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## **Leading Towards Racial Justice: Counterstories of TK-12 Latinx Men Administrators**

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# Leading Towards Racial Justice: Counterstories of TK-12 Latinx

## Men Administrators

A Dissertation by

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Chapman University

Orange, CA

Attallah College of Educational Studies

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Committee in charge:

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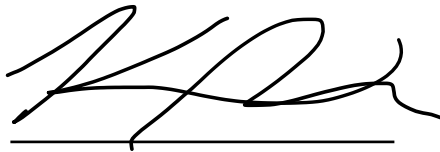
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kris De Pedro', with a horizontal line underneath.

Kris De Pedro, Ph.D.

December 2023

# Leading Towards Racial Justice: Counterstories of TK-12 Latinx

## Men Administrators

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving and caring mother, Martha. *Gracias mamá por todo su amor, cariño, y apoyo. La quiero mucho.*

To the participants of this study, thank you for sharing your stories. May you continue to be a beacon of hope and strive towards racial justice for the school communities that you serve.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Leading Towards Racial Justice: Counterstories of TK-12 Latinx Men Administrators

by Pedro Espinoza

More than half of all students in public schools identify as Students of Color. However, there is an underrepresentation of PreKindergarten (PK)-12 Administrators of Color in public schools, including Latinx men administrators. Furthermore, the literature on the experiences and leadership practices of PK-12 Administrators of Color has mostly been on Women of Color and has utilized a phenomenology or case study research design. Therefore, this study sought to address these gaps in the literature by examining the experiences and leadership practices of Transitional Kindergarten (TK)-12 Latinx Men Administrators by centering their voices. This study utilized a Latinx Critical Race Theory framework, a Critical Race CounterStorytelling, and Narrative Inquiry methodology as a lens to examine the educational, life experiences, and leadership practices of TK-12 Latinx Men Administrators in an in-depth and meaningful way. The counterstories of this study derived from individual, semi-structured, open-ended interviews and revealed the participants' perseverance through discrimination as Men and Educators of Color as well as their culturally responsive leadership practices. The findings of this study also suggested implications for practice for TK-12 public school districts and higher education institutions.



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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

More than half of all students in public schools identify as Students of Color (Superville, 2021). The National Education Association (NEA) (2019) research report on the diversity and representation of PreKindergarten (PK)-12 Administrators of Color stated that there is an underrepresentation of School Leaders of Color. For example, in the 2015-2016 school year, “22.2% of public-school principal positions were held by People of Color” (National Education Association, 2019). Of that number, only 8.2% identified as Latinx, while 77.9% of public school principal positions were held by white people (NEA, 2019). Furthermore, in the 2019-2020 school year, nearly 27% of public school students identified as Latinx, while only about 9% of public school leaders identified as Latinx (Superville, 2021).

Research has shown that Administrators of Color have positive effects on the school community, especially on Students and Teachers of Color (Superville, 2021). As stated previously, there is a growing number of Students of Color in U.S. public PK-12 schools. However, there is a small number of School Leaders of Color serving PK-12 educational settings (NEA, 2019). Therefore, there is a need to highlight and center the voices of Administrators of Color as they serve their school communities. The participants of this study currently work in public California Transitional Kindergarten (TK)-12 school districts. Throughout this dissertation, they will be referred to as TK-12 Latinx men administrators (explained in more detail below). Therefore, this study sought to examine the educational, life experiences, and leadership practices of TK-12 Latinx men administrators by centering their voices. In this chapter, I will begin by discussing the background of this study and key terms that will be used throughout this dissertation. Then, I will discuss the problem statement and present the research questions of this study. Lastly, I will discuss the purpose and significance of this study.

## **Background of the Study**

There is a growing body of literature examining the experiences and leadership practices of PK-12 School Leaders and Administrators of Color (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). The research has shown that many School Leaders of Color implement culturally responsive leadership practices in the school communities they serve. Additionally, the research has reported that the identities (e.g., race, gender) and life experiences of School Leaders of Color influence and inform their leadership practices (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). This study aimed to contribute to the growing body of literature on the experiences and leadership practices of TK-12 school Administrators of Color. To do this, I utilized a Latinx Critical Race Theory framework (Huber, 2010; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001), which will be explained in more detail in Chapter Two, as a lens to examine the educational and life experiences of the participants of this study.

Through my work as a public school educator, I have had the privilege of working with a diverse group of students and colleagues. My values and passions for learning, service, and compassion have influenced me to pursue a career in education. Through my experiences as a public school educator, I have witnessed the influence school administrators can have on teachers, students, school staff, and the community. It is these experiences that have sparked my interest in conducting research that examines the experiences and practices of TK-12 Administrators of Color. Additionally, through my experiences as a doctoral student, I have had the space to reflect on my values, aspirations, and agency for a better future. Thus, my interest in listening to the stories of others and learning from others has grown over the years. This

dissertation was my commitment to honor and center the voices of individuals who are part of marginalized communities (e.g., People of Color) but also build a sense of community, listen actively to their stories, and empower them and other People of Color as they share their voices and stories. I will now present the definition of key terms that will be used throughout this dissertation.

### **Definition of Terms**

Several key terms will be referenced throughout this dissertation. Each of these terms is presented below to provide a shared understanding of how these key terms are used in this study.

#### ***Latinx***

In this dissertation, I utilized Salina and Lozano's (2017) Latinx definition. They defined the term Latinx “as an inclusive term that recognizes the intersectionality of sexuality, language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, and phenotype (p. 9).” They further stated that the term has included individuals who do not identify with the gender binary and represent the various intersections of gender (Salina & Lozano, 2017). In this study, the term Latinx is used as a gender-neutral term to reference and include individuals who identify their racial and ethnic background from various genders. In some cases, the words Latinos, Latinas, and Latina/o will be used to honor the words used in the work of some scholars.

#### ***Racism***

I selected Solórzano and Yosso's (2002) definition of racism. They defined racism as “the ideology that justifies the dominance of one race over another (p. 24).” Racism takes its form as an institutional power, and historically, People of Color have not experienced this type of power (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).



### ***Racial Microaggressions***

In this study, I utilized Sue et al. (2007) definition of racial microaggressions. They defined racial microaggressions as “verbal, behavior, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward People of Color” (p. 271).

### ***Lateral/Horizontal Violence***

For this study, I selected Almonte’s (2023) definition of Lateral/Horizontal Violence. They defined lateral violence (also referred to as horizontal violence) as harmful actions and behaviors that individuals do to each other as an oppressed group within our families and our communities.

### ***People of Color***

In this study, I utilized the National Education Association’s definition of People of Color. The term People of Color references individuals who identify their racial and ethnic background as other than white (National Education Association, 2021). This includes Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other non-white identities such as Students, Teachers, and Administrators of Color.

### ***Marginalized Groups***

For this dissertation, I selected Sevelius et al. (2020) definition of marginalized groups. They defined marginalized groups as “those excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational and/or cultural life” (p. 1). This includes groups who are excluded because of their race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigration status (Sevelius et al., 2020).

### ***Transitional Kindergarten (TK)- 12 Administrators***

In this study, I utilized the Commission on Teacher Credentialing definition of Transitional Kindergarten (TK). The Commission on Teacher Credentialing defined transitional kindergarten as “a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate” (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, para. 1). TK is not considered to be a PK program that provides care and education for young children (ages 3-4). All six study participants work in TK-12 public school districts in California. Therefore, throughout this dissertation, the participants of this study will be referred to as TK-12 administrators. To honor the words of scholars, however, the term PK-12 administrators will be used when referencing the literature.

### **Problem Statement**

As stated previously, more than half of all students in U.S. PK-12 public schools identify as Students of Color (Superville, 2021). Of that number, 27% of students identify as Latinx, while only about 9% of school leaders identify as Latinx (Superville, 2021). Therefore, there is a need to examine the experiences of Latinx administrators as they serve the growing number of Students of Color in public schools. Furthermore, empirical studies on the experiences and leadership practices of PK-12 Administrators of Color have revealed that many School Leaders of Color advocate for all students, especially Students of Color, through culturally responsive leadership practices (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). With a growing number of Students of Color in public schools, there is an urgency to conduct research on the experiences of Administrators of Color as they share their leadership practices with the school communities that they serve.

Additionally, the scant literature on the experiences and leadership practices of School Leaders of Color has mostly been on women of Color (Fernandez et al., 2015; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Martinez et al., 2016). Therefore, there is a need to examine the experiences and leadership practices of men of Color. More specifically, this study aimed to examine the experiences and leadership practices of Latinx men administrators. Through their narratives, the participants shared their leadership practices with the school communities they serve as men of Color, thus providing a valuable understanding of their unique experiences.

Furthermore, research has shown that young Latinx men underperform in their educational attainment in both PK-12 and higher education compared to their Latinx women counterparts (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). Additionally, Latinx men also underperform in their educational attainments when compared to their white and Black men peers (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). Latinx men in both PK-12 and higher education educational settings have experienced racism and negative experiences/treatments because of their racial/ethnic backgrounds (Brown & Rodríguez, 2009; Halx & Ortiz, 2011). Latinx men in higher educational settings are more likely to experience challenges such as being unable to attend school full-time and/or trouble seeking assistance when facing challenges (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz et al., 2018). Thus, there is an urgency to highlight the counterstories of PK-12 Latinx men administrators as they share their educational experiences and leadership practices. Additionally, there is a need to challenge the majoritarian narrative of Latinx men in education. This study sought to combat existing narratives of Latinx men in education by providing a different narrative of their survival of oppressive structures and striving for equity and racial justice as administrators men of Color.

## **Purpose of Study**

This study aimed to examine the educational and life experiences of TK-12 Latinx Men Administrators of Color by centering their voices. Additionally, this study sought to examine how the education and life experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators influenced their leadership practices as educational leaders. Therefore, I utilized a critical race counterstorytelling and narrative inquiry methodology to capture the stories of the participants of this study. Yosso (2006) described critical race counterstorytelling “as a method of recounting the experiences and perspectives of racially and socially marginalized people” (p. 10). Additionally, in contrast to a majoritarian story, counterstories are told from the perspectives of marginalized people to challenge power, deficit views, and practices that contribute to inequity (Kohli, 2021).

A critical race counterstorytelling and narrative inquiry methodology provided an opportunity to examine the experiences of the participants of this study in an in-depth and meaningful way. To do this, I conducted individual, semi-structured, open-ended interviews with each participant. Their narratives highlighted their perseverance through discrimination as Students and Educators of Color and the culturally responsive leadership practices they implement as Administrators of Color. Next, I present the research questions that guided this study.

## **Research Questions**

This study sought to highlight the counterstories of TK-12 Latinx men administrators through their educational and leadership experiences. The following questions lead this study:

1. In what ways have TK-12 Latinx men administrators' educational and life experiences influenced their current leadership practice?
  - a. How has their experience with race and racism influenced their practice?

- b. How has their experience of other salient identities influenced their practice?

The section that follows will discuss the significance of this research study.

