be used in gathering and analyzing the data. Study limitations, research questions, and definitions of the key terms were presented. Chapter 2 includes an in-depth review of the relevant literature.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Charmaz (2006) stressed that a researcher should have some knowledge of the existing literature in the area of study. In addition to knowledge of the literature, major theories related to that field should be understood before conducting research. This review took on a thematic approach, beginning with an analysis of the findings and ideas of early to more recent literature on leadership in general. An analysis of two specific types of leadership qualities, adaptive and flexible, which are of extreme importance when referring to cultural intelligence and diversity in the workplace, follows. Additionally, the review continues from general to specific with an analysis and synthesis of relevant literature relating to cultural diversity in the workplace, cultural intelligence, and the specific topic of how these are related to principals in schools.

Body of Literature Review

Researchers have studied leadership behaviors extensively since the 1950s. Most of the information from the research has been divided into three areas: task-oriented, relationship-oriented, and participative leadership. Developed in the 1970s, managers can use participative leadership to help identify decision procedures in different situations (Yukl, 2003). The roots of this theory can be traced back to the findings on motivation in the Hawthorn experiment in the 1930s. Researchers found, of the varying leadership styles adopted by leaders, a participative style can be effective and was culture bound, meaning it varied from culture to culture, was people oriented, and was democratic (Ali, 2017). Much of the research over the last 50 years has been dyadic; researchers have focused mainly on the relationship between one individual (a leader) and another specific individual (the follower).
The leadership field includes other follower-based theories, such as leader-member exchange, leader attributions about subordinates, follower attributes and implicit theories, follower contributions to effective leadership, and social learning theory (Northouse & Lee, 2016). Many follower-based theorists emphasize the importance of the followers’ role to a leader. The role of leaders is important as they make critical decisions that affect their followers. Other traditional theories, such as transactional and transformational leadership, focus on the leader-follower relationship (Northouse, 2004).

**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership has been the subject of much educational research (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood et al., 1999). Burns (1978) believed leaders could persuade followers through their leadership-teaching role. Burns believed leadership has a moral aspect to it. With this moral aspect, Burns (1978) stated transformational leadership “is grounded in conscious choice among real alternatives” (p. 36). Hallinger (2005) concurred with this idea of the importance of educational leadership and stated principals are considered instructional leaders who play an integral role in the organizational decisions and changes in their school environment. Power and influence are considered essential components of leadership and are extremely important to any organizational decisions and success. Another related but difficult leadership responsibility is leading change. The creation and establishment of a clear and compelling vision are not just useful but are also extremely critical for leaders to guide the organization through change. Throughout this process, the role of a leader is key, as leadership is fundamental to any organization. Researchers believe the performance of the organization, positive or negative, could be attributed to the organizational leaders (Anvari et al., 2014).
Rafiee et al. (2015) examined the new look of leadership in diverse workplaces, cross-cultural management, and challenges for global leaders. Rafiee et al. identified four elements that significantly challenged leadership in diverse workplaces, including (a) blended organizational culture, (b) group dynamics, (c) gender differences, and (d) cultural diversity. Raifee et al. discussed some of the essential skills needed for global leadership: (a) developing self-awareness, (b) understanding cultural stereotypes, (c) increasing self-assurance, (d) looking at the big picture, (e) creating a vision and being able to sell it, (f) developing a global mindset, and (g) building effective communication skills. Life depends on the ability to get along.

Lorenz et al. (2018) endorsed the importance of being culturally intelligent. In their study, Lorenz et al. identified a positive correlation between the role of metacognitive and cognitive cultural intelligence and expatriates’ innovativeness. Goksoy (2017) focused on the relationship between principals’ cultural intelligence levels and leadership and believed cultural leadership and cultural behaviors were of importance when considering leadership positions in educational institutions. Goksoy found ethical leadership and diversity were important. Sometimes, the style of leadership practiced in an organization was dependent on leaders’ ethical beliefs and their knowledge and acceptance of diversity (Göksoy, 2017). When considering ethical leadership and diversity, the issue is not whether leaders use their power, but whether they use it wisely and well; thus, ethical leaders encourage ethical behaviors and initiate efforts to stop unethical practices (Yukl, 2003). Successful diversity management can enhance and improve organizational performance (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2008).
Adaptable and Flexible Leadership

Leadership should be flexible enough to change directions when appropriate. Researchers Yukl and Mahsud (2010) emphasized this point when they explained flexible and adaptive leadership involves changing behaviors in appropriate ways as the situation changes. They further stated this flexibility in leadership is important with the changing times due to several factors. Such factors include but are not limited to (a) globalization, (b) international commerce, (c) rapid technological advances, (d) changing cultural values, (e) new forms of social networking, (f) more visibility of leader actions, (g) changing cultural values, and (h) a rapidly increasing diverse workforce (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010).

Globalization is gaining momentum, as is the need for change at a rapidly increasing pace. Leaders must approach problem solving for each circumstance uniquely. Glover et al. (2002) proposed adaptive and flexible leadership with three types of responses: (a) cultural trap, (b) natural selection, and (c) adaptive response. The first type is a cultural trap. This type of response occurs when a leader experiences a low level of assimilation and a low level of accommodation in response to changes in their environment (Glover et al., 2002). In a cultural trap-type response, the leader and organization are closed to options other than the status quo. Their culture forms the basis for their beliefs and how they do things. They operate to close off any thought of options working against the status quo. Information from the environment is either not accepted or not processed. Natural selection is another type of adaptive leadership response. Natural selection occurs when leaders experience a high level of assimilation and a high level of accommodation (Glover et al., 2002). Leaders experience a low level of
assimilation and high levels of accommodation in response to changes in their environment. With maximum adaptive capacity, leaders sometimes try to attain assimilation and accommodation. With this type, leaders respond to changes in the environment by engaging in high levels of assimilation and accommodation. Additionally, leaders can put aside biases and help the organization to adapt to required changes when deemed necessary (Glover et al., 2002).

Cultural Diversity in the Workplace

Over the years, leaders of various organizations have been trying desperately but are still struggling to understand differences and similarities among various cultures found within their organizations. Leaders’ efforts have rapidly increased with the introduction of new technology in the workplace (Chang, 2002). Today, more people live and work in foreign countries and continually encounter people from diversified cultural origins, involving language, norms, and lifestyle (Zakaria, 2000). Schools reflect similar transformations, as changes in society impact schools. Improvement and management of people on a global scale inevitably require leaders to deal with cultural diversity and problems associated with cultural diversity, such as motivation, leadership, productivity, and authority (Higgs, 1996; Selmer, 2002). Cultural diversity in all organizations holds great significance and meaning in educational institutions (Holtbrügge & Engelhard, 2016). Schools are mirror images of a global world, and as parents travel from one country to the next to work in these organizations, their children travel with them. As a result, schools mirror the diverse cultures of the world at large. Teachers bring diverse cultures to the school system, in addition to children and their families. Educators, as integral members of society, travel to various parts of the world to seek jobs. This
situation reflects the role of principals and assistant principals as they face the added task of dealing with not only the day-to-day aspects of leadership but also cultural diversity in their schools. Schools are considered open systems, and racially diverse societies require leaders who address the racial, cultural, and ethnic makeup of the school community (Brown et al., 2005).

According to Goyal and Shrivastava (2013), the diversity climate was important to organizational culture because a positive organizational diversity climate did not tolerate workplace harassment; the reverse was true for a negative, organizationally diverse climate. It is important for employees to closely examine their motivation for involvement in cross-cultural work, as this motivation strongly relates to effectiveness in cultural situations.

A school leader needs first to understand how each racial and ethnic group in a culturally and ethnically diverse school community is organized to support its members effectively. Patrick and Kumar (2012) stated diversity includes acceptance and respect. When a leader understands diversity in the workplace, it is highly likely they accept and respect the cultural differences in the workplace. Additionally, Patrick and Kumar (2012) believed diversity involves self-perception and how others perceive them. Researchers have frequently suggested diversity has positive effects on the workplace, as it broadens the group’s perspectives (Patrick & Kumar, 2012).

Cross-cultural interactions are no longer the exclusive domain of Peace Corps workers, anthropologists, missionaries, and state department diplomats. It is becoming the norm in this global climate to encounter people from vastly different cultural backgrounds. These encounters sometimes result in cultural clashes. The ability to
respect each other and work together effectively are current critical issues. Not only do individuals with high cultural intelligence survive our rapidly globalizing world, but they also thrive (Naughton, 2010).

**Culturally Diverse Leaders’ Influence**

Leaders in any organization, including those in the educational institutions, can influence their followers in many ways. In the schools, especially with middle-school children, the influence a principal can have over students cannot be denied; therefore, the level of influence can affect the level of success. A leader’s understanding of various cultures or the specific cultures present in the organization can be the factor that helps to effectively confront cultural differences. According to Tutar et al. (2014), leaders who are culturally aware can create an environment that allows employees from varying cultures to direct and manage differences in line with organizational goals. Leaders who are armed with cultural intelligence and possess certain leadership skills, such as transformational or transactional leadership, can effectively manage the differences that arise as a result of culture (House et al., 2004; Meyerson 2012).

With the growing phenomenon of the continuous flow of personnel integrating into the international market comes the need for school leaders who are competent and capable of leading in culturally diverse environments. Leadership styles and the cultural competence of these leaders are of extreme importance. Additionally, along with this increase in the global market comes the need for school leaders to make organizational changes to remain effective; however, it is difficult to institute these changes when there is resistance.
khal and Liu (2019) and Ahmad and Saidalavi (2019) indicated there is a positive relationship between managers’ cultural intelligence, global leadership, and leadership styles. The researchers discovered that when managers have high cultural intelligence, they respond better to many problems and issues in various cultural and social contexts (Ahmad & Saidalavi, 2019). Gelineau (2015) believed leadership was not effective if cultural intelligence was absent. Because leaders are considered the mainstay of a business and the main wheel that steers the business to success, it is extremely important to do whatever it takes to maintain effectiveness. When considered, businesses, economies, and the world are quickly becoming integrated and smaller. Many businesses are going global either physically or by way of the internet. These businesses need to produce or train leaders who are culturally intelligent and better able to handle cultural nuances and differences. A culturally intelligent leader can mitigate surprise elements and is capable of successful adaptation to unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context. Likewise, a culturally intelligent leader can recognize the characteristics of a dominant culture within an organization and make the necessary adaptations for a leadership style that matches that culture (Gelineau, 2015), hence emphasizing the importance of cultural intelligence as an integral tool in leadership management and effectiveness.

Several researchers argued school principals’ cultural intelligence and positive attitude toward their work could significantly affect the school’s success (Ersoy, 2014; Johnson & Fuller, 2014). Johnson and Fuller (2014) emphasized the multicultural and culturally responsive skills needed by 21st-century urban school leaders. Additionally, Johnson and Fuller believe when someone experiences cultural collusion (e.g., when students are at odds with the culture of the school), a defeatist outlook is developed, and
educators fail to reach out to students. These situations require culturally relevant leaders who encourage diverse teaching methods, value multiple voices, and create community connections; hence, cultural difference is a crucial factor in leadership effectiveness.

A principal’s cultural intelligence can either negatively alter or positively benefit the school population they lead. Researchers have shown cultural intelligence can be a determinant of leadership, especially when leaders are in culturally diverse environments (Collins et al., 2016). A principal’s awareness of cultural intelligence can affect daily decisions and interactions with teachers and students.

Livermore (2010b), president of the Cultural Intelligence Center, postulated that a diverse workplace with members who have developed their cultural intelligence is a productive workforce, and a diverse team with high cultural intelligence will outperform a homogenous team. Although basic social skills are important, cultural intelligence is especially important in stressful situations (Mitchell, 2014) and may be applied to principals and teams in the workplace. Mitchell (2014) also believed principals with high cultural intelligence were far more effective in the workplace than those with low cultural intelligence, especially when dealing with stressful situations.

A high cultural intelligence comes with the ability to ask the right questions, give the correct answers, and work with people from various groups as it relates to ethnicity, race, age, economic background, sexual orientation, industry, or work function. Organizations that want their employees to remain relevant and competitive and wish to attract top talents from a global perspective must realize high cultural intelligence for all stakeholders involved may be the gamechanger. Several researchers (e.g., Livermore et al., 2015; Mitchell, 2014) endorsed this idea. They agreed a good understanding of other
cultures determines effectiveness in the workplace. Likewise, effectiveness in the school systems can be determined not only by understanding other cultures but also by using this knowledge to foster better relationships with students and colleagues. According to Liao (2015), leaders who possessed high cultural intelligence can deal with and solve complex problems or issues by using their knowledge of individuals’ culture.

In a study on the role of cultural intelligence in cross-cultural leadership effectiveness, Ersoy (2014) asserted employees and leaders who possess a high level of cultural intelligence play an important role in bridging divides and knowledge gaps in an organization. Ersoy found they educated their peers about different cultures, transferred knowledge between otherwise contrasting groups, helped to build interpersonal connections, and smoothed the interpersonal processes in a multicultural workforce. Culturally intelligent employees possessed the potential to drive up innovation and creativity due to their ability to integrate diverse resources and help the business make the best use of the multiple perspectives a multicultural workforce brings to the workplace. Based on findings from the literature, the importance of being culturally aware and culturally intelligent cannot be stressed enough; therefore, principals and teachers alike need to know what cultural intelligence is and how it impacts their everyday work with children and colleagues.

There have been few research studies on the topic of culturally intelligent middle school principals and assistant principals; it is important additional research be conducted. This study extends the research, enabling principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders to have access to understanding the value of being culturally intelligent.
Cultural Intelligence

As the world becomes increasingly diverse, so do the workplace environments. As a result, many researchers are trying to find ways to explain the diversity phenomenon and its impact on the work environment, daily life, and regular interactions. Cultural intelligence, as posited by Livermore (2010a), is the ability to function effectively in various cultural contexts, such as ethnic, generational, and organizational cultures. Early and Mosakowski (2004) defined cultural intelligence as an individual’s natural ability to interpret ambiguous behavior in a similar way people from that person’s culture would have done. Thomas et al. (2008) deemed cultural intelligence to be a system of interacting knowledge and skills linked by cultural metacognition that allows people to adapt, select, and shape the cultural aspects of their environment. Also defined as an individual’s capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings, cultural intelligence is a multidimensional construct targeted at situations involving cross-cultural interactions arising from differences in race, ethnicity, and nationality (Azizpourm et al., 2013). Cultural intelligence encompasses a person’s ability to deal with cultural diversity effectively. Researchers can assess cultural intelligence through a variety of methods, such as a 20-question online survey instrument, peer evaluation, and newly developed multimedia situational judgment tests (Ang et al., 2011).

Four Domains of Cultural Intelligence

Earley and Ang (2003) defined the four domains of cultural intelligence as metacognitive (strategy), cognitive (knowledge), behavioral (action), and motivational (drive). The four factors complement each other as Ang and Van Dyne (2008) described
these factors as concepts for understanding the “variability in coping with diversity and functioning in new cultural settings” (p. 4).

Cultural intelligence drive (CQ drive, i.e., motivation; Livermore, 2010a) is interest and confidence in functioning effectively in culturally diverse settings. This often gets overlooked. Without the ample drive to take on the challenges that inevitably accompany multicultural situations, there is little evidence for success. Cultural intelligence knowledge (CQ knowledge, i.e., cognition) is knowledge about how cultures are similar and different (Livermore, 2010a). The emphasis is not on being an expert about every culture one encounters. That is overwhelming and impossible. Instead, to what extent does an individual understand some core cultural differences and the impact of these differences on oneself and others? Cultural intelligence strategy (CQ strategy, i.e., metacognition) is how an individual makes sense of culturally diverse experiences. It occurs when an individual makes judgments about their own thought processes and those of others. Can an individual plan effectively in light of cultural differences? Cultural intelligence action (CQ action, i.e., behavior) is the ability to adapt their behavior appropriately for different cultures. It involves having a flexible repertoire of responses to suit various situations while remaining true to themselves (Livermore, 2010a).

Cultural intelligence has some similarities with various approaches to cultural competence, but it differs in its specific ties to intelligence research. Livermore (2010a) believed cultural intelligence involves more than understanding the various cultures; it involves how such individuals adapt and solve problems as they relate to others in various cultural settings. Additionally, experiences with new cross-cultural situations can sometimes be different for people with similar cultural backgrounds (Livermore, 2010a).
Cultural intelligence is an overall capability you can take with you anywhere. An individual can benefit from cultural intelligence even if they are experiencing a culture for the first time, unlike approaches that place primary emphasis on learning all the accepted norms of specific cultures. Individuals can use cultural intelligence to become better relating to neighbors, classmates, and colleagues who come from other parts of the world, or an individual can use it to increase the chances a meme goes viral throughout the world. A study conducted by Tay et al. (2008) found an individual with multiple international working experiences, even if those experiences were relatively brief, was likely to have higher cultural intelligence than an individual who had lived overseas for several years in one or two locations.

CQ knowledge is particularly important in interactions with individuals of different cultures. This dimension indicates an individual’s knowledge of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultures, gained from experience and formal education (Ang et al., 2007). Triandis (1994) concurred: individuals who develop competence in this dimension have relatively high knowledge of the legal, economic, and social systems of various cultures and subcultures. Based on studies done by Ramalu et al. (2011), having a rich cultural knowledge of various cultures is critical in making accurate judgment and decisions when situations involve cultural diversity. This indicates, with knowledge of the other cultures, values, and norms, leaders may be better able to make accurate decisions in extremely sensitive situations.

Cultural intelligence is a skill, and it is the general belief that anyone can learn it. In any organization, it is to the benefit of all to improve or build their cultural intelligence to work together and benefit from diversity. A high cultural intelligence comes with the
ability to ask the right questions, give the right answers, and work with people from various groups as it relates to ethnicity, race, age, economic background, sexual orientation, industry, or work function. Organizations that want their employees to remain relevant, competitive, and wish to attract top talents from a global perspective must realize high cultural intelligence for all stakeholders involved may be the game changer. Several researchers, such as Livermore et al. (2015) and Mitchell (2014), endorsed this idea. They agreed effectiveness in the workplace was determined by a good understanding of other cultures.

According to Delphin-Rittmon (2012), when thinking of cultural intelligence in relation to an organization, leaders should examine the importance and benefits of high cultural intelligence to all organizations. Additionally, it is beneficial to have a culturally diverse organization; however, if the members are not culturally intelligent, then the purpose of diversity is defeated (Delphin-Rittmon et al., 2012). Cultural intelligence is not only important for the general workforce, but also the leaders, as they need to manage people and projects effectively and successfully from various cultural contexts (Livermore et al., 2015). MacDonald (2010) deemed cultural intelligence as important yet stated cultural intelligence should be considered an individual capability, which determines a person’s effectiveness in a culturally diverse setting. These ideas suggest improving cultural intelligence can only be beneficial in the present-day, diverse working environment. It is the general belief that increasing cultural intelligence can improve cross-cultural communication, relationship building, and conflict resolution (MacDonald, 2010). In their research on cultural intelligence, Deng and Gibson (2009) endorsed that a culturally intelligent leader is a necessity in recent working environments.
Kim (2004) determined high cultural intelligence was important in all facets of society, including educational institutions. Earley and Mosakowski (2004), contributing to the arguments for high cultural intelligence, affirmed an individual with high cultural intelligence could suspend judgment in a few days or a few hours. An individual with low cultural intelligence can take weeks or even months to suspend judgment. This notion suggests organizations are better suited to have employees, and especially leaders, with high cultural intelligence, as high cultural intelligence can improve the organization’s chance of success in a diverse economy.

Additionally, Mitchell (2014) postulated everybody needs cultural intelligence because it leads to increased productivity, and employees play an important role in bridging the divides and knowledge gap in an organization. Liao (2015) further stated developing employees’ cultural intelligence could ensure employees can deftly navigate the various cross-cultural boundaries that exist in the workplace and beyond. In a research study, Azizpourm et al. (2013) surveyed the relationship between cultural intelligence and job performance in a tractor factory. Azizpourm et al. discovered there was a significant relationship between each of the four dimensions of cultural intelligence (i.e., metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral) and job performance at Tabriz Tractor Factory. The highest positive correlation was found between behavioral and job performance. Azizpourm et al. suggested high cultural intelligence in the workplace was significant. A high cultural intelligence was a positive precursor to positive international work experiences (L’ Hommedieu Cavanaugh, 2007). L’Hommedieu Cavanaugh (2007) discussed an individual should possess cultural
intelligence to do well in culturally diverse situations. Furthermore, this intelligence can be developed through training or experience.

Cultural intelligence as a necessary tool for leadership success has been recommended and used in many business practices and establishments. Groves and Feyerherm (2011) discovered workers and leaders alike who possessed high levels of cultural intelligence were better able to adapt to changing environments. Groves and Feyerherm claimed cultural intelligence was the best tool for analyzing judgment. They further stated it was a better tool than emotional intelligence.

**Principals’ and Assistant Principals’ Experience With Cultural Diversity**

The importance of leadership and cultural intelligence cannot be overemphasized. Collins et al. (2016) endorsed the importance of cultural intelligence in the workplace and especially among school leaders. In a cross-cultural context, Ersoy (2014) stated leaders should (a) adopt a multicultural perspective rather than a country-specific perspective; (b) balance local and global demands, which can be contradictory; and (c) work with multiple cultures simultaneously, rather than working with one dominant culture.

Ersoy (2014) supported the idea successful leadership behaviors differ within cultures. Likewise, Dickson et al. (2003) asserted different cultural environments require different managerial behaviors. Thus, principals need to adjust to various cultural behaviors to effectively manage any cultural issues that may arise within the schools. Anvari et al. (2014) also endorsed a significant relationship between cultural intelligence and organizational commitment. In their discussions, the researchers found leaders needed the ability to adapt their skills to various and diverse cultural situations to be effective in the workplace. In a correlational study, Baltaci (2017) found a positive
relationship between the variables cultural intelligence and leadership. In the discussions, the researcher argued a school principal’s positive attitude towards work could significantly affect the school’s success. Baltaci suggested cultural intelligence was needed to help principals carry out entrepreneurial activities, such as having information about different people, interpreting this information, and learning different cultural components to support their entrepreneurial skills.

**Oppositional Theory**

Oppositional theory is related to the larger generalized context of race and intelligence. According to this theory, minority students intentionally underachieve in school and in standardized tests (Ogbu 2003) to avoid *acting White*. Adherence to White norms in the African American communities characterizes betrayal of the Black normative culture. Anthropologist Ogbu (2003) used case studies, the most famous of which examined the affluent neighborhood of Shaker Heights, Ohio, to research variables that represented oppositional culture. Ogbu included several explanations of academic disengagement based on African Americans’ self-perception of their workload, their own and White people’s academic efforts, and their own explanations for their disengagement. From this case study and other research, Ogbu formulated the theory of oppositional culture.

Although oppositional culture offers one explanation for the gap in racial educational achievements, there are alternative explanations for this phenomenon. Carter (2005), a sociologist at Stanford University, published findings that directly contradicted Ogbu’s (2003) research that African Americans viewed educational attainment as acting White. Ogbu showed through research in the book, *Keepin’ it Real: School Success*
Beyond Black and White, most minority students shared White normative values about the roles of work and success. Carter argues the possession of wealth and upper socioeconomic status did not confirm more interactions with one race over another. Ogbu insisted minorities on an upward mobility status are more inclined to associate with individuals from their same class than with someone from a similar racial identification.

**Summary**

A vast amount of literature on culture exists. Many authors have written articles on various types of cultures, as well as how these cultures affect students’ educational studies, behaviors, and interactions with peers conceptualizing cultures (Bhgoal, 2019), culture and love, and cultural identity conflict (Li et al., 2016). This chapter presented a discussion and review of the literature topics which form a basis for this research. The core ideas discussed included leadership in general, followed by the specific leadership theories of transformational, adaptive, and flexible leadership. The chapter included a review of the literature on diversity in the workplace, cultural intelligence, the oppositional theory, and a review of the literature of principals’ and assistant principals’ experiences with cultural diversity in the schools.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The researcher sought answers to three research questions derived from the topic. The research questions were:

1. **How culturally intelligent are middle school principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district?**

2. **What are the experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with teachers and students in culturally diverse settings?**

3. **How does cultural intelligence impact the leadership practices of principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district?**

This chapter includes the methodology used to gather information regarding the research questions and the reason for choosing this method. The chapter also includes a discussion of research design, data collection, instruments used to analyze the data, as well as a description of participants.

**Research Method**

The qualitative method is an evolutionary process that addresses the phenomenon studied. Barbour and Barbour (2003) evaluated and synthesized qualitative research and indicated qualitative research must show a connection to the question or questions explored. Additionally, Barbour and Barbour (2003) argued qualitative research made distinctive contributions to the research world based on the nature of its curiosity, the iterative research process, and its treatment of data analysis and findings. Within this approach, data collection and analysis often lead to additional questions or findings. According to Creswell (2013), it is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry. Creswell (2007) believed in a qualitative
study, the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning participants have or hold about the problem or issue and not the researcher’s meaning they bring to the research. Greenhalgh et al. (2016) advocated for qualitative research in an open letter to journal editors. In their research on clinical interventions, they stated that qualitative research would help them understand certain relationships between the healthcare system and the outside world. They believed it would reveal how patients experienced care and how practitioners think.

The researcher used a phenomenological approach to gain information and understanding of participants’ experiences. The phenomenological method describes the experience and the significance of that method (Wertz, 2005). A fundamental characteristic of phenomenological research is its rich, detailed description of the phenomenon. This method is the best choice for the study, as the aim was to understand principals’ and assistant principals’ experiences with cultural intelligence as they lived through them. Data were collected through a variety of means: interviews, questionnaires, written descriptions, and a cultural intelligence test (see Appendix A).

**Research Design**

An introduction to the topic area of research was presented in the previous chapter, including a description of the study’s research problem, several research purposes, and an identification of several terms key to the study. Also, a review of literature related to the major variables of cultural intelligence and principal interaction with students varying cultural backgrounds was presented.