### **Significance of the Study**

The limited research on the experiences of PK-12 Administrators of Color in PK-12 educational settings has focused on women of Color (Fernandez et al., 2015; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Martinez et al., 2016). Additionally, most studies on the experiences of School Leaders and Administrators of Color utilize a phenomenology or case study research design (Aaron, 2019; Flores, 2018; Liang & Peter-Hawkins, 2017; Peterson & Vergara, 2016; Reed, 2012). Thus, this study sought to address these gaps in the literature by examining the educational and leadership experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators utilizing a critical race counterstorytelling method.

Additionally, this study aimed to highlight a different narrative of Latinx men in education. Research has shown that Latinx men are not as successful in their education and thus underperform in their educational attainments compared to Latinx women, white, and Black men (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). This study sought to challenge the majoritarian educational narrative of Latinx men by presenting their counterstories as educational leaders of Color. Each of the participants in this study shared their experiences with persevering racism as Students of Color. All participants hold advanced degrees and chose a career in education as teachers and now serve leadership roles as school leaders to support and advocate for their school communities.

This study also sought to inform TK-12 school districts of the importance of hiring and promoting more Educators of Color in administrative roles. The findings of this study suggested implications for school districts of the culturally responsive leadership practices Latinx men

administrators implement as they serve and support their school communities. The findings of this study also suggested implications for higher education institutions (e.g., teacher education programs, school leadership preparation programs). Additionally, the findings of this study informed both school districts and higher education institutions of the need to implement mentorship programs to support and empower both young Latinx men and Latinx men administrators. The research has shown that PK-12 School Administrators of Color are implementing culturally responsive leadership practices with the diverse school communities that they serve (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Furthermore, research has shown that Latinx men experience challenges through their educational experiences because of their racial and ethnic backgrounds. (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). A LatCrit framework was used in this study as a lens to examine the counterstories of TK-12 Latinx men administrators as they share their educational, life, and leadership experiences.

This Chapter provided an overview, purpose, and significance of this study. Chapter Two will discuss the theoretical framework used in this study. Chapter Two will also review relevant literature on the educational experiences of Latinx men and the experiences and leadership practices of PK-12 School Leaders of Color to elaborate the purpose of this study further. In Chapter Three, I will outline and discuss the chosen methodology of this study and the methods used to collect and analyze the counterstories of the participants. In Chapter Four, I present the counterstories of participants, and in Chapter Five, I discuss those findings and the implications they have on educational and research communities.

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

This chapter delves into the relevant literature of this proposed study. The literature review begins with the theoretical framework of this study, which is Critical Race Theory (CRT) and, more specifically, Latinx Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), which are the frameworks of this study. Next, literature on the experiences of Latinx men in educational settings will be reviewed. Then, literature on racial justice curriculum in PK-12 educational leadership preparation programs will be discussed. Finally, the most current empirical studies highlighting the experiences and practices of School Leaders of Color in PK-12 educational settings will be reviewed. Culturally responsive leadership practices, the impact of mentorship and racial/ethnic identity, and challenges and advantages through the intersection of identities will also be explored. This Chapter will conclude with a discussion of the gaps in the literature and a discussion on how this study sought to address these gaps.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Rooted in the traditions of CRT, this study utilized a LatCrit framework in order to examine the narratives of TK-12 Latinx men administrators. A LatCrit framework was selected for this study to provide the opportunity to explore issues of race, racism, and other forms of oppression that Latinx men administrators face. In this section, I will present and discuss CRT and LatCrit in the field of education.

### **Critical Race Theory**

CRT emerged and is grounded by Critical Legal Studies (CLS) (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and Kimberly Crenshaw are among the initial scholars of Critical Legal Studies. CRT differs from CLS in that it has a focus on activism in order to strive for a more equitable and just society (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

Race continues to be a determining factor that creates inequality in the United States for People of Color. CRT allows for the opportunity to center the voices, experiences, and realities of People of Color in an attempt for equity (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Additionally, CRT in education aims towards the elimination of racism and other forms of oppression, such as gender, class, and sexual orientation, in the educational experiences of People of Color (Huber, 2010; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

DeCuir and Dixson (2004) identified the following five tenets of CRT in Education: “(a) counterstorytelling, (b) the permanence of racism, (c) whiteness as property, (d) interest convergence, and (e) the critique of liberalism” (p. 27). Counterstorytelling is a method of critiquing majoritarian stories that perpetuate racial stereotypes of People of Color. The permanence of racism acknowledges that racism plays a dominant role in American society. Whiteness as property argues that there is an educational inequity in schools in which white students tend to benefit from high-quality education compared to Students of Color. The notion of interest convergence argues that whites benefit from the basic rights of People of Color. Finally, the critique of liberalism challenges the belief in colorblindness and the neutrality of the law.

Furthermore, Ladson-Billings (2010) described critical race theory in education as a challenge to the existing curriculum in schools that maintains a white supremacist script that silences the voices and stories of People of Color. CRT also challenges the current instructional strategies in schools where Students of Color are presumed to be deficient. CRT challenges the notion of assessment in schools where Students of Color consistently underperform compared to their white peers. Additionally, CRT challenges the disparity in school funding in schools with predominantly Students of Color due to systemic inequities. CRT in education challenges the



idea of desegregation in schools where this practice primarily benefits white students while leaving Students of Color with fewer resources and reinforcing white supremacist ideologies.

The next section will discuss Latinx Critical Race Theory.

### **Latinx Critical Race Theory**

LatCrit is an extension of CRT in education. LatCrit allows for the opportunity to reveal the racial, gender, class, and sexuality experiences of Latinx communities (Huber, 2010).

Additionally, LatCrit provides the opportunity to examine and acknowledge issues of immigration status, language, ethnicity, and culture of Latinx People (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Huber, 2010). A LatCrit theoretical framework acknowledges and considers the intersection of race and other forms of oppression, such as immigration status and language, that Latinx students face throughout their educational experiences (Huber, 2010). Thus, a LatCrit theory critiques the dominant discourse of race and racism through the experiences of Latinx People.

Furthermore, Solórzano and Delgado (2001) have described CRT and LatCrit as challenging the dominant discourse of race and racism in education and how the educational system marginalizes Students of Color. Solórzano and Delgado (2001) identified the five tenets of CRT and LatCrit framework in education as (1) The centrality of race and racism, (2) The challenge to the dominant ideology, (3) The commitment to social justice, (4) The centrality of experiential knowledge, and (5) The interdisciplinary perspective.

Solórzano and Delgado (2001) described the centrality of race and racism as the primary factor when explaining and describing the experiences of People of Color. They described the challenge to dominant ideology (e.g., white supremacist ideology) as a challenge to the existing educational affirmation of color-blindness and equal opportunity. The commitment to social justice is described as the advocacy to address issues of race, sex, and gender and empowering

individuals of marginalized communities (e.g., Students of Color). The authors described the centrality of experiential knowledge (e.g., students' lived experiences) as recognizing Students of Color experiential knowledge as an asset and valued experience in their education. Lastly, the authors described the interdisciplinary perspective as a challenge to the lack of historical information on race and racism. Thus, I utilized a LatCrit framework to examine the experiences of Latinx TK-12 men administrators. A LatCrit lens allowed for the opportunity to examine issues of race, gender, class, sexuality, and language that TK-12 Latinx men administrators experienced. The section that follows will review the literature on the educational experiences of Latinx men.

### **Educational Experiences of Latinx Men**

The research shows that young Latinx men students fall behind in their educational attainments in comparison to their young Latinx women counterparts (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). Additionally, Latinx men fall behind in their educational attainments compared to their white and Black young men peers (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). The following sections will explore the literature on the experiences of Latinx men in both PK-12 and higher education settings.

#### **PK-12 Educational Experiences of Young Latinx Men**

Sáenz and Ponjuán (2011) identified various problems young Latinx men face in PK-12 educational settings. For example, Latinx men have a higher high school dropout rate, are more likely to be referred to juvenile justice agencies, and are placed in special education programs. Latinx men students experienced a lack of educational services provided by their schools, such as access to appropriate curriculum (Brown & Rodríguez, 2009). Furthermore, there is a gender gap in the educational attainment between young Latinx men and women. For instance, when

compared to Latinx women, Latinx men have higher high school dropout rates, are less likely to enroll in college and have a lower college rate of associate's and bachelor's degrees (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). Latinx men are also more likely than their white peers to enter prison at some point in their lifetimes (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011).

Additionally, another challenge young Latinx men face in their PK-12 education is a lack of Latinx men in the teaching profession (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). The need for Latinx men teachers is imperative in order to meet the learning and mentoring needs of Latinx youth (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). In their qualitative study examining the experiences of Latinx men high school students, Brown and Rodriguez (2009) found that young Latinx men students desire a strong connection with school personnel and often feel rejected and neglected by the adults at their schools. Furthermore, the young Latinx men students of the study expressed their negative experiences with teachers, counselors, and administrators. The participants of the study also stated the importance for educators to make connections with their students in order to support them through their educational endeavors.

In a similar study, Halx and Ortiz (2011) conducted a qualitative study on the experiences of young high school Latinx men who attended predominantly Latinx students' population schools in South Texas. Through their interviews, the researchers stated that the presence of police on campus made Latinx men students feel powerless and made misbehavior a criminal offense. The participants of the study also felt that school staff discriminated against them and received unfair treatment because of their racial/ethnic background. The lack of care by adults at their schools negatively impacted the young Latinx men students' experiences as learners and as human beings (Brown & Rodríguez, 2009; Halx & Ortiz, 2011).

Furthermore, Halx and Ortiz (2011) reported various factors that impact young Latinx men students in their education, such as cultural pressures, economic concerns, and emotional needs. In their qualitative study, the authors found that high school Latinx men students identified the need to complete their secondary education in order to have a better future. However, the authors found that Latinx men students view school as another work experience and do not have a personal connection with their education. Latinx men students lack interest in educational attainment because it does not represent an immediate payoff, such as a job with a wage. In their study, the authors also found that Latinx men students have a strong work ethic, and many of the participants shared their need and want for financial stability. The authors also reported that Latinx men students have goals and aspirations for their future that are not directly related to attaining an education. The next section will explore the experiences of Latinx men students in higher education.

### **Experiences of Latinx Men in Higher Education**

Ponjuán and Hernández (2016) stated that Latinx men who are 25 years or older have lower rates of obtaining an associate degree compared to their white and Black men peers. The research has shown that Latinx men have a difficult time navigating the pathway to community college, enrollment, and completion. Furthermore, Latinx men face unique family and cultural obligations that may interfere with their pursuit of a higher education. For example, the construct of *familismo* in which Latinx families place an expectation on men to provide financial support and contribute to daily family activities. Thus, the family demands of Latinx men may contribute to Latinx men students being enrolled part-time rather than full-time in community college. On the contrary, Sáenz et al. (2018) conducted a multi-institution qualitative study on the experiences of thirty Latinx men attending public community colleges in Texas. Through their

semi-structured focus group interviews, the researchers found that *familismo* served as a form of familial capital for the participants of the study as they navigated their higher education. Family support and encouragement served as a sense of hope and resilience for the Latinx men participants.