A phenomenological approach was the specific design used to get the best sense of the proposed phenomenon studied. As a research design, it attempts to understand the
hidden meanings and the essence of the experience and how participants make sense of their experiences. In a study examining phenomenology as a tool for educational research, Padilla-Diaz (2015) confirmed phenomenology was developed in the mid- to late-1970s and has primarily been a tool for educational research. Padilla-Diaz also argued qualitative research is underlined by an element linked to the perceptions of participants studied. Despite that argument, Padilla-Diaz maintained all qualitative research has a phenomenological aspect to it. The roots of the phenomenological approach are in Sweden at the University of Gothenburg. The focus is on the experience of a phenomenon rather than the phenomenon itself. Ponce (2014) believed the aim is to investigate the different ways in which people experience, perceive, apprehend, understand, and conceptualize various phenomena.

Creswell (2013) and Maxwell (2012) discussed the importance of a phenomenological approach as it relates to qualitative research. Both indicated a phenomenological approach involves seeking to capture the sense of meaning participants give to their situations. Maxwell (2012) went further to affirm researchers get the most out of the data by interviewing, observing, and analyzing the spoken interactions of participants.

Phenomenology is a theoretical perspective often associated with qualitative research. In research of phenomenology and education, Eddles-Hirsch (2015) addressed the issue of phenomenology as a research method, although it is seen as a philosophy. Eddles-Hirsch indicated phenomenology differs from other modes of inquiry as it seeks to capture the essence of the phenomenon from the perspective of the people who are experiencing this phenomenon. Eddles-Hirsch further stated a key characteristic of this
model is its rich, detailed description of the phenomenon. According to Husserl (1931), perception enables us to go beyond the image. Therefore, when participants are asked to describe their experiences, they share unintentional experiences, which provide raw, uninterrupted images in consciousness. Husserl believed it becomes the special viewpoint achieved by the phenomenologist as the participant focuses not on things, but consciousness of things.

By giving meaning to participants’ culturally diverse experiences as leaders, the phenomenological approach not only allows them to describe these experiences but also allows them to provide background information on their cultural beliefs as they relate to leadership practices (Van Manen, 2017). Nichols et al. (2010) endorsed the idea of using a phenomenological approach when examining the insights an individual assigns to experiences with a phenomenon.

The phenomenological method was considered the best fit for this study simply because of its ability to provide the researcher with a profound, detailed understanding of the phenomenon been studied. Furthermore, this method adds value to the research as it includes the unique perspective of how people feel about the phenomenon rather than how the phenomena exist in a vacuum. According to Groenewald (2004), phenomenological researchers should consider these four principles: (a) person in context, (b) nature of conscious experience, (c) intentionality of directed action, and (d) situated human experience. All principles were considered for the research. However, two are significant, as they formed the basis for the choice of a phenomenological approach over others. The two principles were person in context and situated human experience.
The person in context allows for the importance of individual context (Groenwald, 2004). The researcher understands the value of the interplay between context, individuals, and consciousness. The researcher understands this value and listens to each participant’s response to understand the narrative and the person behind the narrative (Neubauer et al., 2019). In this study, the researcher understood each participant’s unique experiences with various cultures as they interacted with students and colleagues by listening to their responses. The second principle is situated human experience. According to Pollio et al. (1997), this principle “requires us to emphasize not only that there is a situation, but that situation is significant only in the unique way it is experienced by the person” (p. 15). The phenomenological researcher is interested in the person and the meaning embedded in their context. Therefore, in this study, the researcher gathered phenomenological data based on the unique experience of each administrator (principal and assistant principal).

This research explored the cultural intelligence of principals as they interacted with students of varying cultural backgrounds. The research included one-on-one interviews beginning with a few semi-structured questions, then moved on to an in-depth approach as its primary data collection. This method gave the researcher and participants opportunities to explore the issue of cultural intelligence in detail (Patton, 2014). In endorsing the idea of phenomenological interviews, Eddles-Hirsch (2015) concurred this type of study, the in-depth interview, allows the researcher to gain the essence of phenomenon investigated. Interviews began with questions such as, “Have you traveled to other countries outside the United States?” This question was followed up with,
“Where have you traveled?” and “How long did you stay?” As anticipated, principals talked about a wide variety of topics throughout the interviews.

Because the qualitative research approach enables the researcher to understand and explain personal experiences of individuals and to experience research issues from the participants’ perspective, the in-depth interview method used to collect the data supported participants in gaining a profound understanding of the research questions. Ticehurst and Veal (2000) believed in-depth interviews are optimal for collecting data on individuals’ personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics were explored. According to Mathers et al. (2009), an interview is an important data-gathering technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the subject. As described by Wimpenny and Savin-Baden (2012), the interview is grounded in the theoretical tradition of phenomenology, emphasizing the researcher in the process.

In an article discussing the essentials of qualitative research analysis, Patton (2014) specified certain characteristics of in-depth research (e.g., in-depth interviews are usually long). Therefore, interviews not completed in a day were completed the following day or at a date and time convenient to the participant. Furthermore, email interviews were given as an option. Ten interviews were conducted to gather as much data as possible, along with clarifying follow-up interviews. The interviews were recorded and varied in length between 25 and 45 minutes. They were informal, open-ended, and embraced a conversational style. For clarification questions, the researcher either requested another face-to-face meeting or phone call or sent an email, whichever was convenient for participants. In addition to interviews, participants completed the cultural intelligence tests (CQ tests) as outlined next. The researcher hand delivered and emailed
approximately 20 demographic surveys. Ten surveys were returned, representing the 10 participants in the study.

**Instruments**

Several instruments were used to gather the relevant data. These instruments included a demographic survey, one-on-one interviews, and the CQ test. The first instrument was the 20-item, four-factor Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) developed by cultural intelligence experts Ang et al. (2007) from the Cultural Intelligence Center.

**Validity and Reliability**

Cox (1996) stated, “A questionnaire is useful only to the extent that it collects accurate information. And for data to be accurate, questionnaire items must be precise” (p. 8). Creswell (2009) advised researchers that it is best to locate or modify an existing instrument rather than creating their own. Furthermore, Creswell believed an instrument needed to have certain characteristics before it is considered to be valid. Creswell thought it should be recently developed, widely cited by other authors, have published reviews, and be reliable and valid. The cultural intelligence inventory created by the Cultural Intelligence Center is precise, developed recently, widely tested, cited often, and published, thus making it a valid and reliable instrument for this study.

To test the validity and reliability of the inventory used in a study, Ang and Van Dyne (2008) conducted six studies using the tool. These studies examined scale development, means, mode, standard deviations, scale reliability, inter-correlations, the participants’ ability to generalize across countries, and the ability to generalize across methods. Finally, in Study 6, they looked at discriminat and incremental validity of the tool. From a theoretical perspective, findings from the six studies indicated the 20-
question CQS holds promise as a reliable and valid measure of cultural intelligence. Potential uses of the scale in substantive research included further exploration of the nature of dimensionality of cultural intelligence.

**Interviews**

In addition to the CQS self-inventory, school leaders participated in an in-depth one-on-one interview, using mostly open-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow participants to answer based on their complete knowledge, feelings, and understanding of the issue presented. The responses are not narrow and limited but allow for deep probing into participants’ answers.

Denzin (2001) considered the interview as an interpretive practice where it functions as a narrative device allowing participants or interviewees to tell stories of their rich experiences. In an article focusing on qualitative interviews and observations, Jamshed (2014) explained practices are challenged, recorded, and reinforced in the framework of the qualitative interview. Jamshed further emphasized the in-depth interview as one commonly and widely used in research. Ryan et al. (2009) also endorsed the importance of face-to-face interviews as they offer the researcher the opportunity to interpret non-verbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions. This method gave the researcher a better understanding of how participants might have felt when asked questions dealing with cultural relevance.

Each participant shared individual demographic information in the interview, including cities in which they lived, countries to which they traveled, lengths of stays, languages spoken, and ethnic backgrounds. Participants then answered detailed open-ended questions relating directly to four specific areas of cultural intelligence: meta-
cognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral. Questions were asked based on Patton’s (2002) six kinds of questions. These included questions on behaviors, values, and attitudes towards various cultural perspectives. Questions included those based on knowledge of cultural intelligence and the cultural orientations of the members of their specific populations. These questions were reviewed and pilot tested before the actual interviews. Majid et al. (2017) conducted a study of pilot testing interview questions for qualitative research. They supported pilot testing as vital to the interview process when conducting qualitative research.

The order of questions asked was designed to progress from less invasive and less reflective to in-depth and introspective, easing the respondent into conversation, allowing each to feel more comfortable and to become more candid over time as the relationship between interviewer and interviewee developed. This technique led to richness in data collection and reliable responses (Dejonckheere & Vaughn, 2018).

**Participants**

The demographic area was selected due to rich variations in culture and backgrounds; however, the vast population and diversity limited the study of such a large group. It was necessary to delimit the setting and use purposeful and selective sampling to choose a small number that represented the whole. Purposeful sampling was used to select “information rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest” (Palinkas et al., 2015, p. 533). Patton (1990), in *Qualitative Designs and Research Methods*, lauded the importance of purposeful sampling in qualitative research. Patton explained purposeful sampling allows for flexibility in selecting participants for a study. Patton (2014) stated the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-
depth studies. A great deal can be learned about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research from these information-rich cases (Patton, 2014).

The population for this study consisted of principals and assistant principals of schools with diverse student and staff populations. The schools were in the southwestern section of a large, inner-city public-school district. Initially, a total of 20 school leaders were contacted by emails, telephone calls, and personal visits. This initial list of 20 school leaders was selected based on recommendations from other principals with whom the researcher was familiar. From this number, 15 principals and assistant principals responded. The first 10 school leaders were chosen from this number. The choice of 10 was based on the schools’ level of diversity. According to Creswell (2009), this number is adequate to observe general thoughts, themes, and recurring patterns. Crouch and McKenzie (2006) proposed that less than 20 in a sample size allows the researcher to build and maintain close relationships and thus improve the open and frank exchange of information. This size helped to mitigate some biases and validity threats inherent in qualitative research. If the researcher did not get 10 participants in the first attempt, then another 10 school leaders would have been contacted. It was anticipated a total of at least 20 interviews would be conducted. Interviews were conducted over at least 2 days for each participant. This schedule accommodated the event of incomplete sessions. A second face-to-face or phone call session was planned when the researcher had clarification questions while analyzing the data.

All interviews were recorded, except for the two sent by email. Interview times varied from 25 to 45 minutes. Initial access was gained to participants through phone
conversations, visiting their schools, and having face-to-face conversations with them. Emails were used as access tools as well.

Ethical foundations of human subject research have been grounded in three basic principles: respect for person, beneficence, and justice (Ross et al., 2018). The ethical principle of respect for person, to protect participants, guided the research. Furthermore, a detailed explanation and participation requirements were given to the school leaders before they consented to the study. Informed consent is considered the core principle of “ethical research involving human subjects” (National Research Council, 2003, p. 2). The informed consent demonstrated transparency and allowed participants to choose whether to participate (see Appendix B).

Protecting the identity of participants in any study should be of paramount importance (Paoletti, 2014). The identity of each participant was protected using code names. Materials, information, and any other documentation about participants were locked away in a secure location only accessible to the researcher. Data will be shredded after approximately 3 years.

**Data Analysis Methods**

Based on the recommendations of Creswell (2009), a systemic approach was used to analyze the data. According to Husserl (1962), the phenomenological approach uses the principle that scientific knowledge begins with an unbiased description of its subject matter. With this approach, Merriam and Tisdell’s (2015) components of data analysis were followed. This process included simultaneously collecting and analyzing data, organizing data into narrative accounts of findings, developing categories or themes that interpret data, and finally, explaining the phenomenon and how it is related. The open
coding approach was used. This approach allowed for identifying various themes, patterns, and categories based on the interviews and from the results of the CQ tests. To prepare the data for analysis, the researcher transcribed the verbal descriptions and interviews. The information was then read without a research focus to grasp participants’ expressions and meanings in a broad context. From the information, meaningful patterns and categories related to the focus of the research were identified. According to Tesch’s (1990) steps for coding data, the researcher gets an understanding of the documents to find explicit meaning, clustering and then coding topics using abbreviations, categorizing the topics using descriptions, finalizing abbreviations for categories, alphabetizing codes, assembling data by category, performing preliminary analysis, and recoding when necessary. The researcher read and manually coded the transcribed data.

The researcher expected data analysis and subsequent results might be free from anything that would skew the findings. This expectation is not the case in most, if not all, data analysis, as there may be outliers that affect results. The small size of participants in this study was due to the proportion of school leaders to the rest of school leaders in the same district with diverse populations. Disaggregating the data addressed the size. Disaggregating data involves the researcher collecting numerical and nonnumerical information from multiple sources and individuals, compiling the information into aggregated data, and then breaking it into parts or smaller units of data (Great Schools Partnership, n.d.). For this study, the researcher disaggregated information collected during interviews to distinguish the cultural intelligence of principals and assistant principals and to distinguish their experiences in diverse settings.
Limitations

This study was limited; the population was small, and there may have been a lack of available and reliable data (Giorgi, 2009). Additionally, because research participants were required to articulate their thoughts and feelings about the experience clearly, it might have been difficult to express themselves due to embarrassment or other factors. Moreover, cultural biases may have been reflected in participants’ explanations or descriptions of their experiences.

Researcher subjectivity is implicated in any research, particularly in phenomenological research. Giorgi (1994) stated nothing could be accomplished without subjectivity. Therefore, subjectivity in phenomenological research is necessary, as it brings out inter-subjective and interconnectedness between researchers and subjects, which characterizes phenomenology (Finlay, 2009). Another limitation may exist in the data presentation. The subjectivity of the data may lead to difficulty in achieving reliability and validity. The results may not be statistically reliable even when there is a larger sample. Self-reporting data may limit validity and reliability because the researcher relied on interviews. Since samples all came from the same school district, it may be a limitation that most districts have students from similar cultural backgrounds. This limitation may cause an issue with findings and data analysis because of the lack of variety in cultures present.

Delimitations

The research topic was chosen because of the researcher’s curiosity regarding administrators’ cultural intelligence and the need to improve cultural awareness of educators, especially those in leadership positions in school systems. As a result, the
study was limited to principals and assistant principals, as they were the target population of the research.

Another delimitation was the limit to the number of participants. The number was limited to only 10 principals and assistant principals from one school district in New York City, because of time constraints. The researcher only had a limited time to complete this study and the decision was made to study a small, unbiased group from a large population. Results of this study are not generalizable to principals and assistant principals who work in middle schools within multicultural urban areas across the country, as their experiences may be different.

**Summary**

Chapter 3 provided details of a traditional method of qualitative research. The purpose of this qualitative study was twofold. The first was to understand the cultural intelligence levels of principals and assistant principals in middle schools. Another purpose was to examine if they understand the impact of their level of cultural intelligence on students and teachers with whom they interact daily. This chapter included a discussion of research methods and a presentation of the design and procedures. The chapter included a discussion of the types of instruments used. The number and types of participants, how they were contacted, and how their anonymity has been maintained were presented. Furthermore, the chapter included a discussion of how data were collected and analyzed, along with a detailed explanation of analytical procedures. Finally, the chapter ended with a discussion of limitations encountered during the research process.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter provides a descriptive account of the data analysis and data collection. The researcher aimed to explore the cultural intelligence of principals and assistant principals and identify how level of cultural intelligence impacts daily leadership practices through this study. Data were collected through interviews, demographic questionnaire, and a CQ test. This approach allowed the researcher to get a thorough understanding of principals' and assistant principals’ experiences with the cultural intelligence phenomenon and allowed participants to share insights regarding their experiences with diversity.

This research was a qualitative phenomenological study. The guiding research questions were:

1. How culturally intelligent are middle school principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district?
2. What are the experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with parents and students in culturally diverse settings?
3. How does cultural intelligence impact the leadership practices of principals and assistant principals?

Descriptive information was collected from interviews of 10 principals and assistant principals regarding their cultural intelligence, their experiences, and how cultural intelligence affects their daily interactions with students, colleagues, and parents. The thematic analysis approach and manual qualitative open coding were used to analyze and synthesize data from the research. Researchers using the thematic analysis approach strive to identify patterns of themes in the interview data. Thematic analysis is a flexible
method used for explorative studies, without a clear idea of what patterns the researcher may be searching for, and for deductive studies, when researchers know the exact area of interest (Nowell et al., 2017).

Open coding allows for direction in a research study and helps the researcher become focused and selective. It is a process of reducing data to a small set of themes that appear to describe the phenomenon under investigation (Glaser, 2016). Once data were collected and transcribed, they were scrutinized for commonalities that reflected themes or categories. Recurrent themes were identified, four categories emerged, and findings were summarized under thematic headings. The four main themes derived from the transcribed narratives were:

- opportunities and drive to interact with different cultures outside their school district,
- level and awareness of cultural intelligence,
- experiences interacting with others in culturally diverse settings, and
- impact of cultural intelligence on leadership practice.

Several subthemes, such as trust, culturally sensitive, authenticity, communication barrier, assumptions, implicit bias, modeling, equity training, and reflection, emerged from the interview, which further explained their experiences with diversity and its effects on leadership practices. Additionally, data gathered from the CQ test were tabled and organized to reveal each participant’s level of cultural intelligence.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section covers the ethnicity distribution of the school district and individual schools’ demographics and ethnicity distributions. The second section describes the demographic information of participants.
The third section covers a description of the narrative data from the interviews and written responses based on emerging themes and subthemes. The fourth section is a presentation of the data from the CQ test. The fifth section includes a summary of the chapter.

Demographics and Ethnicity Distributions

The school district is comprised of students and their families, teachers, and administrators from various ethnic backgrounds. Table 1 shows the ethnic distribution for this school district. Participating school demographics are listed next for each individual school and presented in Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. The participating schools' ethnicity distributions are represented in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage in District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District Ethnicity Distribution
Table 2

School A Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWDs</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Fam</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. English language learners (ELLs); students with disabilities (SWDs)

Figure 1

School A Ethnicity Distribution
Table 3

*School B Demographics*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWDs</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* English language learners (ELLs); students with disabilities (SWDs)

Figure 2

*School B Ethnicity Distribution*
### Table 4

*School C Demographics*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWDs</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* English language learners (ELLs); students with disabilities (SWDs)

### Figure 3

*School C Ethnicity Distribution*
**Table 5**

*School D Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>216</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWDs</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* English language learners (ELLs); students with disabilities (SWDs)

**Figure 4**

*School D Ethnicity Distribution*
Table 6

School E Demographics

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWDs</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. English language learners (ELLs); students with disabilities (SWDs)*

Figure 5

School E Ethnicity Distribution
Table 7

School F Demographics

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWDs</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* English language learners (ELLs); students with disabilities (SWDs)

Figure 6

School F Ethnicity Distribution
Presentation of Findings

Findings in this section were based on data from a set of 10 interview questions and information from the CQ test. This study was comprised of 10 participants: three principals and seven assistant principals from six schools. The interview questions were divided into two parts: demographics and face-to-face interviews (see Appendix C).

Participants’ Demographic Information

Initial questions were asked to gather demographic information from each participant (e.g., How many years have you been in the field of education?; Do you speak a language other than English?; Have you lived or traveled outside of New York or the United States? Where?). Each participant was given a title and a letter to protect identities. Participants and their schools were given the same letters. For example, Principal A was from School A, Assistant Principal A1 and A2 were from School A. The information that follows represents their responses and each participant’s school demographic and ethnic distributions.

Principal A

Principal A (from School A) has been in the field of education for 22 years. He has been an assistant principal for 10 years and a principal for the past 5 years. Other than English, Principal A speaks Spanish. He has never lived outside the United States but has traveled to several other countries such as Mexico, Bahamas, and Burma on vacation. He has been to several states outside of New York.
**Assistant Principal A1**

Assistant Principal A1 worked in the same school as Principal A, School A. He has been a teacher for over 14 years. He joined the administrative field 4 years ago as an Assistant Principal. He speaks only English but has traveled to several countries or regions where the native language is not English, such as Mexico and Canada. A native New Yorker, he has lived all his life in New York. He has traveled to other states such as Georgia, Pennsylvania, Florida, and New Jersey on vacations.

**Assistant Principal A2**

Assistant Principal A2 worked in the same school as Principal A and Assistant Principal A1, School A. She has been an educator since 1999 and has been an Assistant Principal for 7 years. She speaks only English and lived in the United Kingdom for several years. She has traveled to countries such as Dubai, Costa Rica, South Africa, and Jamaica.

**Principal B**

Principal B has been in education for over 24 years. She spent 4 of the 17 years in administration as an Assistant Principal and has been a principal at School B for the past 13 years. She has traveled to many other states and has lived in France for a few years. In addition to speaking English, she speaks French.

**Assistant Principal B**

Assistant Principal B works in School B. Assistant Principal B was teacher since 1999 and served the past 8 years as an assistant principal. Assistant Principal B has dedicated his life to education for 20 years. He is a native New Yorker who has never
lived in any other state or country. He has traveled to Israel and Mexico on several occasions on vacation. He does not speak a language other than English.

**Principal C**

Principal C has devoted 20 years in the field of education. She has been a principal for the past 5 years. Principal C only speaks English but has traveled to several countries such as Mexico and the Bahamas on vacation. She has not lived outside of New York but has visited other states on vacation.

**Assistant Principal C**

Assistant Principal C has been in the field of education for over 20 years and has been a member of the administrative department for 5 years. According to him, he speaks “a little Spanish.” He has traveled to several countries, such as Europe, the Bahamas, China, and the Dominican Republic, among others on vacations.

**Assistant Principal D**

Assistant Principal D has been in the field of education for 29 years. He has been an assistant principal for the past 8 years. He speaks only English. He is a Caribbean native and has been living in New York for the past 18 years. He has traveled to several countries such as Mexico, Jamaica, and England on vacation. He has been to Florida and Georgia for vacation purposes.

**Assistant Principal E**

Assistant Principal E has been in education for 27 years, and this was her third year in administration. She is not fluent in any other language. She speaks only English. Like Assistant Principal D, she is also a Caribbean native and has been living in the
United States for over 18 years. She has traveled to countries such as Canada, Mexico, Bahamas, Finland, and Jamaica.

**Assistant Principal F**

An educator for over 30 years, she dedicated her life to the classroom and has been in administration for 8 years. She speaks English and has traveled to several countries outside of the United States.

**Data From Face-to-Face Interviews and Written Responses**

Face-to-face, in-depth interviews were conducted with eight participants using open-ended questions to determine the administrators’ (principals and assistant principals) experiences when dealing with parents and students in culturally diverse settings and how cultural intelligence impacted their leadership practice. Two participants chose to submit written responses. Interviews in the phenomenological paradigm were conducted to ascertain detailed information about the experiences of principals and assistant principals. Interviews consisted of a total of 10 questions with follow-up questions to establish additional details regarding the original question asked. Seven of these interviews were recorded and transcribed.

After the transcriptions and written answers were received, data from the interviews were manually coded using thematic analysis and open coding methods. Four main themes emerged (a) opportunities and drive or interest to interact with different cultures outside school; (b) level and awareness of culture and cultural intelligence; (c) experiences interacting with others in culturally diverse settings; and (d) impact of cultural intelligence on leadership practice. Additionally, several subthemes such as trust,
culturally sensitive, authenticity, communication barrier, assumptions, and implicit bias appeared to be constant in the responses.

**Research Question 1**

How culturally intelligent are principals and assistant principals? For Research Question 1, there were two themes: (a) Opportunities and Drive to Interact With Different Cultures and (b) Levels and Awareness of Cultural Intelligence. Related subthemes such as culturally sensitive, implicit bias, and authenticity also emerged from this question.

**Theme 1: Opportunities and Drive to Interact With Different Cultures.** The interview and demographic questions, such as “Have you visited another country, and have you lived outside of New York or the United States?” solicited information regarding this area. Of the 10 participants, only two spoke a language other than English. Five participants lived in another country and therefore lived outside of New York. All 10 participants traveled outside of the United States and New York. “I have visited other countries on multiple vacations but only for 1 or 2 weeks at a time,” commented Assistant Principal E. Eight participants shared this sentiment. Participants expressed interest and motivation to interact with others of varying cultures within and outside their schools; however, they expressed concern that despite the interest and the many vacations taken, they did not get enough opportunities for substantial interactions to help them understand or get to know more about other cultures.

**Theme 2: Level and Awareness of Cultural Intelligence.** This theme highlighted participants’ level of cultural intelligence, which categorized participants as having poor, average, good, or very good cultural intelligence. It focused on awareness and understanding of cultural intelligence. Interview Questions 3, 4, and 9 were asked in
this section. Question 3 required participants to explain their understanding of the terms culture and intelligence and to reflect on the terms when placed together as cultural intelligence. All 10 participants had an operational definition of culture and intelligence as separate terms. They all agreed or understood culture as something that had to do with food, beliefs, and how people define themselves. The comments of Assistant Principal A1 provided an example of their perceptions of cultural intelligence: “To me culture is really systems, beliefs, ideas, rituals, in terms of a group of individuals that subscribe to such ideologies.” Likewise, Assistant Principal E mentioned, “Culture is related to the unique practices such as dance, dress, and food.” When asked to define the term, all participants except one were able to articulate their understanding of the term cultural intelligence. Assistant Principal B1 saw culture as the way people define themselves as a group with similar beliefs. Assistant Principal D believed cultural intelligence was:

A person’s appreciation with the different cultures that we have. How we treat each other, how we look at different food, culture, different activities that are being highlighted within different cultures and appreciate them.

Assistant Principal F endorsed this definition as “the manner in which one works and relates with those from other cultures.”

Question 4 required participants to talk about their understanding of individuals from different cultures. All participants acknowledged a familiarity of at least one culture in the school where they work. They all had limited knowledge of cultural intelligence and limited knowledge of the cultures present in their schools. Principal C has knowledge of the Muslim culture and stated, “What I find for the most part, it’s the men who handle the business.”
Principal A explained his understanding of Caribbean (Jamaican, Trinidadian) and Hispanic cultures: “The intricacies of the culture that makes it distinct, that makes it different; clothing, dress.” Assistant Principal D seemed to have knowledge of the Yemen culture and stated:

In my school we have people from Yemen. I know they are Arabic. They don’t believe in the notion of women working in the marketplace. The women they stay at home and take care of the children. The men go out and work. It’s Islamic belief. It’s the man’s utmost responsibility to take care of his family. He also thinks the Hispanic American culture is family oriented.