Furthermore, Sáenz et al. (2018) stated that masculinity impacts the success of Latinx men in community college. For instance, Latinx men students are less likely to seek help when faced with challenges during their community college experience due to *machismo*. Seeking assistance and help may seem like a feminine activity and/or characteristic of Latinx men. Additionally, there is a need for more Latinx faculty in higher education. Latinx faculty in higher education may serve as role models that may motivate and inspire Latinx men to graduate college and pursue their career aspirations. The participants of the study experienced a lack of support on campus and felt that all responsibility was placed on them for academic success. Latinx men students experienced a difficult time finding mentors on their school campus who would support them through their education pathways (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz et al., 2018).

Moreover, Sáenz et al. (2020) conducted a phenomenological qualitative study that examined the lived experiences of Latinx men attending 2-year and 4-year higher education institutions in Texas. Through their focus group interviews, the authors found that Latinx men mothers serve as a sense of support and inspiration for their education. The mothers of the participants set high expectations and provided advice, support, and encouragement as they pursued their higher education. Additionally, the sisters of Latinx men reinforced educational expectations, provided support, and served as a mode of inspiration. Furthermore, the sisters of Latinx men serve as mentors and provide financial support as they navigate their higher

education. Moreover, extended female family members such as grandmothers, aunts, and cousins provided financial security and emotional and moral support to the Latinx men of the study as they continued their post-secondary education.

Similarly, research shows that peer support among Latinx men helped them succeed academically in higher education settings (Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Pérez & Taylor, 2016). For example, Pérez and Taylor (2016) conducted a qualitative study utilizing a phenomenological approach to examine how Latinx men use different forms of capital to navigate higher education. In their study, the authors found that through peer networks, Latinx men learned what routes to avoid and what opportunities to seek in higher education. Similarly, in their qualitative study exploring Latinx men experiences in navigating the college environment, Huerta and Fishman (2014) found that the participants' experiences with peer support helped and motivated them with their academic and personal trajectories. Peer support had a positive influence on the experiences of Latinx men in higher educational settings (Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Pérez & Taylor, 2016).

### **Summary of Educational Experiences of Latinx Men**

The research shows that Latinx men underperform in graduation rates, college enrollment, and completion in comparison to their Latinx women counterparts as well as their white and Black men peers (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Saenz & Ponjuán, 2011). Latinx men are more likely to experience difficulty in accessing the appropriate curriculum, drop out of school, and be placed in special education programs in PK-12 educational settings (Brown & Rodríguez, 2009; Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). Additionally, the research shows that Latinx men experience challenges in navigating higher education, are more likely to attend school part-time, and are less likely to seek assistance (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz et al., 2018). In both PK-12 and higher education, Latinx men experience a lack of

support from educators and expressed the need to have role models of Color in their educational experiences (Brown & Rodríguez, 2009; Halx & Ortiz, 2011; Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz et al., 2018). Latinx men receive support and encouragement to continue their education from their mothers and family (Sáenz et al., 2020). Additionally, peer support has a positive influence on the experiences of Latinx men in higher educational settings (Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Pérez & Taylor, 2016). The section that follows will explore educational leadership preparation programs.

### **Educational Leadership Preparation Programs**

As this study focuses on Latinx men who are educational administrators and takes a LatCrit lens, it is important to understand what is written in the literature about educational leadership preparation programs, particularly as it pertains to the inclusion and teaching of racial justice. Research has highlighted the need for a racial justice curriculum in PK-12 educational leadership preparation programs (Carpenter & Diem, 2013; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Gooden et al., 2018; Peterson et al., 2013). Aspiring and current school leaders need to be equipped with strategies and racial justice language in order to address equity issues in their school communities (Gooden et al., 2018; Peterson et al., 2013). The following section will discuss literature on racial justice curriculum and practices in PK-12 educational leadership preparation programs.

### **Racial Justice Curriculum in Educational Leadership Preparation Programs**

Peterson et al. (2013) examined a school leadership preparation program curriculum in Oregon that prepared aspiring school leaders for equity and social justice. The school leadership program implemented a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Project for candidates. Through the PBL project, candidates were able to conduct equity audits on their schools and districts. Based

on their equity audits and self-reflection, interns were able to develop and create an improvement plan to address the equity issues they identified. Similarly, Carpenter and Diem (2013) conducted a case study to examine the ways conversations focused on race and racism are facilitated in leadership preparation programs. Through individual interviews, the authors found that professors utilized a variety of strategies to engage in and facilitate race-related conversations with aspiring school leaders. These strategies included critical self-awareness and a deeper awareness of their racial identity and consciousness through the writing of racial autobiographies.

Furthermore, Gooden et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study examining the influence a school leadership preparation program had on candidates who recently completed the program. Through their interviews, the authors found that social justice issues and language helped prepare candidates to engage in difficult conversations on social justice issues. Additionally, through their findings, “participants reported that studying anti-racist leadership had a significant impact on their values and beliefs, which in turn led to ongoing change in their perception of social justice issues, particularly those around race” (p. 15). Through a racial justice and anti-racist school leadership preparation program, participants felt prepared and equipped with strategies for addressing equity issues in their schools.

Additionally, Gooden and Dantley (2012) proposed centering race in a framework for leadership preparation programs. The authors identified the following five key characteristics for a leadership preparation program that centers race: 1) a prophetic voice, 2) self-reflection serving as the motivation for transformative action, 3) a grounding in a critical theoretical construction, 4) a pragmatic edge that supports praxis, and 5) the inclusion of race language. A prophetic voice challenges and seeks changes to rituals, practices, and institutional behaviors. Critical self-



reflection provides educational leaders with an agenda of reforms toward racial justice in education. A critical theoretical construction ignites school leaders with a social justice and civil rights agenda. Thorough praxis, current and aspiring school leaders need to offer solutions and strategies to address discriminatory practices. Finally, a leadership preparation program for racial justice must focus on race and include race language (Gooden & Dantley, 2012). The next section discusses the literature on the experiences and practices of PK-12 School Leaders of Color.

### **Experiences and Practices of PK-12 Administrators of Color**

There has been a growing body of literature over the last decade examining the experiences of School Leaders of Color in PK-12 educational settings (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). The findings of these studies have revealed how the identities (e.g., race, gender) and experiences of School Leaders of Color have influenced and informed their leadership practices. The research has shown that School Leaders of Color are implementing culturally responsive leadership practices with the school communities that they serve (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Studies have also identified the influence mentorship has had on School Leaders of Color wanting to pursue a career in PK-12 administration (Martinez et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2020). Additionally, School Leaders of Color are committed to making a positive impact and serving as role models for their school communities (Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Moorosi et al., 2018; Murakami et al., 2018; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). The sections that follow discuss relevant research on the experiences and leadership practices of PK-12 Administrators of Color.

## **Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices**

Studies on the experiences and practices of PK-12 School Leaders of Color have revealed their commitment to implementing culturally responsive leadership practices with the school communities that they serve (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). This section will review the literature on the culturally responsive leadership practices of School Leaders of Color.

### ***Student, Parent, and Community Involvement***

Smith (2021) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study that explored how the identities of Black men school leaders of K-12 and independent schools informed their leadership practices in support of students, community, and village. The researcher found that school leaders placed an emphasis on compassion for their students and school communities as well as students' social and emotional learning. Similarly, Aaron (2019) conducted an in-depth interview study on the experiences and leadership practices of four Black woman school principals. The author stated that through their student-centered leadership practices, school principals focused on building positive and nurturing relationships with parents, teachers, and students. Utilizing their positional powers, school leaders have taken the role of caretakers as they support the well-being of their teachers to ultimately benefit the well-being of students, particularly their Students of Color (Aaron, 2019).

In addition to serving as caretakers and supporting the well-being of their students and school communities, scholars have found that School Leaders of Color also value the involvement of parents within the school community (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Baxley and Lac (2019) conducted a qualitative study of an Asian American high school

principal's personal aspiration for social justice leadership. The school principal has created a Black Parent Cafe that is hosted once a month where Black parents are invited to come in and speak with her. The principal of the study shared her aspiration to host similar sessions with Latinx and Asian parents. PK-12 School Leaders of Color have expressed the importance of involving families within the school community by getting them involved with school events and being part of the decision-making process of the school.

Additionally, school principals have also required teachers to have constant communication with families in order to increase the engagement of parents with their students' schooling (Baxley & Lac, 2019; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). In order to increase parent and community engagement within the school, School Leaders of Color have engaged in community walks and community partnerships (Flores, 2018; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020). Thus, school leaders value the importance of family engagement in the learning of their students (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Flores, 2018; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019).

Furthermore, as aforementioned above, Aaron (2019) found that school principals also made decisions in context, keeping the students' familial background and home context in mind. Additionally, school leaders held firm expectations of their teachers when it came to instruction, moral character, and professionalism in order to ensure equity and meet the needs of their diverse students. They have also committed to hiring more diverse staff at their schools and offer equity training on culturally responsive practices for staff (Smith, 2021). Furthermore, Moorosi et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study on the experiences of gender, race, and leadership of three Black woman secondary school principals. Utilizing a life-history narrative approach through interviews, the researchers reported that school leaders believed in the importance of having a

strong team of educators with a common purpose of supporting student achievement. The school leaders also revealed their commitment to developing a holistic child by supporting students and equipping them with the skills and support needed to pursue their goals and aspirations as they follow their endeavors post PK-12 education (Moorosi et al., 2018).

### ***Equity-Driven Practices***

As culturally responsive school leaders, PK-12 leaders of Color shared, through the findings of several studies, their commitment to challenging deficit views their school's staff and/or the district had on minority students (Baxley & Lac, 2019; Flores, 2018; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). For instance, Flores (2018) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study on the experiences of three Black women School Leaders of Color. The school leaders of the study worked in either an elementary or middle school setting. Through their semi-structured interviews, the authors found that school principals preferred to use "opportunity gap" instead of "achievement gap." The principals preferred to use the word "opportunity gap" because achievement tends to blame the students for their educational performance.

In a similar study, Rodela and Rodriguez-Mojica (2019) utilized a counternarrative method to examine the leadership experiences of four Latinx administrators working in different PK-12 schools in Oregon and Washington. The authors stated that school leaders shared the importance of clarifying what the word "equity" meant for their school district. They shared that equity was more than just providing food and supplies for students and families, but rather a deeper issue than poverty alone. School leaders also shared their awareness of inequities Students of Color face, such as deficit views and perspectives of their families and abilities (e.g., race, class). The school leaders were committed to being the voice of their students and families

and determined to advocate for social justice and equity issues their schools' communities faced (Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019).

Furthermore, School Leaders of Color revealed their awareness of equity issues such as over-placement of students in special education programs, student suspensions, teacher quality, low expectations teachers place on Students of Color, and other racist practices in their schools and districts (Baxley & Lac, 2019; Flores, 2018). School leaders shared their commitment to social justice by having conversations with their staff about the deficit mindset teachers may have of students from low socioeconomic status, Students of Color, as well as English Language Learners (ELLs) (Flores, 2018). In their qualitative study on the experience of a high school Asian American social justice school principal, Baxley and Lac (2019) found that the school principal has set up monthly meetings where she hears from student leaders of the Black Student Union of the school. At the standing monthly meetings, the principal learned of Black students' concerns regarding suspension rates, deficit views, and treatment from their teachers. This school leader was committed to serving and advocating for her Black students (Baxley & Lac, 2019).

In order to combat deficit views and practices of Students of Color in their schools, PK-12 School Leaders of Color, in one study, emphasized their attempt to hold themselves accountable to ensure that the decisions they made were fair and equitable and always put students and their families first (Smith, 2021). School leaders of Color highlighted the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection of their strengths and weaknesses as they work with diverse school communities (Smith, 2021). Additionally, School Leaders of Color expressed the importance of school staff, district administrators, and the school board in recognizing external factors that affect student achievement from marginalized groups (Flores, 2018).

Furthermore, Hernandez and Murakami (2016) utilized a counterstorytelling method to examine the experience of one Latina school principal working in an urban school. The researchers found that a school principal advocated against negative views and teacher attitudes toward students needing the most support, such as English Language Learners (ELLs). Additionally, working at a school community with 77% Latinx students allowed a school principal to be more aware of the issue of racism and discrimination within her own school community. Through their self-awareness and reflective practices, School Leaders of Color were able to identify and address equity issues their minority students face in their schools and districts (Flores, 2018; Hernandez & Marakami, 2016; Smith, 2021).

Similarly, in order to create an equitable and positive learning environment for their students, PK-12 School Leaders of Color promote and encourage culturally relevant pedagogy within the curriculum at their schools (Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Smith, 2021). For example, school leaders have identified the importance of engaging their Black students with the curriculum by incorporating hip-hop and creative film-making (Smith, 2021). Miles Nash and Peters (2020) conducted a qualitative case study on three middle school Black women school leaders who utilize asset-based approaches to support Black girls at their schools. Through individual interviews, the authors stated that the Black women school leaders were determined to provide Black girls with examples of women of Color who work in the STEM fields. Exposure to STEM professionals and providing a variety of career options for Black girls were important to the school leaders of this study (Miles Nash & Peters, 2020). The next section will review the influence mentorship and racial/ethnic identity have had on the experiences of School Leaders of Color.

## **The Influence of Mentorship and Racial/Ethnic Identity**

The research shows that many PK-12 School Leaders of Color had mentors who empowered and encouraged them to pursue careers in PK-12 school administration (Martinez et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2020). The support of their mothers, partners, colleagues, and supervisors also had an influence on the participants' aspirations for pursuing careers in PK-12 school administration (Martinez et al., 2016). Additionally, Latina school leaders mentioned the positive impact other Latina mentors have had on them in becoming school administrators. Through their positive experiences with mentorship and their commitment to increasing the visibility of School Leaders of Color in their school districts, Latina school leaders were committed to recruiting and supporting aspiring Latina school leaders (Martinez et al., 2020).

Furthermore, PK-12 School Leaders of Color's own experiences as people of Color have influenced and informed their commitment to equity and social justice practices at their schools (Hernandez & Marakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Sharing similar ethnic and racial backgrounds as the students in their schools, school leaders described how their instructional leadership has been influenced by students' experiences, such as language and family support (Mendez-Morse et al., 2015). Latina school leaders' racial and ethnic identity influenced their commitment to connecting with students and families through language (Hernandez & Marakami, 2016). For Latina school leaders, aspirations to become a school principal were also influenced by the transition as a bilingual teacher and the desire to support the cultural and linguistic needs of their Latinx students (Martinez et al., 2016).

### ***Desire to Serve as Role Models***

School leaders viewed their ethnic and racial backgrounds as an asset in supporting and serving as role models for teachers, students, and their families (Mendez-Morse et al., 2015;

Moorosi et al., 2018; Murakami et al., 2018; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). In their qualitative study examining the construction success leadership of three secondary Black women school principals, Moorosi et al. (2018) reported that school principals felt it was important to serve as role models to positively impact the students they serve. As women of Color, school leaders emphasized the importance of visibility for their students, especially young Black women students at their schools. In order to increase visibility and role models for Students of Color, school leaders revealed their intentions and practices in hiring more bilingual and minority school teachers (Mendez-Morse et al., 2015). Striving to be role models for their entire school community, School Leaders of Color shared their commitment to providing students with the most opportunities and modeling social justice behaviors and practices with their teachers (Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014).

### **Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices Summary**

Multiple studies have demonstrated how the lived experiences and racial and ethnic identities of School Leaders of Color have influenced and informed their leadership practices as they work with diverse school communities (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Flores, 2018; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). PK-12 School leaders of Color are dedicated to working for social justice and educational equity as well as making a difference in the lives of their students, families, and school communities. Research has shown that School Leaders of Color value the involvement and voice of students and their families when it comes to curriculum and school policies (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Flores, 2018; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). School leaders of Color also prioritize the importance of serving as role models for minority students (Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Moorosi et al., 2018; Murakami et al., 2018; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). Lastly, PK-12 School



Leaders of Color have had mentors who motivated them to pursue school administration and positively impacted and informed their leadership practices (Martinez et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2020). Thus, School Leaders of Color are committed to advocating and supporting their diverse students, families, and school communities (Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). The section that follows will discuss the challenges and advantages PK-12 School Administrators of Color face through the intersection of their identities.

### **Challenges and Advantages Through the Intersection of Identities**

There is a growing body of literature that has examined the experiences of PK-12 School Leaders of Color through the intersection of their identities (e.g., race, class, gender) (Aaron, 2019; Flores, 2018; Liang & Peter-Hawkins, 2017; Martinez et al., 2016; Peterson & Vergara, 2016; Reed, 2012). The findings of these studies have demonstrated both the challenges and advantages that PK-12 School Leaders of Color experienced through the intersection of their identities. Sexism, racism, and low expectations are some of the challenges School Leaders of Color have faced. On the contrary, racial/ethnic background, language, and cultural experiences are some of the advantages School Leaders of Color have experienced through the intersection of their identities. This section will analyze empirical studies on the experiences of PK-12 School Leaders of Color through the intersectionality of their identities. The section that follows will explore the challenges PK-12 School Leaders of Color experience through their identities.

### ***Challenges Through the Intersection of Identities and Lived Experiences***

Scholars have found that PK-12 School Leaders of Color have experienced cultural barriers while working with students and families with similar ethnic/racial backgrounds (Flores, 2018; Reed, 2012). For instance, Black woman school leaders have experienced challenges forming positive school relationships with their students and parents with similar backgrounds

(Flores, 2018). Parents of students have viewed the school leaders as having advantages in life and, thus, not relating to them in terms of the experiences the families and students are going through (Flores, 2018). Moreover, Reed (2012) conducted a multi-case qualitative study that examined how the intersection of race and gender influenced the leadership practices of three Black woman high school principals. Through individual interviews, the authors found that two of the Black woman school principals of the study experienced challenges in forming positive relationships with their young Black men students. The participants of the study felt the students did not respond to them positively as they did to Black men teachers and administrators (Reed, 2012).

**Gender Discrimination.** Women School Leaders of Color have experienced sexism through gender stereotypes (Liang & Peter-Hawkins, 2017). For example, Liang and Peter-Hawkins (2017) conducted a multi-case qualitative study examining the experiences of female Asian American administrators working in public PK-12 schools. Utilizing in-depth structured interviews, the authors reported that school leaders were criticized for being either too aggressive or passive with their teachers, depending on whether they served as school administrators in an elementary or secondary setting. Additionally, the participants of the study shared how their abilities as school leaders were questioned, and they experienced constant pressure to prove themselves as school leaders. The findings of the study also revealed that Asian American women school leaders were challenged with stereotypes of Asian American women, such as being submissive and quiet. For instance, participants of the study shared how they were told by colleagues and parents that they were not “real” Asian women because they were too direct and loud (Liang & Peter-Hawkins, 2017).

Similarly, Rodela and Rodriguez-Mojica (2019) found that Latina school leaders confronted cultural norms as they pursued their education and career aspirations as school administrators. Latina school leaders shared how they confronted cultural norms about being good daughters and good mothers as they pursued their higher education. Additionally, Latina school leaders shared the pressure they received from their families to quit school because they were mothers. They were reminded by their families that being a mother should be their priority instead of pursuing education and career advancement. Thus, Latina school leaders made personal sacrifices by challenging their families' beliefs to pursue their education and career advancement (Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019).

Furthermore, Fernandez et al. (2015) conducted a phenomenological qualitative study examining the experiences of five secondary Latina/o school principals. The researchers stated that women school leaders experienced challenges in breaking into men dominated fields of educational leadership. The participants of the study described having an added pressure to demonstrate their leadership abilities for being women. Latina school leaders also revealed gender discrimination they faced, such as sexual harassment from men school leaders (Martinez et al., 2016). Women School Leaders of Color also faced a level of scrutiny, such as the way they dressed and increased attention to their personal lives (Reed, 2012). Latina school leaders also described their experiences with inequities and injustices with gender discrimination in their school districts. As women of Color, the school leaders experienced low expectations of their abilities to work with and support "tough" students at their schools. The Latina school leaders' leadership skills and abilities were underestimated and undervalued (Martinez et al., 2020).

Furthermore, women School Leaders of Color experienced resistance and low expectations from their white counterparts and colleagues (Aaron, 2019; Martinez et al., 2016;

Peterson & Vergara, 2016). For example, school principals shared resistance they faced from non-Latino administrators, such as being told not to speak Spanish with students (Martinez et al., 2016). Peterson and Vergara (2016) conducted a qualitative study examining the experiences of ten Latina/o school leaders working in PK-12 schools/districts in the Pacific Northwest. Through individual interviews, the authors found that School Leaders of Color needed to be stronger and smarter because the community was looking for them to fail. The school leaders also experience microaggressions from colleagues and school personnel because of their racial/ethnic identity.

Similarly, Black women school leaders experienced resistance to their leadership and authority from white women because of their identity as women of Color (Aaron, 2019). To combat resistance from white teachers, the school principals intentionally formed purposeful relationships with teachers in order to deconstruct their perceptions of Black women. The principals' awareness of how they were perceived through negative stereotypes influenced them to enact their leadership practices in ways that were more relatable to their staff (Aaron, 2019). Additionally, School Leaders of Color have also experienced resistance from the district when suggesting to hire more teachers and Administrators of Color (Fernandez et al., 2015).

Further challenges that PK-12 School Leaders of Color face are self-doubt and forms of isolation (Fernandez et al., 2015; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Martinez et al., 2016). In a white-dominated field, School Leaders of Color have experienced a form of social isolation during their all-white administrative staff meetings (Hernandez & Marakami, 2016). Additionally, having very few School Leaders of Color as mentors and colleagues has also added to the isolated feelings that School Leaders of Color experienced (Martinez et al., 2016). Furthermore, Latina school leaders have shared a fear of being judged more harshly than their white counterparts (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). In addition, School Leaders of Color have

experienced imposter syndrome, and their leadership capacity and ability have been challenged or questioned (Fernandez et al., 2015). The next section will explore the advantages School Leaders of Color experience through the intersection of their identities.