Despite some participants knowing some cultures, there were still other participants who were not aware of some cultures present in their schools.

**Subthemes: Culturally Sensitive, Implicit Bias, and Authenticity.** Three subthemes emerged from this section. These subthemes were culturally sensitive, implicit bias, and authenticity. Participants described differences from their peers based on these three areas. Interview Question 9 required participants to describe their perceptions of how their level of cultural intelligence differs from that of their peers. Four of the 10 participants responded with an “I don’t know.” Principal B explained, “The problem is, I don’t necessarily know how my peers handle it.” Assistant Principal B1 responded, “I don’t know because I don’t know what their level of cultural intelligence is.”

Even though they all responded in like manner, there was a common thread throughout the extension of their individual responses. All four participants pointed out that differences came down to authenticity, implicit bias, and being culturally sensitive. Principal C explained that many colleagues try to be politically correct to please the crowd, but they are not authentic in their behavior towards people from other cultures. Principal C stated:
See, I think that all principals when they are engaging in a workshop, they all want to engage properly, even if they think differently. . . . I am not sure whether people answered certain questions for shock value to have a form of discussion or whether that was really their belief system.

Principal A believed he was a “work in progress,” and therefore, he was open to learning as the experiences have had positive and negative impacts on him. He stated:

So, my experiences with cultural intelligence, culturally relevant pedagogy or just culture, being culturally sensitive, implicit bias and all that stuff impacts me greatly. . . . But I feel that I am much more acutely aware of it than my peers because I am sensitive to the impacts of implicit and explicit bias as I have also experienced them.

Assistant Principals A1, D, E, and F also considered authenticity as an important factor that differentiated them from their peers. Assistant Principal D stated:

It has to do with authenticity. Because you have people who, based on their background they may not be authentic. They are just playing the role, because they know people are observing them and they are afraid of litigation or certain things.

In addition to thinking authenticity was a major factor, Assistant Principal A1 responded in affirmation when asked if his level of cultural intelligence was different from his peers:

I am very observant. In being observant and have become sensitive to various cultures over the years. I’ve also learned to watch people, how they move, how they interact, and I get sort of caught up in the nuances of how people do things differently. That’s just me and I think that’s what separates me from my colleagues.

Assistant Principal E also responded positively to this question. Assistant Principal E believed her level of cultural awareness was more developed than her peers because:

I am from a different cultural background and several of my close friends are also. Interacting with people from around the world and visiting different countries have helped me to be more sensitive to other cultures and aware of other cultures while growing my cultural intelligence and develop an understanding of differences that I might encounter through different groups.
The participants were sensitive to various cultures; however, they experienced implicit biases and most of them expressed the belief that being authentic is important to overcoming cultural biases.

**Research Question 2**

What are the experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with teachers and students in culturally diverse settings? The theme related to this question was experiences interacting with others in culturally diverse settings and the subtheme was communication barriers and making assumptions.

**Theme 3: Experiences Interacting With Others in Culturally Diverse Settings**

**Settings.** This section shares some of the physical, emotional, and mental experiences participants had while interacting in culturally diverse settings. Participants shared physical, emotional, and mental struggles while dealing with diversity. Research Question 2 was answered with Interview Questions 5, 6, 7, 8. When asked about their experiences in culturally diverse settings, all participants' responses included communication barriers and making assumptions as their biggest struggles.

**Subthemes: Communication Barriers and Making Assumptions.**

Communication barriers and making assumptions were main struggles when dealing with someone from another culture. Assistant Principal D stated:

The first struggle I faced with individuals from different cultures is the language. As an administrator I am totally ignorant of the language especially that from the Middle East. Therefore, I try to use Google to pick up some of the words, critical words that I’ll use. Words like “please be quiet” Words like good morning, good afternoon, just to make them more comfortable around me.

Assistant Principal D also recounted an incident in which an assumption was made because of a preconceived idea. Assistant Principal D stated:
She had preconceived notions about me. Because in my school you would never know that I am an administrator, because it’s a small school, the way I was dressed. I didn’t wear a suit and tie and we assume many roles.

Principals C and A reported their struggles were in getting to know the many different cultures, implicit bias, and racism. According to Principal C, she had to learn the cultures of the Muslim Faith from a different perspective, “from outside the country.” She recounted an incident in which misunderstanding and making assumptions created tensions in relationships with others. Principal C stated:

I remember when in college as an ambassador I was paired with international students and part of our responsibilities were to help these students transition into the American culture. Wow! Some of the males from Africa were not very embracing! It wasn’t totally disrespectful, but it was almost like the males felt a sense of entitlement and there were certain expectations of me regardless. This encounter prepared me for the girls I would later meet at my school. Now I understand how the cultures treat women and men in different ways.

Principal C continued to state her understanding of some of the cultures she encountered during her many years working with children and families from various cultural backgrounds. She stated:

And so, with that came a lot of restrictions for the girls. So, we had to kind of learn about how females and males interact in those countries. And then we had to adjust some of the things that we were doing to be able to embrace their culture, and what was respectful for them.

Based on Principal’s A experiences, he struggled with racism and implicit biases, not just those meted out to him, but also biases he had of others from different cultures. He stated, as an administrator, he struggled with people having those implicit biases and making assumptions about him because he is Black.

When asked about the assumptions she has regarding the cultures, Assistant Principal F acknowledged she often grouped them together “under the same umbrella
instead of dealing with them based on individual characteristics.” She went on to describe an incident in a class where:

I assumed that all Hispanics eat the same type of food and they all cook the same way. I was so wrong! A student corrected me. She explained some of the dishes that are truly Puerto Rican, Dominican or Mexican.

In experiences with other cultures, participants were asked if they planned before interacting with others from other cultures. Seven of the 10 participants reported they did not plan before interacting with individuals of other cultures. Assistant Principal B1 responded that he does not plan; his encounters happen organically. Assistant Principal A1 stated he used information and experiences from his wife, who works with many Asians and people of other cultures, to help with interactions. Principal B referred to planning before encounters as “making assumptions.” Principal B stated:

If for example, you’re meeting someone from Bengali then you have never met this person before. This is the first encounter with that culture. . . . Because what’s the general thing thought about Bengali parents? Oh, they tend to be more involved. Oh, they push their kids to be the top . . . because the truth is, maybe a lot of them do. But that doesn’t mean that all of them do.

Assistant Principals C, D, E, and F planned before an encounter with someone of a different culture. Assistant Principal E stated whenever she has a planned event or meeting with someone from a different culture, she researches their cultural habits: “their social habits, behavior and also the types of food they eat so that when we meet, I have been prepared for their social norms, so my interactions are culturally appropriate and sensitive.”

Assistant Principal D affirmed he prepared by getting interpreters, such as a Spanish liaison, who helps to alleviate the communication issues and barriers they encounter during interactions with parents and students. Assistant Principal F indicated,
“First get an understanding of them and what they value. Also, must take in their interest and find ways to hold their attention, whether it’s by learning a few words in their mother language or simply inquiring about them.”

When asked to discuss thoughts and behaviors after interactions, seven participants said they thought about the interactions after. Most reflected on this interaction. According to Assistant Principal A1, he was constantly reflecting, “Did I say the correct thing? Did I say it correctly? Did I come off too harsh with my wording? Was it effective?” Assistant Principal F’s reply was, “My thoughts and reflections are often that of an eye-opener. One gets to reflect on how much stereotype goes on in dealing with others from other cultures. We have to be accepting of others and be more open minded.”

When asked if this eye opener alters her behaviors and thoughts, she replied, “Sure! I see how my assumptions and the assumptions of my colleagues can sometimes negatively affect how we deal with the children we interact with daily. And not only the kids, but their parents too.”

Implicit bias, equity training, and professional development for administrators stood out among all participants when asked about techniques used to help others (Interview Question 8), especially students and colleagues they work with to become culturally intelligent. All participants sought ways to become culturally relevant and sensitive and to improve their cultural intelligence. Assistant Principal A2 stated she tried to find commonalities and encouraged staff members to learn about culturally responsive teaching. She took initiative to send teachers she supervises to culturally responsive teaching workshops. At Assistant Principal’s F school, she was a part of the Latino in Action group that mentored young ENL students targeting various cultural groups and
featuring individuals from various cultural backgrounds. Despite this involvement, she did not think she was culturally intelligent enough to do as much as she wanted; however, she stated, it was the perfect opportunity for her to learn with students. Assistant Principal E used modeling through conversational interactions that expose others and help them increase awareness. Principal C introduced students and teachers at the school to an organization called Global Kids. This organization included workshops and programs in schools to help students learn about other cultures and increase sensitivity to and awareness of the subtle nuances of the various cultures.

**Research Question 3**

How does cultural intelligence impact the leadership practices of principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district?

**Theme 4: Impact of Cultural Intelligence on Leadership Practice.** Research Question 3 was addressed with Interview Question 10. Eight of the 10 participants responded that they believe their level of cultural intelligence or awareness contributed to their success as administrators. When asked to elaborate on how it impacts specific leadership practices, the majority (eight) of participants referred to a successful behavior or positive incident that was a result of being culturally aware.

**Subthemes: Trust, Modelling Positive Behaviors, Reflections, and Equity Training.** Trust, modeling positive behaviors, reflections, and equity training were mentioned in their various responses. For example, Assistant Principal D’s response was:

Because by reading and researching, going all out in the communities, interacting with different members from different countries I am able to ascertain certain things that will motivate them to contribute more to their students’ academic success. . . . I am able to get parents to come in to school to attend meetings and to furnish them with strategies that we have to enhance their child’s learning.
This action, he stated, “builds trust and this trust has contributed a lot to my success.”

Principal C thought cultural awareness made a difference:

Because I believe that being in this position, what I’ve learned is that culture looks like so many different things/ways. It’s not just what country you are from or what language you speak. And so, I modeled the behavior I expect to see from the students. In my school, we also have programs to help these girls.

She went on to explain these programs started as a result of her awareness and sensitivity to the various cultures, “Even though I am still learning about them.” One program Principal C mentioned was:

Global kids. Many of our girls, American girls, Hispanic and Caribbean girls were not comfortable with the Muslim girls wearing the hijabs and being totally covered. And so, they teased them initially. And so Global Kids helped to sensitize both populations.

When asked to expand on how it impacted her leadership practice, Principal C stated she tries to treat each child as an individual with unique cultural differences and who has something valuable to contribute to the school. Additionally, she thinks the equity training as part of the new chancellor’s initiative helped with cultural differences.

Principal A thought this level of awareness helped him think about his relationships daily:

I would say the big word quote about cultural intelligence is relationships. My job is probably 85% relationships and 15% everything else. It’s all about relationships regardless if you are Jewish, Black, Muslim, Italian, Trinidadian, where is the relationship?

Of the 10 participants, two participants were not sure, and one stated she was still a work in progress regarding implicit biases. The other participant responded with her ideal situation when asked to clarify. She also believed her cultural intelligence was a work in progress.
Reflecting on their actions and behaviors was something participants used to help them grow in everyday practice. One such belief statement came from Assistant Principal A1, who believes education is a relationship business. He stated:

I try to always get some helpful hints by reflecting on previous days actions, especially as they relate to culturally sensitive topics or behaviors. Because if you don’t know what is respectful or disrespectful in a culture, how are they going to pay attention to what you are saying when they are probably concentrating on something you took for granted in a previous conversation or in your own culture?

Assistant Principal F voiced similar experiences when she reflected on her actions after a long day at school. These actions sometimes had to do with culturally sensitive behaviors. Assistant Principals D, E, and Principal B echoed the sentiment when they explained during their interviews that reflection had become a daily norm for them, as they often found it to be useful when dealing with culturally sensitive situations.

**Data From the Cultural Intelligence Survey**

The 20-item cultural intelligence survey developed by Ang et al. (2007) was used to answer Research Question 1: How culturally intelligent are principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district? This test consists of four components: metacognitive/strategy (four items), cognitive/knowledge (six items), motivational/drive (five items) and behavioral/action (five items). Interpretations of average cultural intelligence total scores (CQ score) are included in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Range of Score Interpretation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>5.50-7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>4.50-5.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3.50-4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1.00-3.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 shows overall average scores and average scores in each dimension for the 10 participants. The scores were added and averaged in each dimension. For example, Principal B’s CQ strategy scores were 5, 4, 4, 3. These scores were added for a total score of 16, then divided by 4 (number of items) for an average of 4. These averages were added, and the total was then divided by the number of categories (four). This total indicated the overall average CQ score for each participant. The results revealed, of 10 participants, only one scored an average CQ score of 5.87 (*very good*), which indicated a very good level of cultural intelligence.

**Table 9**

*Average Score for Each Category and Overall Average CQ Score*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Drive</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>CQ Average</th>
<th>CQ Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal A</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP A1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP A2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP B</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP C</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP D</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP E</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the other nine participants, six received average CQ scores between 3.50 to 4.49 (*average*), or an average level of cultural intelligence. Of the three remaining participants, two received scores in the range of 4.50 and 5.49 (*good*), and one received a
score of 2.91 (*poor*). Table 9 illustrates scores for the 10 participants. Eight participants received their highest score in the CQ drive category. All 10 participants received their lowest scores in the CQ knowledge category; scores in this category ranged from 2.16 (*poor*) to 5.33 (*good*). Of the four categories, five participants received scores ranging from as low as 2.16 to 3.33 (*poor*) in CQ knowledge.

Principal A received an overall average CQ score of 4.97 (*good*), indicating an overall good level of cultural intelligence (see Table 9). He scored high in CQ drive at 6.2 (*very good*). Principal A’s scores included a 4.5 (*good*) for CQ strategy, a CQ knowledge score of 4 (*average*), and on the dimension of CQ action, a score of 5.2 (*good*).

Principal B received an overall average CQ score of 4.4 (*average*) for cultural intelligence. Principal B’s scores in each dimension suggested average score interpretations in CQ strategy (4), CQ knowledge (4), and CQ action (3.6). The highest score was in CQ drive with a score of 6 (*very good*).

Principal C received the lowest scores of the three principals. She received an overall CQ score of 3.98 (*average*) on the level of cultural intelligence. Principal C’s highest score was in the dimension of CQ drive, with an average score of 5 (*good*). The score in CQ knowledge was a 3.33 (*poor*). Principal C received a score of 4 (*average*) in CQ strategy and a score of 3.6 (*average*) in CQ action.

Of the 10 participants, Assistant Principal A1 received the second-highest overall average CQ score of 5.2 (*good*), indicating a good level of cultural intelligence. Across dimensions, Assistant Principal A1 received scores of 5.5 (*very good*) in CQ strategy, 4.5 (*good*) in CQ knowledge, 5.8 (*very good*) in CQ drive, and a score of 5 (*good*) in CQ action.
Assistant Principal A2 received the highest overall CQ score of 5.87 (very good), which indicated a very good level of cultural intelligence. She scored in the range of very good in three dimensions and good in the fourth. CQ drive was the highest score of 6.6 (very good) and CQ action was second highest with an average score of 6 (very good). For CQ strategy and CQ knowledge, Assistant Principal A2 received scores of 5.5 (very good) and 5.33 (good), respectively.

Assistant Principal B received the highest score of 5 (good) in the cultural intelligence dimension of CQ drive. The lowest score was in CQ knowledge. In CQ strategy and CQ action categories, he received scores of 3.25 (poor) and 4.2 (average), respectively. The total overall average CQ score was 3.95 (average) for cultural intelligence for Assistant Principal B.

Like the results of eight participants, Assistant Principal C’s highest score was in CQ drive with a score of 6 (very good). The second-highest scores of 4 (average) were in CQ knowledge and CQ action categories. She received scores of 3.75 (average) in the category of CQ strategy. Principal C’s overall average CQ score was 4.44 (average), which revealed an average level of cultural intelligence.

Assistant Principal D’s highest score was in CQ strategy with an average of 5.7 (very good) followed by CQ drive with a score of 5 (good). The lowest score was in CQ knowledge, with an average of 2.16 (poor). For CQ action, Assistant Principal D received a score of 3.2 (poor). The overall average CQ score for level of cultural intelligence was 4.02 (average).

Assistant Principal E scored a high average of 6 (very good) in CQ drive, followed by CQ action of 4.5 (good), CQ strategy of 4.25 (good), and CQ knowledge of 4
The overall average CQ score for Assistant Principal E was 4.16 (average) for level of cultural intelligence.

Assistant Principal F’s highest score was in CQ action, a score of 4.5 (good). The lowest score was in CQ drive; 2 (poor). Of the 10 participants, she had the lowest overall average CQ score of 2.91 (poor), indicating a poor level of cultural intelligence. She scored a 4 (average) in CQ strategy and 2.66 (poor) in CQ knowledge.

Each dataset used in this study explains differing aspects of the cultural intelligence of the participants. According to Abdalla, Oliveira, Aczevedo, & Gonzalez (2018), using multiple datasets such as interviews, questionnaires, and observations can be used to validate the findings by way of triangulation. Researchers not only use them to examine the phenomenon from multiple perspectives but also to widen understanding of the phenomenon among researchers. Additionally, the researcher may use them to discover misleading dimensions or identifies agreements or disagreements in findings. Despite the differing aspects of the phenomenon explained in this study, findings from all three sources triangulate to prove that most of the participants had limited cultural intelligence since most participants recorded average or low scores in the cultural intelligence test. Findings from the CQ test validated specific responses from the interviews. For example, participants were concerned about their limited knowledge of the various cultures present in their school environments. Participants reported that their greatest struggle was learning the intricacies of the various cultures and as a result, this lack of knowledge created communication barriers and tension. This concern was validated in the results of the CQ tests, as all the participants who voiced such concerns recorded low scores in the knowledge dimension of cultural intelligence scale.
Summary

This chapter presented results of one-on-one interview data, written responses of three participants, and results of the Cultural Intelligence survey. The research questions answered in this chapter were:

1. How culturally intelligent are middle school principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district?

2. What are the experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with parents and students in culturally diverse settings?

3. How does cultural intelligence impact the leadership practices of principals and assistant principals?

Four categories and themes emerged from this data: (a) opportunities and drive to interact with different cultures outside school; (b) level and awareness of cultural intelligence; (c) experiences interacting with others in culturally diverse settings; and (d) impact of cultural intelligence on leadership practice. Additionally, words and phrases such as trust, culturally sensitive, authenticity, communication barrier, assumptions, and implicit bias appeared to be constant in most of the responses provided. Results from these data and the CQ test are discussed in Chapter 5, including further discussions and findings of each research question, the relationship to the problem statement, and how findings can be applied to leadership.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the cultural intelligence of principals and assistant principals. With the movement of cultures from one country to the next, it becomes necessary to equip leaders with tools to help them be effective. This study added to the existing body of knowledge regarding school leaders’ cultural intelligence and their experiences in culturally diverse settings.

As seen recently, globalization has turned the world into a cultural melting pot. People of varying cultural and ethnic orientations can be found in every organization possible. This massive influx and interweaving of cultures have a long and lasting place in educational institutions as families are constantly assimilating to different cultures. There have been mixed reviews regarding the benefits and shortcomings of globalization. Proponents of this phenomenon argued that it can make this world a better place as it creates democracy and respect for human rights (Collins et al., 2017). In the education system, the integration of culture due to globalization has been spreading over the past decade. The classroom, like society, is saturated with workers, students, and teachers from many different cultural backgrounds. As a result, educational leaders are tasked with the responsibility of developing and creating an experience and an environment that is welcoming and conducive to learning. Cultural intelligence theory (Earley & Ang, 2003), developed to address the issue of cultural sensitivity, was the main theoretical framework of the present study.

This chapter provides a summary of the study, which includes a review of the first three chapters, an outline of research questions, a summary of data analysis, a summary of findings and conclusions, and recommendations for future research. The researcher for
this study used a narrative research strategy that explored the cultural intelligence of school leaders, specifically principals and assistant principals, and their experiences with diversity. Central findings indicated principals and assistant principals in this district were aware of the various cultures in the school communities. Most participants lacked basic knowledge of these cultures and had an average level of cultural intelligence. They were motivated to interact and learn more about various cultures.

**Discussion of Findings**

This section was organized using research questions and four theme categories from interviews. Additionally, findings from the CQ test in Chapter 4 were used to present how results from this study supported or contradicted existing research and how these results answered or supported the research questions:

1. How culturally intelligent are middle school principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district?
2. What are the experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with parents and students in culturally diverse settings?
3. How does cultural intelligence impact the leadership practices of principals and assistant principals?

**Research Question 1**

How culturally intelligent are middle school principals and assistant principals in a large inner-city school district? This question was designed to ascertain the cultural intelligence levels of principals and assistant principals. The themes which emerged from the responses are discussed next.

**Opportunities and Drive to Interact With Different Cultures Outside School District**
Based on the interviews, all participants had the opportunity to interact with people of varying cultural backgrounds as they had visited at least one country outside of the United States. However, these experiences were limited to vacation holidays of 2 weeks or less. With the increasingly diverse populations in educational institutions and societies, it is evident global organizations need leaders with a culturally diverse mindset. Still, local institutions, businesses, and schools also need leaders of such a mindset (Lisak & Erez, 2015). Therefore, having global experience by visiting and interacting with others from varying cultures can enhance a leader’s ability to perform in a culturally diverse setting. Becoming an effective leader for diverse populations means adjusting perceptions and drawing on international experiences. In recent studies, Gonçalves et al. (2015) discussed the values of global experiences and Jiang et al. (2018) extended the idea that global experiences, coupled with cultural intelligence, positively affect voice behavior. All participants in this study had the opportunity to experience global interactions. These opportunities were limited to a duration of 1 or 2 weeks.

Level and Awareness of Cultural Intelligence

During interviews, principals and assistant principals saw themselves as culturally aware. They credited their successes as administrators to their sensitivity to various cultures and, consequently, how they interacted as a result of this awareness. Their ideas of cultural awareness were based on knowing these cultures exist in their school settings and knowing at least one thing about that culture (e.g., something to help them survive in a culturally diverse setting). The perception of the importance of being culturally intelligent was a dominant idea throughout interviews. Although participants were cognizant of the importance of being culturally aware, their actions did not demonstrate
it. When asked if they planned before interacting with someone of a different culture, six of the 10 participants responded that they did not. This behavior tied in with concluded results from the CQ test, when all but one participant received the lowest score in the knowledge category. This score validates the results as to why most participants had an average cultural intelligence score.

Results showed that all 10 participants had an operational definition of culture and intelligence as separate terms. They all agreed or understood culture to be something that had to do with food, beliefs, and how people define themselves. Most were unable to define cultural intelligence. Based on responses from Interview Question 3, participants had only limited knowledge of the cultures existing in their school settings. Participants further acknowledged experiences were limited to the basic knowledge they had of a culture. Principal C endorsed this idea:

> With the girls coming in from Yemen and Bangladesh, I knew that I didn’t know enough about the culture and that I was interacting with these families from an American state of mind and position. I know I had to try and understand their values and see how I could be most respectful to them.

In their study examining educators’ beliefs and cultural knowledge, Nelson and Guerra (2013) revealed that the majority of participants had deficit beliefs and knowledge about diverse students and their families. As a result of this lack of knowledge, they used deficit thinking in explanations for clashes and viewed clashes as problems warranting a technical solution. Nelson and Guerra further stated a lack of cultural knowledge and deficit beliefs might be the result of ineffectiveness in many reform efforts, proving a lack of cultural knowledge affects local leadership effectiveness and education reform efforts. These results confirm conclusions from the CQ tests that a lack of knowledge of
other cultures can affect effectiveness in a culturally diverse setting, discussed in the section on results from the CQ test.

Four participants responded “I don’t know” when asked how their level of cultural intelligence differed from their colleagues. In an extension of individual responses, the common thread centered on authenticity and trust. Such responses confirmed most principals were not fully aware of the term or cultural intelligence, so they were unable to answer the question.

**Cultural Intelligence Test Results**

Results obtained from the CQ test indicated most participants had an “average” level of cultural intelligence. All participants except one (i.e., Assistant Principal F) scored remarkably high in drive (i.e., motivation) and low in the category of knowledge (i.e., cognitive). All were motivated to learn about other cultures and enjoyed interacting with people of different cultures, socializing in unfamiliar cultures, and dealing with stresses of adjusting to a new culture. Had it not been for the high scores in drive, participants would have all received a low overall score, which would have placed them in the category of having a poor level of cultural intelligence.

Participant scores in the knowledge domain of the CQ test were significant. This domain requires knowledge of legal systems, rules of language, cultural values, religious beliefs, marriage systems, arts and crafts, and rules for expressing non-verbal behaviors in other cultures. These areas are some of the basic and most important aspects of someone’s culture. Knowledge of cultural values, legal systems and rules of language can bridge the gap to understanding and better relationships with people of varying cultures (Janssens & Brett, 2006). Having knowledge of other cultures is of extreme
importance to be effective in a culturally diverse setting. When leaders know other cultures, it not only increases their horizons but their interpersonal skills in dialogue and communication at a personal level (Chenari et al., 2017). These skills, according to Meng (2015), are important for leaders to succeed in a diverse setting. They contended effective leadership communication help facilitate effective corporate interactions and build culture; therefore, a leader’s extensive knowledge of the cultures of people with which they work gives them the advantage of communicating effectively.