### ***Advantages Through the Intersection of Identities (Race, Gender)***

Contrary to PK-12 School Leaders of Color experiencing issues with the intersection of their identities, research studies have also demonstrated that School Leaders of Color experience advantages because of the intersection of their identities (Hernandez et al., 2014; Martinez et al., 2016; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Murakami et al., 2018; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). School leaders of Color have experienced positive rapport with students and parents of Color (e.g., Black, Latinx, Asian). These parents and students feel comfortable having conversations with school leaders because of their shared ethnic/racial identity (Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). The *testimonios* of Latina school leaders revealed their use of cultural capital to connect with and support their Latinx communities (Martinez et al., 2016). Furthermore, through their own experiences of racialized gender discrimination, Black women school leaders are able to empathize and support Black girls in their school communities (Miles Nash & Peters, 2020).

Similarly, Murakami et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study examining the experiences of 231 PK-12 Latina/o school administrators in Texas. Through the adaptive responses of the participants, the authors found that school leaders' ethnic and racial backgrounds positively impacted their work as school administrators. The school leaders were fluent in both Spanish and English and were able to communicate with their students and their families in Spanish. Sharing a common language and culture allowed participants to build rapport, understand, and connect with their students and their families. Through their lived experiences and cultural backgrounds, school leaders were committed to advocating for their

Latinx students and families by ensuring that their culture and identity were acknowledged and affirmed in their schools (Murakami et al., 2018).

**Educational Experiences.** Hernandez et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative case study on the experience of an elementary Latina school principal. The researchers found that a Latina School Principal's experience with racism and deficit views from her teachers and school counselor growing up provided her the opportunity to comprehend the discrimination that Students of Color experience in school settings. Through those experiences, the participant was able to learn how race and class get privileged in schools. The experiences of her schooling, family context, and work experiences have provided the participant with an understanding of the importance of respecting students and their families regardless of background or socioeconomic status. The school principal centers her leadership practices on creating educational institutions that are of quality for ethnically diverse students. Her aim for social justice leadership practices includes professional development training for white teachers to support them with better understanding and resolving situations and problems with the students of color and the families they work with.

Similarly, Rodela and Rodriguez-Mojica (2019) examined the experiences of four PK-12 Latinx school administrators in the Pacific Northwest who draw from their community cultural wealth for their equity leadership visions and practices. The counterstories of the participants revealed the struggles the Latinx school administrators faced with racism during their PK-12 schooling. School leaders shared how they were spanked by their teachers for not understanding the directions that were given to them in English. Additionally, the Latinx school leaders shared how their guidance counselor encouraged them to attend cosmetology school when that same counselor was telling their white peers to pursue careers as lawyers and doctors. Through their

own experiences of racial discrimination in their PK-12 schooling, Latinx school leaders were able to empathize with their Students of Color and advocate for equity practices at their schools. The intersectionality of their identities (e.g., race, gender, lived experiences) has provided school leaders the opportunity to empathize with and understand their students from marginalized groups. (Hernandez et al., 2014; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019).

### **Challenges and Advantages Through the Intersection of Identities Summary**

The research demonstrates how the intersection of identities has both positive and negative impacts on the experiences of PK-12 School Leaders of Color (Aaron, 2019; Flores, 2018; Liang & Peter-Hawkins, 2017; Martinez et al., 2016; Peterson & Vergara, 2016; Reed, 2012). Racial/Ethnic background possessed both a challenge and an advantage for School Leaders of Color. School administrators find themselves challenging racial and ethnic stereotypes within the communities they serve who share similar racial/ethnic backgrounds (Flores, 2018; Reed, 2012). Women School Leaders of Color have also challenged cultural norms as they pursued their education and careers in PK-12 administration.

Additionally, women School Leaders of Color experienced gender stereotypes and low expectations from their counterparts, colleagues, students, and parents (Aaron, 2019; Martinez et al., 2016; Peterson & Vergara, 2016). In contrast, PK-12 School Leaders of Color are also able to connect with the communities they serve who share similar backgrounds as People of Color. Through their own racial/ethnic experiences, school leaders are able to understand the experiences of their minority students. Speaking the same language as their school community has been a big asset for School Leaders of Color in terms of forming positive relationships with their school community (Murakami et al., 2018). The section that follows addresses the gaps in the literature.

## **Gaps in the Literature**

There is a growing body of literature on the experiences and practices of School Leaders of Color in PK-12 educational settings (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Additionally, there has been an expansion in the literature examining the experiences of PK-12 School Leaders of Color through the lens of the intersection of their identities (Aaron, 2019; Flores, 2018; Liang & Peter-Hawkins, 2017; Martinez et al., 2016; Peterson & Vergara, 2016; Reed, 2012). In a field where the majority of educators (e.g., teachers, school administrators) continue to be white, more studies on the lived experiences and leadership practices of School Leaders of Color are needed to capture their counternarratives as they advocate for social justice and equity practices in their school communities and districts.

Additionally, most literature on the experiences of PK-12 school leaders and Administrators of Color has focused on women school leaders. This could be in part because women make up most of the educators in PK-12 education, and most men who are school leaders are white (Fernandez et al., 2015; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Martinez et al., 2016). There is a need in the literature to highlight the stories of Latinx men, school leaders, and Administrators of Color as they serve their school communities. Lastly, the research shows that Latinx men are less likely to graduate from high school, enroll, and complete college than their Latinx women counterparts and white and Black men peers (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). There is limited research highlighting the counterstories of Latinx men administrators as they share their educational and leadership experiences. Thus, this study sought to address these gaps in the literature by utilizing a counterstorytelling method to examine the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators.



## **Summary**

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework used in this study as well as the educational experiences of Latinx men. This chapter also examined the experiences and practices of PK-12 school leaders and Administrators of Color (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Through the review of the literature, it was revealed that PK-12 School Leaders of Color identities and lived experiences inform their leadership practices within the communities they serve. PK-12 School Leaders of Color are social justice and equity-minded as they advocate and care for their diverse students, families, and school communities. The research found that these School Leaders of Color utilized their ethnic and racial identities to build rapport and support their students and families (Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). The research also highlighted challenges School Leaders of Color face, such as racism and sexism, as they work to serve their diverse school communities (Flores, 2018; Reed, 2012). Therefore, taken together, this literature informs the conducting and analysis of this study. The next Chapter will outline and discuss the methodology and methods used in examining the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods**

Presented in this chapter will be the study's methodology, including the history, rationale, and methods. As first discussed in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators using a critical race counterstorytelling method. Yosso (2006) described critical race counterstorytelling "as a method of recounting the experiences and perspectives of racially and socially marginalized people" (p. 10). Additionally, in contrast to a majoritarian story, counterstories are told from the perspectives of marginalized people in order to challenge power, deficit views, and practices that contribute to inequity (Kohli, 2021). This study aimed to examine the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators by centering their voices.

The limited research on PK-12 school leaders and Administrators of Color has mostly been done on women school leaders (Fernandez et al., 2015; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Martinez et al., 2016). Therefore, this study sought to share the stories and experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators by centering their voices. This study also sought to provide an alternative narrative of Latinx men in education that is often not heard. Finally, this study sought to highlight the leadership practices TK-12 Latinx men administrators implement as they serve and support their school communities. The following research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways have TK-12 Latinx men administrators' educational and life experiences influenced their current leadership practice?
  - a. How has their experience with race and racism influenced their practice?
  - b. How has their experience of other salient identities influenced their practice?

I will begin this chapter by discussing my positionality as it relates to the research topic, as well as my role as the researcher. Next, I will explain and describe the choice for a qualitative research design. I will then discuss the history and practices of narrative inquiry and critical race counterstorytelling. Finally, I will explain and describe the methods used in this study to collect and analyze data and then conclude this chapter with a summary.

### **Researcher Positionality**

This section will discuss my positionality by describing my role as the researcher in this study. Bailey (2007) highlighted the importance of reflexivity, or “critically thinking about how one’s status characteristics, values, and history, as well as the numerous choices one has made during the research, affect the results” (p. 6). Herein, I reflect and share how my identities and lived experiences influenced my decision to pursue research on this topic and how my identities and experiences may have influenced the way I approached this study and interpreted the results and data. By engaging in reflexivity and acknowledging my connections to this research topic, I was able to bring this awareness with me before, during, and after the research project was completed. I will discuss my identities and experiences as a PK-12 Student of Color, as a TK-12 educator of Color, and as queer Person of Color as it relates to the research topic. My identities and experiences have influenced how I view the world. These experiences have sparked in me a commitment to social justice and equity and have motivated me to conduct a research study on centering the voices (narratives) of marginalized people.

### **My Experiences as a PK-12 Student of Color**

I attended a public PK-12 school district that serves a diverse student population, such as Students of Color and students who come from low socioeconomic status like myself. From a very early age, I realized that my identity as a Person of Color influenced my learning

experiences and how I was treated by school personnel (e.g., administrators, teachers). With Spanish being my first language, I was classified as an English language learner due to my lack of proficiency skills in the English language. Every year, I was required to take an assessment and meet a series of requirements in order to change my status from limited English proficient to reclassified English fluent proficient. Because it took me several years to meet these requirements, I was labeled a long-term English learner and was required to take an assessment every school year until I met the requirements during my secondary education. The language spoken at school, the textbooks, and the novels read at school were all in English. My home language was not represented in my learning until I decided to take a Spanish class in high school.

Furthermore, as a Student of Color, I noticed I was treated differently at times by my teachers and high-performing students. I remember a specific teacher who called me by another Spanish-speaking name for the duration of the course instead of my actual name. My name was always pronounced with an English accent by all my teachers and classmates. I also had very minimal experiences with Teachers of Color and School Administrators of Color throughout my PK-12 education. The lack of representation of my cultural heritage in my learning and school allowed me to feel like my racial and ethnic background was not valued in my learning.

Similarly, as a first-generation college student, I did not have access to knowledge and resources regarding higher education. I did not believe or even feel I was capable of attending college until the 8th grade when I was invited to join a program that was designed to support me in being college and career-ready. I was selected to be part of this program for belonging to a marginalized group (e.g., Students of Color) and being a first-generation college student. By joining this program, I was able to learn about higher education, and for the first time, I started to

believe that college could be an option for me after high school. Thus, my experiences as a PK-12 Student of Color influenced my decision to pursue a career in education to advocate and serve as a mentor to all students, especially Students of Color. I will now discuss my experiences as a TK-12 educator of Color.

### **My Experiences as a TK-12 Educator of Color**

I began my teaching career as a high school Spanish and AVID teacher. I worked for a Title 1 school that served an 80% Asian student population and about 15% Latinx student population. From the very beginning, I noticed how my identity as a Teacher of Color allowed me to connect with our Latinx students through our similar culture and ethnic backgrounds. I had students who felt comfortable discussing their lack of belonging in school due to very few students enrolled in our school with similar backgrounds as them. They also shared with me how they were treated differently by their teachers compared to the high-performing Asian students in our school. As a classroom teacher, I also noticed the inequities our Latinx students faced in our school. There were very few Latinx students enrolled in the Advanced Placement (AP) courses that we offered. Additionally, I witnessed some of our Latinx students being encouraged to take lower-level science classes than their high-performing Asian and white peers.

I also had the privilege of serving as the advisor of our Latinos Unidos club at our school. This club provided a space for our Latinx students to express and celebrate their language and culture not only within the club but also within our school community. As an advisor, I was able to serve as a mentor and role model for our Latinx students beyond the classroom setting. My identity as a Latinx teacher also allowed me to connect with our Latinx parents. Many of the Latinx parents I connected with felt comfortable approaching me during after-school events, such as back-to-school nights and open houses, to discuss any issues or concerns they had. They

were able to feel trusted and speak to me in their native language (Spanish). This allowed me to connect with our Latinx parents without a language barrier.

In my current role as a secondary Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), I have had the privilege of working with secondary classroom teachers across our school district. Similar to the experiences I had with my Latinx students and parents, I find that I am able to connect more with the Teachers of Color in my district. Perhaps this is because I have found it difficult at times to engage in conversations with teachers who use deficit language of our Students of Color, queer youth, and students with a disability. I find this challenging because sometimes the teachers are unaware of the deficit views and language they use and may not understand why this affects our students. As a TOSA, this is something I am continually working on, and strive my best to model asset-based thinking and language with my colleagues. Through my experiences as a teacher and teacher leader, I have grown an interest and aspire to advance in my career as a TK-12 administrator in order to advocate for social justice and equity and to make a greater impact on our students, teachers, parents, and school communities. In addition to my identity as an educator of Color, my Queer identity has also influenced my commitment to advocating for our school communities. I will now discuss my experiences as a Queer Person of Color.

### **My Experiences as a Queer Person of Color**

My experiences as a Queer Person of Color have influenced me in how I view the world. My identity as a Queer Person of Color has, at times, been ignored or looked down upon in our heteronormative society. During my PK-12 education, I did not learn about queer history and queer identities. It was not until my master's program where I took classes that spoke about queer identities. Because of my feminine qualities and characteristics, at a very young age, I was reminded that I was different from boys my age. I was called names and phrases by peers and

family like “gay,” “you’re too feminine,” and “act like a man.” The binary gender expression in our society impacted me for many years. I was always careful and conscious of how I walked, talked, and expressed myself. As an adult, I have learned to accept and appreciate my queer identity and gender expression. This journey continues to this day.

Through my queer identity and experiences, I have grown a passion for advocating for queer youth and people by affirming their identities and experiences and teaching my colleagues about the impact language has on our queer students. The intersection of my queer and racial/ethnic identities and experiences has prompted my commitment to social justice and equity. These identities and experiences have instilled a passion for advocating for marginalized communities such as Queer People and People of Color. Thus, my identities and experiences as a Student, Educator, and Queer Person of Color have motivated me to conduct research that centers on the voices and stories of individuals from marginalized communities, and one of the best ways to do this is through qualitative research. In the sections that follow, I will discuss the approaches to qualitative research. I will also discuss the history and approaches of narrative inquiry and critical race counterstorytelling methodologies.

## **Methodology**

In this section, I will describe the methodology chosen for this study, which examined the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators with a critical race counterstorytelling method. I will begin with a description and explanation of the approaches to qualitative research. Then, I will discuss the history and practices of narrative inquiry and critical race counterstorytelling.

## **Qualitative Research**

Leavy (2017) described qualitative research as the value of in-depth meaning and people’s subjective experiences. Qualitative approaches allow one to understand a specific topic

by analyzing people's lives, activities, situations, and circumstances. Qualitative researchers want to understand how and why behavior occurs (McMillan, 2012). Furthermore, Bailey (2007) stated that "almost all field researchers have the same general purpose: to understand social interactions within the setting or social group from the perspective of the participants" (p. 41). Qualitative researchers usually enter the field with general goals and research questions they hope to explore in their study (Bailey, 2007).

Similarly, Merriam and Grenier (2019) shared that an important aspect of qualitative research is that meaning is socially constructed by individuals interacting with their world. Qualitative researchers are curious to learn how people understand and experience their world at a specific point in time and in a specific context. Qualitative researchers investigate how individuals make meaning of their experiences by asking them questions in interviews, and/or observing them in settings, and/or analyzing relevant documents and/or artifacts. Another important characteristic of qualitative research is that the process is inductive rather than deductive. Qualitative researchers gather data in order to build concepts, hypotheses, or theory. In an attempt to understand the meaning of a phenomenon for those involved, qualitative researchers build toward theory from observations and their understandings from being out in the field (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Qualitative inquiry is also rich in narrative descriptions. Rather than depending on numbers, words and pictures are used to obtain a detailed understanding of the setting (McMillan, 2012).

Bailey (2007) described the interpretive or constructivist paradigm and critical paradigm as the paradigms often used by qualitative researchers. The ontological belief of an interpretive paradigm is that there is no objective social reality but rather multiple realities. Qualitative researchers who utilize an interpretive paradigm ask things such as what kind of things people do



and how it is that they do them. Therefore, the qualitative researcher is interested in the meanings, ideas, or beliefs associated with the objects, events, and activities of participants in the settings (Bailey, 2007).

A critical paradigm often strives to empower individuals from a particular social setting and work toward meaningful social change. Qualitative researchers who utilize a critical paradigm might want to understand and change how powerful groups oppress powerless groups. Additionally, qualitative researchers who use a critical paradigm understand that the researcher is not independent of what is being researched, and the findings of the research are mediated through their values (Bailey, 2007). As this study sought to empower and center the voices of individuals who belong to marginalized communities, I utilized a critical paradigm to examine the experiences and counterstories of TK-12 men Administrators of Color. The following section will describe the history and approaches to narrative inquiry.

### ***Narrative Inquiry***

Merriam and Grenier (2019) stated that “we use stories or narratives to make sense of the experiences in our lives, communicate with others, and to come to understand the world we live in” (p. 239). Narratives are descriptions of the experiences that are told in a story format having a beginning, middle, and end (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Similarly, Clandinin and Caine (2008) described narrative inquiry as a way of understanding experience. Narrative inquiry is a research methodology that allows researchers to narratively inquire into the experience and study people’s experiences over time in an intimate manner. Additionally, narrative inquiry has an emphasis on the relational engagement between the researcher and participants. This methodology places close attention to experience as a narrative phenomenon and emphasizes the relational engagement that places relational ethics with inquiry (Clandinin & Caine, 2008).

Furthermore, Clandinin and Caine (2008) shared that through narrative inquiry, “participants are able to relate and live through stories that speak of and to their experiences of living” (p. 542). There are two starting points for narrative inquiry. First, researchers listen to people tell their stories and live alongside participants as they live their stories. Interviews *and* conversations, or interviews *as* conversations, are mostly commonly used to listen to participants' stories. In the second starting point, researchers begin with living alongside participants using visual media and/or participant observation. This can be done through using methods such as conversations, oral histories, and interviews. Narrative inquiry addresses the question of how larger social, institutional, and cultural narratives inform our understanding and shape the researchers' and participants' stories by which they live. By paying attention to contextual narratives, researchers are able to further deepen the complexity of the living and telling of stories (Clandinin & Caine, 2008).

The philosophical underpinning of narrative inquiry is influenced by John Dewey's theory of experience (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). Drawing from Dewey's theory of experience and taking a narrative approach, narrative inquiry has been defined as a way of understanding experience. It is a collaborative effort between the researcher and participants over time in a place or series of places (Clandinin, 2006). Dewey's perspective on experience has been used by researchers for the study of human experience through narratives. For example, narrative inquirers have studied individual's experiences in the world, experiences that have been storied both in the living and telling. Thus, narrative inquiry provides the opportunity for understanding how personal and social are intertwined over time in people's lives. This research approach also grants one the opportunity to slow down our lives and notice the narrative structures that characterize our and others' lives (Clandinin, 2006). Narrative inquiry's emphasis on storytelling

provided the opportunity to examine the experiences and counterstories of the participants of this study. In the section that follows, I will discuss the history and approaches to critical race counterstories.

### ***Critical Race CounterStorytelling***

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) defined critical race methodology as a research approach that foregrounds race and racism in all parts of the research process. Critical race methodology also challenges other issues of race, such as gender and class. Additionally, critical race methodology challenges traditional research paradigms that are used to explain the experiences of People of Color. This methodology also offers a transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination and focuses on the experiences of People of Color through their racialized, gendered, and class experiences. Lastly, it views these experiences as strengths and utilizes interdisciplinary knowledge based on other fields, such as ethnic studies, women's studies, and sociology, to understand the experiences of People of Color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Utilizing a critical race methodology provides opportunities for people affected by racism and other forms of oppression to discover they are not alone in the marginality. Participants become empowered by hearing their own stories and the stories of others (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Similarly, Huber (2008) stated that various research methodologies have been utilized in Critical Race Theory (CRT) research. CRT research methodologies utilize a CRT lens to understand the experiences and perceptions in response to racism, classism, sexism, and other forms of oppression in the field of education. Furthermore, the author described critical race methodologies as a way of challenging Eurocentric research paradigms and offering a liberatory and transformational meaning to academic research. Critical race methodologies provide researchers with the means to conduct critical race research conducted through an anti-racist,

anti-hierarchical, racial, and social justice agenda. Counterstorytelling is one of the most widely used CRT methods.

**History of Critical Race Counterstorytelling.** When describing counterstories, Delgado (1989) stated that “counterstories can open new windows into reality, showing us that there are possibilities for life other than the ones we live ” (p. 2414). Delgado defined outgroups as a group of people whose voices and perspectives have been suppressed, devalued, and abnormalized. The author further stated that individuals who belong to the outgroup have the capability to create their own stories that circulate within the group as a counter-reality. The dominant group, also called the ingroup, tell their stories and narratives in a form of shared reality in which a superior position is seen as natural.

Furthermore, Delgado (1989) stated that the cure for challenging oppression is through counterstorytelling. Counterstories have the ability to challenge the status quo. Stories can create a consensus and a common culture of shared understanding. Additionally, counterstories have the ability to challenge the received wisdom from the dominant group. Oppressed groups have utilized stories as an essential tool for their own survival and liberation. Delgado further stated that individuals who are part of the outgroup can use their stories in two basic ways. The first way can be used as psychic self-preservation, and the second as a way of lessening their own subordination. These two ways allow for the stories to be viewed in the following two perspectives: that of the teller and that of the listener. Stories also have the ability to humanize us and emphasize our differences in ways that can bring us closer together (Delgado, 1989).