Several arguments have surfaced over the past decade regarding the importance of intercultural knowledge. Studies have shown knowledge of other cultures can prevent and overcome racial and ethnic division, create an equitable workplace and societal environments, leads to global awareness, and encourages acceptance of diversity. In research done to show the importance of cross-cultural knowledge, Momir and Petroman (2015) stated there were certain benefits when cultural awareness and understanding improved. Such benefits include reducing cultural misunderstanding and conflict. Momir and Petroman further stated that enhancement of cultural awareness could create a positive working atmosphere, as the organization benefits from multiculturalism. They went on to iterate students were trained that failure to understand another culture with which they interact may lead to misunderstanding and conflict (Momir & Petroman, 2015). In another study examining the cultural intelligence of faculty leadership in a tertiary institution, Ellis (2017) asserted the two most influential factors on the cultural intelligence scale were knowledge and action. Ellis concluded knowledge and action had greater influences on leadership than all other dimensions. Knowledge had the greatest influence of all the leadership practices. Leaders in multicultural environments need to
have the ability to understand the perspective of others and incorporate that understanding into their communication and dialogue with their subordinates (Davy, 2016). This ability to use knowledge of another person’s culture to communicate effectively applies to educational leaders, specifically principals and assistant principals.

The push to make leaders and employees culturally aware is not recent. Cultural awareness training programs were first structured in the United States in the 1960s. The specific focus then was on cultural norms and traditions with a minor focus on interactions (Shepherd, 2019). However, as globalization and cross-cultural integration increased, there came the need for an in-depth look at cultural awareness. As a result, several other cultural communication concepts, such as cultural safety, cultural humility, cultural competence, and recently, cultural intelligence emerged. As seen in the responses from participants regarding their awareness of various cultures in their school, being merely cognizant of various cultures was not enough for leaders to become effective. In this global and diverse society, with predominantly diverse educational institutions, leaders need to be able to communicate and behave in a manner deemed appropriate for that culturally diverse setting or situation. In their study which emphasized the importance of cross-border effectiveness in a globalized world Rockstuhl et al., (2011) proposed that cultural intelligence is a critical tool to help leaders deal with diversity in the workplace. Their hypothesis was tested using multisource data and multiple intelligences. Results from the selected sample suggested that cultural intelligence was a strong predictor of cross-border leadership effectiveness and therefore showed the value of cultural intelligence as a critical leadership competence in culturally diverse global settings (Rockstuhl et al., 2011) Additionall, Livermore (2010a) and Mannor (2008),
argued cultural intelligence increases a leader’s ability to assess a culturally diverse setting when the need arose.

**Research Question 2**

What are the experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with teachers and students in culturally diverse settings? This question focused on experiences principals and assistant principals had while interacting in diverse settings. The following findings are discussed based on the themes that emerged from participants’ responses.

*Experiences Interacting With Others in Culturally Diverse Settings*

Findings related to this question suggested several factors impacted the relationships and experiences of principals and assistant principals when dealing with students and parents in diverse settings. Among the factors that stood out were previous experiences with diversity, views on culture, trust, communication, and developing positive relationships and the struggles they faced.

*Previous Experiences With Diversity:* According to Chao et al. (2017), a person’s previous experiences can influence the way they interact with people from other cultures. In a study of enhancing cultural intelligence, Chao et al. specifically targeted the roles of implicit cultural beliefs and stated previous international experience was an important factor that contributed to cultural development. They added any previous experiences with culture or in culturally diverse settings could impact how a person interacts in present experiences. Based on results from the interviews in this study, it can be concluded that participants’ previous experiences with cultural diversity influenced current interactions and, thus, influenced their current experiences with diversity. For example, Principal C’s experiences with cultural diversity from early interactions in
college helped to improve her interactions with students, parents, and teachers from varying cultural backgrounds. In the interview, she explained, “And so it kind of really set me up for the girls now. So, I feel like I understand to some level what they could be possibly facing or interacting with. And so, my conversations with them are different.”

Principal A’s previous experiences with implicit bias and racism impacted his experiences and interactions with students and parents.

*Views on Culture:* Culture is a set of social meanings that shapes and filters how people think and act (Haslanger, 2017). Assistant Principal E’s views on culture and the way she acted confirmed this statement. She thought cultural intelligence was adapting to other cultures and so she tried to learn about each culture in the school by researching and talking to the students, their parents, and her colleagues. Participants viewed culture as based on foods, events, and norms, and experiences in diverse settings centered around these aspects. They chose to build relationships through activities surrounding cultural events and food. For example, Principal A explained that getting to know the different types of foods, events, and how events were celebrated helped build relations and helped him interact with a positive attitude in a diverse setting.

*Trust, Communication, and Developing Positive Relationships.* These were essential factors that affected the experiences participants had with diversity. Principal B believed building a positive relationship with students and their parents was a factor that made his experience a positive one. Six of the other participants endorsed the idea of developing trust, communication, and a positive relationship as factors that made their experiences mainly positive. Assistant Principal D summarized in his response that trust
is essential. Parents, students, and teachers prefer authenticity. Assistant Principal D stated:

By going out into the community, interacting with the male figures, buying lunch from them. I sometimes ask them to give me a meal from their country. So, this is what I think has helped me, trust and going out into the community to learn more about different cultures.

Many scholars (e.g., Bligh & Kohls, 2014; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014) have acknowledged the importance of communication to effective leadership. One overlapping idea in their research studies on the communicative perspective of leadership focused on communication as meaning-centered. They argued that effective leadership communication emphasizes the formative power of language, which is the ability to categorize and label vaguely sensed feelings and thoughts.

**Struggles Faced in Experiences With Individuals From Different Cultures.** In terms of struggles faced in experiences with diversity, most participants responded that language and communication barriers were the biggest struggles. One participant, whose setting consisted mainly of Hispanic and Middle Eastern students, agreed by stating, “As an administrator, sometimes I am totally ignorant of the language.” Another participant said, “We have a growing Bengali population and we are now looking for someone who speaks Bengali and at the same time trying to educate ourselves about their culture and its nuances.” Understanding the language was only one aspect of the equation. However, the lack of knowledge of various cultural norms and traditions could compound such problems and make communication increasingly difficult, which can cause confusion and conflict in the workplace. According to Larson and Larson of Watermark Learning (2006), using euphemisms and certain analogies caused misunderstanding and confusion when used in multicultural settings. De Jesus-Rivas (2017) agreed with this statement.
when they mentioned language and communication barriers are magnified, especially when trying to communicate in diverse settings. They argued multiple languages spoken in the workplace could be additional barriers to safety and training. Because communication is an integral aspect of any organization’s success when trying to achieve its objectives (Olsen & Martin, 2012), it is imperative leaders understand how to communicate and have knowledge of language and intricacies of the culture.

**Research Question 3**

How does cultural intelligence impact the leadership practices of principals and assistant principals? Research regarding effects of cultural intelligence on leadership performance has been steadily growing. Ang et al. (2007) asserted cultural intelligence was positively associated with decision-making quality and task performance. Their research highlighted the effects and measurements of cultural intelligence on leaders’ cultural judgement and decision-making and theorized that cognitive and metacognitive CQs are relevant predictors of cultural judgement and decision making. Based on results from the interviews and the CQ test, the level of cultural intelligence, whether high or low, positively as well as negatively impacted leadership practice. Despite scores indicating low levels of cultural intelligence, all participants agreed that cultural intelligence, one or more of its components, and awareness of, or respect for, other cultures positively impacted their leadership practices. According to Assistant Principal D, he was successful because he constantly went out into the community to interact and to learn about their cultures. This action built trust, fostered communication, and thereby led to success in enhancing learning outcomes. Principal C endorsed the idea by saying, “The little I’ve known has helped a lot. I now look at my girls in a different way.”
Assistant Principal E endorsed the idea with, “Now I lead teachers and students from diverse backgrounds because of my understanding of various cultural habits in the institution.” Cultural intelligence has been associated with enhancing and increasing managers’ ideas sharing and their effective intercultural negotiation and collaboration (Chua et al., 2012). Four participants proved this idea of using cultural intelligence to enhance and increase their effectiveness in intercultural negotiations and collaborations. In their statements, participants shared ideas of how they used knowledge of the various cultures to help them plan for school-wide events and professional development activities.

Furthermore, research supported a positive correlation between cultural intelligence and successful leadership. One such research study was conducted by Mahdi and Elaheh (2012), who investigated the leadership styles and cultural intelligence of primary school principals and concluded there was indeed a positive relationship between transformational leadership and cultural intelligence. Additionally, a recent study by Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2013) explored the relationship between cultural intelligence and the leadership effectiveness of international school leaders and found there was indeed a significant positive relationship between cultural intelligence and transformational leadership. Other studies, such as one conducted by Crowne (2019), endorsed the idea of the positive relationship between cultural intelligence and leadership practices. Crowne focused on the behavioral aspect of cultural intelligence and findings revealed a positive correlation between the behavioral aspect of cultural intelligence and leadership. With the present study, most participants were found to have only an average level of cultural intelligence; however, all agreed and displayed behaviors that being
culturally intelligent and aware of culture have some positive effects on leadership practices.

**Application of Findings and Conclusions to the Problem Statement**

The problem this researcher aimed to address was school leaders who were lacking cultural intelligence, had little or no knowledge of it, and were inept at creating a climate of inclusion and acceptance necessary in culturally charged settings. The results of this study revealed school leaders, specifically principals and assistant principals, demonstrated an overall average level of cultural intelligence. Because cultural intelligence is the capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008), an average level was considered adequate but may not be enough. Several studies have shown positive correlations between cultural intelligence and leadership performance. In a study of the relationship between transformational leadership and cultural intelligence of school leaders, Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2013) found a significant positive relationship. Similarly, Grubb (2014), who studied authentic leadership and cultural intelligence in academic leaders in higher education, found a positive relationship between cultural intelligence and leaders. Grubb expounded that with at least an average level of cultural intelligence, educational leaders were able to quell misunderstandings and create a cohesive and caring environment.

Findings indicated that although most school leaders were culturally aware, most lacked sufficient knowledge of other cultures. Based on the CQ test, all participants recorded their lowest scores in the knowledge category. This conclusion partially supports the idea principals lack sufficient means to create a climate of inclusion and acceptance.
Additionally, findings from this study contradicted the claim principals and assistant principals had no knowledge of cultural intelligence and were not able to create the climate of inclusion and acceptance necessary in culturally charged settings. Although many participants were unable to define the term cultural intelligence, they were able to define each term separately. At least two participants produced an operational definition of the term, cultural intelligence. In creating a climate of inclusion and acceptance in a culturally charged setting, principals and assistant principals were highly motivated, as shown in the test results and as revealed in interviews. They were aware of other cultures and recognized the importance of being culturally intelligent. They tried to create culturally accepting environments by visiting and interacting with parents and students in the communities.

Despite an average level of cultural intelligence, participants showed high levels in the motivational category (i.e., CQ drive), which coincides with Ang et al. (2014), who, in an article examining cultural intelligence and competence, revealed:

“Motivational intelligence is the most consistent predictor of affective outcomes in international contexts” (p. 436). Of all the components, motivation was the strongest predictor of all forms of adjustments in a culturally diverse setting. The effects of providing motivation are related to unmet needs (Jie & Harms, 2017; Riggio, 2008). Additionally, Jie and Harms (2017) argued that leaders with a global mindset are motivated and willing to learn from others while adjusting themselves to the dynamics of their global environments, which includes the various cultural aspects of such environment, while Riggio (2008) argued more leadership development programs should focus on motivation. Likewise, in this study, participants were motivated to learn about
various cultures in their schools. As one participant stated, “I am a work in progress, and I still have a lot to learn about dealing with diversity in my school,” meaning they were willing to work to improve their level of cultural intelligence. Armed with this positive belief and despite an average level of cultural intelligence, participants were motivated to improve their cultural intelligence by attending professional development workshops and equity training courses implemented by the chancellor and by encouraging others around them to respect and acknowledge differences.

**Application to Leadership**

One major finding from this study was a leader’s level of cultural intelligence, high or low, could impact leadership practice. Most participants in this study recorded average levels of cultural intelligence because they were culturally aware their leadership practices were impacted positively. These principals and assistant principals used other leadership qualities along with awareness of various cultures in their communities to impact parents and students positively. These findings are contrary to popular belief that leaders need to possess a high level of cultural intelligence to lead in a diverse setting successfully. According to Rosenauer et al. (2015), team leaders with high levels of cultural intelligence possessed the skills to foster adequate team processes and thereby enhance diversity climate and performance; however, results from this study illustrated principals and assistant principals who are culturally aware and have at least an average proficiency in one or more components of CQ test effected positive changes in their schools. A leader of 21st-century culturally diverse and globally integrated schools should aspire to be beyond average. An effective leader should strive to possess high cultural intelligence to succeed in a global economy. As seen in the results of this study,
participants who had average scores acknowledged they were struggling to deal with diversity in their schools effectively.

Research consistently supported the importance of cultural intelligence as an intercultural capability that fosters personal and professional capabilities. Several positive effects in the workplace are a result of cultural intelligence. These effects include intercultural adjustments, knowledge de-codification, knowledge transfer (Vlajcic et al., 2019), and intercultural cooperation (Mor et al., 2013). According to Chua et al. (2012), leaders can use cultural intelligence to predict trust and effectiveness in crossborder contexts (Rockstuhl et al., 2011). Given the interconnectedness and globalization of our cultures, economies and education systems, these capabilities are important for leaders to possess in today’s global economy.