**Purpose of Critical Race Counterstorytelling.** Solórzano and Yosso (2002) defined critical race counterstory as a method of telling people's stories and experiences whose stories are often not told. Counterstories allow for the opportunity to expose, analyze, and challenge

majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counterstories are not only a response to majoritarian stories, but these stories and experiences can also strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance. Furthermore, Yosso (2006) described majoritarian storytelling as a method that recounts the experiences and perspectives of those individuals with racial and social privileges. Majoritarian narratives omit the experiences of People of Color and perpetuate myths and stereotypes of People of Color. Additionally, majoritarian stories express the racialized assumptions and perspectives of white men and women who are considered middle and/or upper-class and are heterosexual. Counterstories highlight the lived experiences of People of Color and raise critical consciousness about social and racial injustice. Counterstories also highlight and bring attention to people who have resisted racism and struggle towards a more socially and racially just society. Thus, critical race counterstorytelling is a method of narrating the experiences and perspectives of racially and socially marginalized people (Yosso, 2006).

Moreover, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) stated that critical race scholars utilized counterstories in various formats. One of the ways in which critical race scholars use counterstories is through personal stories or narratives. Personal stories or narratives reveal a person's experience with racism and sexism. These personal counterstories tend to be autobiographical reflections of the author within the context of larger socio-political critique. Another type of critical race counterstories are other people's stories or narratives. In this format, narratives are told in a third-person voice and highlight the person's experiences with racism and sexism. Lastly, critical race scholars sometimes utilized counterstories as composite stories or narratives. Composite stories and narratives draw on various forms of data to narrate the racialized, sexualized, and classed experiences of People of Color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

One important tenet of Critical Race Theory is honoring the experiences and narratives of People of Color (Miller et al., 2020). Counternarratives can be used to describe how race influences the educational experiences of People of color, whose stories counter the majoritarian stories that are considered normal and neutral (Miller et al., 2020). Utilizing Strauss and Corbin's idea of theoretical sensitivity (1990) and Delgado Bernal's Cultural intuition (1998), Solórzano & Yosso (2002) identify four specific types of data sources used for critical race counterstories. The four types of data sources are: "(a) the data gathered from the research process itself, (b) the existing literature on the topic, (c) our own professional experiences, and (d) our own personal experiences" (p. 34). Theoretical sensitivity allows the researcher to gain insight and awareness in order to give meaning to the data. Cultural intuition goes beyond one's own personal experience and highlights the importance of participants engaging in the analysis of the data (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Thus, critical race methodology in the field of education challenges and critiques biological and cultural deficit stories through counterstorytelling, oral traditions, poetry, and other means (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Furthermore, Yosso (2006) identified four functions that critical race counterstories address in the struggle for educational equality. First, counterstories can build community among those at the margins of society. Counterstories serve as a reminder that we navigate and struggle through the educational pipeline together. Counterstories are also able to serve as a means of empathy among marginalized communities. Second, counterstories can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society's center. To challenge those who have benefited from maintaining silence about the negative effects of racism, counterstories listen to the voices and experiences of individuals who have been victims of racism. Third, counterstories can nurture community cultural wealth, memory, and resistance. Counterstories allow for the opportunity to critique and

dismantle oppressive silence created through the omission and distortion of outsider histories. Counterstories also strive to preserve community memory of the history of resistance to oppression. Fourth, counterstories can facilitate transformation in education. Through their critical and theoretical content in a story format, counterstories can serve as pedagogical tools. Counterstories also teach us and remind us that the construction of another world that is socially and racially just is possible (Yosso, 2006). In the section that follows, I will discuss the rationale as to why using a Critical Race Counterstory Methodology was appropriate in examining the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators.

### **Rationale for Chosen Methodology**

This study sought to recount the experiences and stories of TK-12 Latinx men administrators. Yosso (2006) stated that critical race counterstories provide the opportunity to offer a critical reflection on the lived experiences and histories of People of Color. Today, there is an ongoing controversy in implementing Critical Race Theory into our TK-12 curriculum. Additionally, acts of racial violence continue to happen to People of Color. Thus, the narratives and counterstories of TK-12 Latinx men administrators provided the opportunity to highlight their experiences as People of Color as well as their leadership practices as they support and empower their school communities. Furthermore, counterstories can dismantle complacency, critique and challenge the dominant discourse on race, and continue advancing toward racial reform (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The narratives and counterstories of the participants of this study also highlighted the racial challenges they have experienced through their education and careers as People of Color. Additionally, their counterstories highlighted the challenges they have faced through their other identities, such as gender and immigration status. Moreover, a

counterstorytelling method allowed for the opportunity to highlight the participants' practices toward racial justice as educators and People of Color.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) defined majoritarian stories as not only stories of racial privilege but also stories of gender, class, and other privileges. Majoritarian stories are those stories that grant privileges to whites, men, the middle and/or upper class, as well as heterosexuals (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The counterstories of the participants of this study challenged the traditional narratives of Latinx men in the field of education. Through their narratives and counterstories, the TK-12 Latinx men administrators of this study shared how they persisted with racism. Their narratives also highlighted the leadership practices they implement to support and empower their school communities. Furthermore, through their other forms of identity, such as gender and immigration status, the counterstories of the participants of this study combated and challenged stereotypes told from majoritarian stories. For example, the masculinities of men of Color, as well as homosexual men, have been oppressed by white heterosexual masculinities (Connel, 2005). Thus, a counterstorytelling method allowed the opportunity for participants to provide a different narrative on Latinx men in education that is often not heard of.

Furthermore, there is a dearth in the literature examining the experiences of TK-12 school leaders and Administrators of Color. Most of the scant literature on TK-12 school leaders and Administrators of Color has been on the experiences of women of Color (Fernandez et al., 2015; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Martinez et al., 2016). Additionally, most studies on the experiences of School Leaders and Administrators of Color utilize a phenomenology or case study research design (Aaron, 2019; Flores, 2018; Liang & Peter-Hawkins, 2017; Peterson & Vergara, 2016; Reed, 2012). Very few studies on the experiences of TK-12 school leaders and



administrators utilize critical race methodologies such as counterstorytelling, narratives, or *testimonios* (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Martinez et al., 2016; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Thus, a critical race counterstorytelling methodology was best suited for this study because it highlighted the experiences and narratives of the participants of this study by centering their voices and provided a new way of understanding these experiences.

A counterstorytelling method, therefore, provided an in-depth description of how TK-12 Latinx men administrators persisted through racism and other forms of oppression through their educational and life experiences. A narrative research design allowed for a holistic view of the past, present, and future experiences of the participants that other methodologies do not. Overall, a critical race counterstorytelling methodology was best suited for examining the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators. I will now discuss the methods used to collect and analyze the counterstories of this study.

## **Methods**

In this section, I will begin by discussing the methods I used to collect and analyze the counterstories of this study. I will begin by describing the population criteria and sample selection. I will then discuss the ethical considerations I took to conduct this study. Next, I will explain the methods used for the collection of data as well as the data analysis. Finally, I will describe the trustworthiness and credibility of this study.

### **Population Criteria and Sample Selection**

This section will describe the population criteria for this study, such as the race, gender, and occupations of the participants. This section will also discuss the methods used to select the participants for this study.

### ***Population Criteria***

In order to capture the narratives and experiences of Latinx men TK-12 administrators, the participants of this study needed to meet specific criteria. For example, participants of this study included individuals who self-identified as Latino and/or Latine/x. The participants of this study also included individuals who self-identified as men. Additionally, the individuals who participated in this study needed to hold an administrative services credential and an administrative position at the site or district level (e.g., assistant principal, principal, coordinator, director) in a TK-12 educational setting. Those asked to participate in this study needed to have served as administrators for a minimum of one year and be working at a public school at the district or site level. Additionally, participants of this study needed to be 18 years or older. I will now describe the sample selection of this study.

### ***Sample Selection***

This study utilized purposeful, convenience, and snowball sampling in order to recruit participants. Purposeful sampling is when the researcher identifies and selects specific participants who are informative about the research topic (McMillan, 2012). For the participants' recruitment process, I sought TK-12 administrators who identified as men, Latino, and/or Latine/x and worked in TK-12 public school districts. As a current TK-12 educator working for a public school district, I also utilized convenience sampling for this study. I reached out via email (Appendix A) to TK-12 Latinx men administrators who work in my school district, asking them for their interest and willingness to participate in this study. McMillian (2012) described convenience sampling as selecting a group of participants based on access. In addition, I utilized snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is when one selects certain participants for a study based on the recommendations of others (McMillan, 2012). I asked my current colleagues for

recommendations on other participants who meet the criteria of this study to whom I could reach out. Therefore, I asked the initial round of participants for the referral of others to reach my target goal of participants.

In narrative research, an appropriate sample size is six participants or when there is thematic redundancy after six interview participants (Butina, 2015; Kim, 2016). Following this guidance, I aimed to recruit a sample size of six participants in order to center and capture the stories of TK-12 Latinx men administrators in in-depth and meaningful ways. Table 3.1 shows the study participants' pseudonyms and demographics. Next, I will discuss the ethical considerations of this research project.

**Table 3.1**

*Participants' Demographics*

Pseudonym	Age	Role	Level	Number of years as an administrator
Lucas	45	Assistant Principal	Elementary	1-5 years
Roberto	47	Principal	Elementary	15-20 years
Diego	42	Assistant Principal	Elementary	6-10 years
Carlos	44	Principal	Middle School	6-10 years
Gabriel	31	Assistant Principal	High School	1-5 years
Raúl	34	Assistant Principal	High School	1-5 years

**Ethical Considerations**

I took several measures to ensure the safety of the participants in this study. As alluded to above, in order to protect their privacy and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for the participants' names. Additionally, I described the purpose and procedures of this study to all participants as well as had them sign a consent form indicating their willingness to participate in

this study. Participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Furthermore, I went through Chapman University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that all risks and ethical issues have been considered and reviewed. After reviewing these considerations, I was granted approval from Chapman's IRB to conduct this study. I will now discuss the methods for data collection and analysis of this study.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection of this study consisted primarily of individual, semi-structured, open-ended interviews (Appendix B). Similar to other critical race methodologies, counterstorytelling uses standard qualitative methods for the collection of data, such as semi-structured interviews (Miller et al., 2020). Additionally, one of the standard methods for narrative inquiry is listening to individuals tell their stories through interviews as conversations (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). Individual interviews are one of the most commonly used methods in narrative research in order to understand the stories and experiences of participants (Kim, 2016).

### ***Interviews as Conversations***

Using interviews as conversations, I conducted two individual interviews with each participant that lasted approximately 45-60 minutes each. Participants had the option to have their interviews take place either in person or via Zoom. Four out of the six participants opted to have their interviews conducted via Zoom. The remaining two participants chose to have their individual interviews take place in person. These interviews were conducted at the participants' school sites. All interviews took place between April 2023 through June 2023.

I first conducted the first round of interviews with each participant prior to moving on to the second round of interviews. All interviews were audio recorded. As seen in Appendix B, the first interview focused on the participants' educational and professional background as well as their past educational, professional, and life experiences. The second interview focused on

participants' experiences as current TK-12 Administrators of Color and their hopes for the future as educational leaders. Using semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask flexible and different relevant questions based on the responses of the participants.

Additionally, during the individual interviews, there were instances where participants switched from English to Spanish as they shared their stories. I noticed participants switch to Spanish when referencing customs and traditions that were tied to their culture. These unique cultural customs and traditions were expressed in the participants' native language rather than in the outsider's (dominant) group.