**Recommendations for Action**

Diversity is a major aspect of daily lives and educational institutions; this study and many others revealed additional actions are needed to create an environment of inclusiveness. This inclusive environment may start with leaders, such as principals and assistant principals of educational institutions. Research on middle schools, middle school principals, and assistant principals with regards to cultural intelligence is extremely sparse. Although there are several research studies on tertiary education leaders and leaders of private organizations regarding their cultural intelligence and its effects on their leadership practice, it was difficult to find research on middle school principals and assistant principals.

1. **Training and Development**
This study’s findings brought to light the need for additional training in areas of diversity and cultural intelligence for principals and assistant principals. Although results from this study indicated leaders were motivated and used awareness of cultures around them to lead culturally diverse schools, there is still a need to go beyond average. Leaders were motivated and willing to improve their cultural intelligence; however, the onus of gathering information and becoming culturally intelligent cannot be placed solely on principals and assistant principals. Despite a current chancellor’s push for equity training for school leaders, it has not been enough. District superintendents and school chancellors need to take some responsibility and initiative to create meaningful programs to improve school leaders’ cultural intelligence.

All schools in the district mentioned in this study had high levels of cultural diversity. Principal leadership programs and training academies can include diversity training as a professional development program, but there should be an in-depth course on cultural intelligence embedded in the curriculum. One participant already voiced the inevitable, “We have an influx of girls from Yemen and other countries registering in our school on almost a monthly basis.” As noted in the results of this study, principals and assistant principals lacked cultural knowledge.

2. **Leadership and Mentorship Programs**

Another recommendation, in addition to the cultural intelligence courses in the training curriculum, is that leaders create a committee with the responsibility to conduct further studies to ascertain the various cultures entering the school districts. From information gathered, leaders could create a structured online program with information on each culture. It should be mandatory for all educators, including school leaders, to
complete an online study, which includes at least one language spoken in their school setting and using the information gathered at least once or twice per year or as deemed necessary. Additionally, research has shown administrators learn by experiential training at school sites (Ojode et al., 2017). In their study emphasizing the development of managerial expertise, Ojode et. al studied how managerial college students learn experientially as well as theoretically. Results from Ojode et. al’s (2017) research indicated that students learn about management skills and decision-making through experiences gained from training with seasoned administrators. Courses should be developed so administrators, especially those new to the field, are allowed to experience field trips to other diverse schools and shadow successful, culturally intelligent principals for at least 1 week. Principals and assistant principals who possess high cultural intelligence with proven track records of successful management could be mentors to new principals and assistant principals. This benefit would allow for firsthand observations of the behavioral intelligence skills of successful principals and their daily interactions in diverse communities.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Research on cultural intelligence and leadership has come a long way. However, with globalization growing at a much faster rate than anticipated and diversity in educational institutions rapidly increasing, further research is needed to explore the experiences of leaders in diverse settings, especially those in educational institutions. Most participants in this study described positive experiences during their interviews. Only a few participants mentioned negative incidents during interviews. Even when prodded, participants were inclined to relay positive experiences. Although qualitative
data were useful, there may be a need to conduct quantitative research, using case study methods and observations over time to supply additional data on how school leaders experience culturally diverse settings and how leadership practices are affected by levels of cultural intelligence. Rather than using the self-assessment CQ test only, the CQ test, which requires colleagues to respond regarding cultural intelligence, should be used in the recommended research.

1. In order to mitigate limitations mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, future researchers may need to take into consideration the population size as well as the variety of cultures available within such population. Therefore, when conducting such research they should consider using a larger sample from various school districts. This would provide more reliable data, as students would range from a variety of cultures.

Other questions to consider for further research would be:

2. To What Extent Do Certain Factors Affect a Leader’s Cultural Intelligence?

Results from this study revealed several factors (e.g., trust, views of culture, and communication) that impacted leaders’ experiences with diversity. Jyoti and Kour’s (2017) research on factors affecting cultural intelligence revealed that social and emotional intelligence were two main factors that can significantly affect cultural intelligence. Despite these findings, there is a need for further research to explore the extent to which these factors affect leaders’ cultural intelligence and experiences with diversity. Such research could produce valuable information on how to manage positive and negative experiences in culturally diverse settings.
3. What Leadership Qualities Enhance Cultural Intelligence?

Another area for further research includes leadership qualities that offset or enhance cultural intelligence. As noted in this study’s findings, although leaders had average levels of cultural intelligence, a level not considered useful in highly effective leadership, leaders felt they were able to effect change and lead positively in their diverse settings. Mullinax (2013) explored the relationship between the capability for intercultural interaction, as represented by cultural intelligence and effective organizational leadership, as defined by transformational leadership style, in global organizational leaders. Mullinax found a relationship between transformational leadership style and cultural intelligence. In addition to this finding, there is the need to explore relationships and effects, if any, between other leadership styles and cultural intelligence.

Concluding Statement

Having the ability to adjust to people of varying cultures and the capacity for intercultural communication are necessary skills in a 21st-century school system (Chenari et al., 2017). Cultural intelligence, the tool used to develop such skills, is a capability that allows individuals to act appropriately across a wide range of cultures (Brancu et al., 2016). The need for school leaders to develop such skills and competencies is greater than ever, with globalization making the world much smaller and leading to diversity and cultural integration in schools and communities (Mazur, 2010).

Being culturally intelligent comes with the ability to ask the right questions, give the right answers, and work with people from various groups related to ethnicity, race, age, economic background, sexual orientation, industry, or work function. Organizations
that want their employees to remain relevant and competitive and that wish to attract top talents from a global perspective must realize cultural intelligence for all stakeholders involved may be the game changer. Several researchers (e.g., Livermore, 2015; Mitchell, 2014) endorsed this idea. They agreed a good understanding of other cultures determined effectiveness in the workplace (Livermore, 2015). Likewise, effectiveness in the school systems can be determined by not only understanding other cultures but also by using this knowledge to foster better relationships with students and with colleagues Mitchell, 2014).

Although most leaders in this study who possessed an average level of cultural intelligence worked efficiently in culturally diverse settings, there was room for improvement. Having an average level of cultural intelligence may not be enough to deal with more complex issues in culturally diverse settings. Ersoy (2014) stated employees and leaders who possess a high level of cultural intelligence played an important role in bridging divides and knowledge gaps in an organization, which included educating peers about different cultures, transferring knowledge between otherwise disparate groups, helping to build interpersonal connections, and smoothing the interpersonal processes in a multicultural workforce.

Culturally intelligent employees possess the potential to drive innovation and creativity due to their ability to integrate diverse resources and help the business make the best use of the multiple perspectives that a multicultural workforce brings to the workplace (Jiang et al., 2018). The importance of being culturally aware and culturally intelligent cannot be fully stressed. All stakeholders in the education system, especially principals and assistant principals, should strive to gain a high level of cultural
intelligence by improving knowledge of other cultures and using this knowledge to impact daily experiences positively and effectively in diverse settings.
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## APPENDIX A

### Cultural Intelligence Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CQ Strategy</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly agree</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC1</td>
<td>I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC2</td>
<td>I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC3</td>
<td>I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC4</td>
<td>I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CQ Knowledge</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly agree</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COG1</td>
<td>I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COG2</td>
<td>I know the rules (e.g. vocabulary, grammar) of other languages</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COG3</td>
<td>I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COG4</td>
<td>I know the marriage systems of other cultures</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COG5</td>
<td>I know the arts and crafts of other cultures</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COG6</td>
<td>I know the rules for expressing non-verbal behaviors in other cultures</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CQ Motivation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly agree</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOT1</td>
<td>I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT2</td>
<td>I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT3</td>
<td>I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT4</td>
<td>I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT5</td>
<td>I am confident that I can get used to the shopping conditions in a different culture</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CQ Behavior</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly agree</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEH1</td>
<td>I change my verbal behavior when a cross-cultural interaction requires it</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEH2</td>
<td>I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEH3</td>
<td>I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEH4</td>
<td>I change my non-verbal behavior when a cross-cultural behavior requires it</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEH5</td>
<td>I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Document

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a research study that examines the cultural intelligence of middle school principals and assistant principals and explores their experiences with diversity. The main purpose of this research is to recognize and use their knowledge of cultural intelligence to improve school culture and their interactions with students, families, and teachers of different cultural backgrounds.

You will be asked to participate in two interview sessions and one follow-up meeting if necessary. With your permission, the interviews and follow-up meeting will be audio-recorded to provide a complete account of your responses. You are welcome to request a copy of these audio-files at any time. With your permission, the researcher will keep a copy of these audio-files, which may be used in the future for educational purposes (e.g., as an instructional tool for a professional development workshop). Pauline Sawyers, who is a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at City University of Seattle, will conduct this research. Dr. Michel Weber is her Dissertation Advisor.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are no foreseeable physical risks directly related to this study. You may discontinue participation in the study at any time by informing the researcher. There are no direct benefits to participating in this study. You may find it useful to reflect on your work with students as well as your interaction with students, families, and colleagues. You may also learn about new strategies or approaches used by other principals with culturally diverse families, as would be described in the researcher’s dissertation. Finally,
you may feel a sense of pride and satisfaction about having shared your experiences and insights with other educators.

**DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY**

You will have the choice to keep your name and the name of your school confidential. This means your real name and the name of your school will only be used with your permission. Otherwise, the researcher will protect your confidentiality and use pseudonyms (e.g., “School A” and “Elementary School Principal of School A”) in her dissertation and any related publications. The recorded interviews (audio files) will be stored on the researcher’s personal laptop computer, which is password-protected and never left unattended. Back-up copies of the audio files will be stored on an external drive in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s home, which is locked at all times. All related paperwork will also be stored in this locked filing cabinet. The researcher is the only person with access to this filing cabinet.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT**

Your participation will take approximately three hours in total: each interview session will last approximately 90 minutes, and the follow-up meeting will last approximately 60 minutes. The interviews will be scheduled at your convenience between--------and--------2019. The two interviews will take place in a time period no shorter than two days (i.e., no more than one interview per day) and no longer than two months (i.e., at least one interview per month). The follow-up meeting (if needed) will be scheduled within a month after the final interview.

**HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED**

The results of the study will be used for the researcher’s dissertation. In addition,
some data may be presented at conferences, included in journal articles, and/or used for other educational purposes. Upon completion of the study a copy will be provided to all participants if requested.

I____________________________________ of ______________________________ (school) therefore grant authorization for the use of the above information with the full understanding that my anonymity will be preserved at all times. I understand that transcripts, both paper and electronic, will be kept secure in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s office and that any audio tapes of my conversations with me will always be treated anonymously until project completion and during any future publications by the author. However, I understand that besides the researcher, her dissertation chair will also have access to the information.

I have received a copy of this consent form to keep for myself and have read and understand all of it. I therefore agree to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, and I may withdraw my permission to participate at any point without prejudice to the university. I have signed below to indicate my consent.

Signature: _______________________________ Date: _____________________

Researcher’s Signature: _______________________ Date: _______________
APPENDIX C

Cultural Intelligence Principal and Assistant Principal Interview

Demographics
1. Name: ____________________________________________________________
2. School name: ______________________________________________________
3. School address (optional)
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
4. Email address: ______________________________________________________
5. Phone numbers:
   A: School: __________________________________________________________
   B: Contact #: ________________________________________________________
6. How many years have you been in the field of education? __________
7. How many years have you been in administration? _________________
8. How many years have you been a principal? ________________
9. Do you speak any other language other than English? ___________
10. Which language(s)? ________________________________________________
11. Have you lived outside of New York? ___________
12. Where? __________________________________________________________________
13. Have you lived outside of the United States? ___________
14. Where? __________________________________________________________________
15. Have you traveled outside of New York? __________
16. Where? __________________________________________________________________
17. Have you traveled outside the United States? __________
18. Where? __________________________________________________________________

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you speak a second language? If yes, which one?

2. Have you been to another country? If yes, which ones and how long have you been there?

3. Reflect on the term Cultural Intelligence, what does that term mean to you?
   A: Separate the terms, talk about culture, talk about intelligence, how are they related?
   B: What does the phrase mean as a whole? (Cultural intelligence)

4. Talk to me about your understanding of individuals from different cultures?
   What do you know about other traditions, values, and communication styles?
   A: What is your understanding about the different cultures in your school?
5. Talk about struggles you face when dealing with individuals from different cultures?
   A: What communication issues have occurred?
   B: What misunderstandings have you encountered in relation to actions or assumptions?

6. Discuss your planning prior to interacting with individuals of other cultures?
   A: What do you think about before talking or meeting with individuals from other cultures?
   B: What do you do during interactions

7. Discuss your thoughts and reflections after you have interactions with those of different cultures.

8. Tell me about the techniques you use to help others become more culturally intelligent? A: How do you alter your thoughts and behaviors?
   A: Conversations
   B: Professional development
   C: Modeling
   D: Student consequence and techniques

9. Describe your perception as to how your level of cultural intelligence differs from that of your peers?
   A: What is different from the way you handle cultural interactions and the way your peers handle their cultural interactions?
   B: Share with me some examples of incidents that you might recall.

10. Reflect on how your level of cultural intelligence contributes to your success as an effective principal?
    A: With parents
    B: With students
    C: With teachers
    D: With peers