### ***Reflexive Journal***

Clandinin and Caine (2008) identified the importance of reflexivity in narrative inquiry. As narrative inquirers, one must consistently reflect on their experience before, during, and after each interview (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). I utilized a reflexive journal in order to reflect on my experiences, feelings, thoughts, and reactions throughout the inquiry process. As I conducted the interviews, I wrote down any thoughts, patterns, ideas, and follow-up questions I thought of before and after each interview. This provided me with the opportunity to document ideas and make connections that resonated from the individual interviews as well as across interviews with the participants of this study. Additionally, journaling also provided me with an ongoing reflection on my role as the researcher of this study. I will now describe the methods used for the data analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

Kim (2016) stated that “we analyze narrative data in order to develop an understanding of the meanings our participants give to themselves, to their surroundings, to their lives, and to their lived experiences through storytelling” (p. 190). To analyze the participants' narratives, I utilized a grounded theory coding process. Grounded theory coding strategies (e.g., Initial Coding,

Focused Coding) have been used for data analysis in critical race studies (Huber, 2010). Additionally, Saldaña (2016) stated that grounded theory coding methods are appropriate for various qualitative studies (e.g., Narrative Research). A grounded theory coding process allowed me to fully immerse myself in the data as I identified common themes that emerged across participants' stories.

In the following sections, I describe the methods used to analyze participants' narratives. I will begin by describing the transcription process. Next, I will describe the multiple rounds of coding I utilized to identify the themes that emerged from the participants' stories.

### ***Transcriptions***

All audio recordings from the individual interviews were transcribed. I utilized Zoom and Otter.ai to generate the audio recordings into transcriptions. I then uploaded each transcription into a Google Sheet. In order to ensure accuracy, I reviewed the transcriptions by listening to the audio recordings multiple times. This process also allowed me the opportunity to ensure that the transcriptions reflected the authenticity of how participants shared their stories. For instance, there were times when participants switched to Spanish as they shared their stories. As someone with a Spanish speaking background, I was able to directly edit the transcripts by typing the words that participants used in Spanish. This ensured that those instances where participants utilized Spanish in their storytelling were reflected in the transcriptions and were authentic to their stories as they were told. Next, I will describe the coding methods I used to analyze the data.

### ***Initial Coding***

For the first cycle of coding, I engaged in initial coding. Charmaz (2014) described initial coding as sticking closely to the data and looking closely for actions to code data as actions. To do this, I coded each transcription line-by-line with gerunds (Charmaz, 2014). This allowed me

to immerse myself in the data fully. After completing both interviews, I conducted initial coding for the first round of all interview transcriptions before conducting initial coding for the second round of interviews. Next, I will describe the second cycle of coding.

### ***Focused Coding***

I utilized focused coding for the second cycle of the coding process. Charmaz (2014) stated that “focused coding involves attending to how your initial codes account for your data. Look for what these codes imply as well as what they reveal” (p.140). As I condensed the initial codes into focused codes, I utilized a LatCrit lens to look for recurring patterns that revealed the experiences of racism, immigration status, language, ethnicity, and culture (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Huber, 2010). I also utilized a counterstorytelling lens, such as resisting racism and striving for equity and social justice (Yosso, 2006). In the next section, I describe the third cycle of coding.

### ***Theming the Data (From Categories to Themes)***

After completing focused codes for all interview transcriptions, I condensed the focused codes into categories. This process is also known as axial coding (Charmaz, 2014). I then grouped these categories into themes. When describing a theme, Saldaña (2016) stated “that a theme is an outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection” (p. 198). Table 3.2 shows the themes that were identified across participants’ stories and their corresponding categories. Table 3.3 shows examples of the different steps of the coding process. Next, I will describe the trustworthiness and credibility of this study.

**Table 3.2***Themes Across Participants' Stories*

Themes	Categories
Experiences with Discrimination	Racial Microaggressions Lateral/Horizontal Violence
Support Systems	Mentorship Family Support Peer Support
Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices	Connecting Through Culture and Life Experiences Equity-Driven Celebrating Diversity



**Table 3.3***Journey of a Quote*

Original Quote	Initial Code	Focused Code	Category	Theme
“I would be overlooked or not given the opportunity even though I might have had a bit more experience and the right qualifications.”	Feeling disregarded by others with new and advancing opportunities	Feeling discriminated against	Racial Microaggressions	Experiences with Discrimination
“What pushed me to be an administrator, I would say it would have to be mentors that I've had, one of them being my director.”	Having mentors that encouraged him to pursue school leadership	Support from mentors	Mentorship	Support Systems
“I think that stems from my practice right now, which is Mexican, at least in my culture, we take care of everybody.”	Building relationships through culture and life experiences	Building relationships	Connecting through Culture and Life Experiences	Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices

## **Trustworthiness and Credibility**

The data generated in this study is credible for several reasons. First, all the participants of this study self-identified as men and as People of Color. Additionally, all the participants of this study currently work as TK-12 administrators in public TK-12 educational settings. The integrity of the data generated from this study was maintained through member checking. Member checking is when participants have the opportunity to review the findings of their interviews (McMillan, 2012). All participants of this study were provided with a copy of the responses to their interviews in order for them to provide comments and correct factual information. Member checking also ensured that the interpretation of the data resonated with the participants' experiences. Additionally, I kept a reflexive journal before, during, and after data collection to document any key ideas, thoughts, and connections I made across the participants' stories. Lastly, my positionality as a researcher, Person of Color, and aspiring TK-12 Administrator of Color was identified and acknowledged throughout the research process.

## **Summary**

This chapter described the history and methods of the chosen methodology of this research study. The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men Administrators of Color currently working in public school districts. To understand the experiences and perspectives of the participants of this study, a qualitative research design was best suited for this study. Qualitative researchers are curious to learn how people understand and experience their world at a specific point in time and in a specific context (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). This study sought to utilize a critical race counterstorytelling method in order to capture the narratives and voices of the participants. Through their counterstories, the participants of this study had the space and opportunity to challenge and dismantle majoritarian narratives and

stories of Latinx men in education. Through multiple qualitative coding strategies, each participant's voice from this study was highlighted and acknowledged. As a Queer Person and Educator of Color, as well as the researcher in this study, my positionality statement addressed my connection to this research topic to bring awareness to how my identities and experiences may have influenced the direction I took in this research project. In Chapter Four, I present the counterstories of the participants of this study.

## **Chapter 4: Counterstories**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators by centering their voices. The findings presented in this chapter are derived from individual, semi-structured, open-ended interviews with each participant. Critical Race Counterstories are not only a response to majoritarian stories but also highlight the cultural survival and resistance of Communities of Color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Additionally, counterstories highlight the stories of people who have resisted racism and strive towards a more socially and racially just society (Yosso, 2006). The counterstories presented in this chapter describe the challenges participants faced as Students and Educators of Color as well as their resistance, survival of oppressive structures, and drive for equity as educational leaders.

Therefore, this study illustrates that despite experiencing racism and other oppressive structures, participants navigated the educational system in order to all hold advanced degrees and currently serve in leadership roles in TK-12 educational settings. Several themes found across participants' stories, such as experiences with discrimination, having a support system, and culturally responsive leadership practices, illustrate their overall experiences. Narratives of each of the participant's individual experiences, organized by the aforementioned themes as well as additional themes unique to their stories, are shared in this chapter in order to center their voices and unique journeys.

### **Lucas**

Lucas was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States at the age of seven. His family immigrated and situated in Southern California, where he enrolled in school. Living in a new country, Lucas experienced some challenges adjusting to the changes in culture, such as food and language. He recalled experiencing challenges with his academics in his early years of

education. He was very involved in sports, which helped motivate him to stay in school. In high school, Lucas developed a connection with literature, which ultimately influenced him to pursue literature in college and to become a teacher. He also comes from a family of educators, as many of his aunts and uncles were teachers in Mexico.

Lucas began teaching as a Dual Immersion (Spanish/English) Elementary Teacher. Lucas loved being in the classroom because he could connect with his students and tie the content he taught to students' culture and language. After teaching for several years, Lucas embarked on a new role as a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA). In his role as a TOSA, he served as an instructional coach and supported the dual language programs in his district. Encouraged by mentors and eager to make a broader impact within his school community and district, Lucas pursued school administration. He currently serves as an assistant principal for a Dual Immersion school. Below, I present his experiences.

### ***Experiences With Discrimination***

When reflecting on his educational and life experiences, Lucas remembered multiple instances where he experienced discrimination. He experienced discrimination from educators, such as his college professors, as well as other People of Color, including friends and family. His experiences with racial microaggressions and lateral/horizontal violence are described below.

**Racial Microaggressions.** Lucas recalled instances where college professors told him that he needed to work on his English if he wanted to continue as an English major. He shared:

I started attending English courses, and you have these conversations with professors, and they are like, 'Oh, have you taken English 101? I am like, yeah, I got an A, but they are all like because you have great ideas, but you have lots of grammar problems that I need to address if I plan to continue with that major [English].'

Lucas further elaborated on his experiences with being told by his college professors that he needed to work on his English. He stated, “So it was just a challenge, and I ended up switching my major for that reason. I am like, ‘Okay, that’s probably not going to work,’ and so I ended up changing it to ethnic studies.” Here, Lucas shared how he felt discouraged to continue as an English major by the comments made by his professors. These comments and deficit views from his professors ultimately influenced him to pursue a different major despite his interest in English literature. The section that follows presents Lucas’s experiences with lateral/horizontal violence.

**Lateral/Horizontal Violence.** Throughout his life experiences, Lucas has experienced discrimination from other People of Color. These individuals include both friends and family members. For example, he shared:

Two things that stand out: I’m dark-skinned and short. It’s one of those things where you get noticed right away, and it’s sad, but it is true even within our own Latino community. You get this connotation like oh ‘*es morenito*’ *es ‘chaparro.’* And it’s something that you keep in your head, right? You keep it in your head, and it stays there, and sometimes family members and friends say things that are hurtful. I don’t think they are trying to be hurtful, but they will say things that can be hurtful.

Lucas elaborated on the discrimination he has gotten from friends and family members and how it has affected him. He stated:

It's one of those things where we grow up in our community, where you know they'll say things like, oh, ‘*es indio*,’ and it has this negative connotation. And so, growing up, realizing that one is darker than most people, shorter than most people, it's a challenge, and it's a struggle, and having to make up for those things was always for me.

Here, Lucas shared the lateral/horizontal violence that he has experienced from other People of Color. Physical characteristics like the color of his skin are something that people have consistently pointed out, even his loved ones. The next section describes Lucas's experiences as an immigrant.

### ***Experiences as an Immigrant***

When reflecting on his life experiences, Lucas shared his challenges as an immigrant and student. Moving to a new country at an early age, Lucas had to adapt to cultural changes and faced obstacles through his immigration status and language. These experiences are described in the sections that follow.

**Adapting to a Different Culture.** Lucas reflected on his experiences when he first moved to the United States and enrolled in school. He stated:

I came to the U.S. when I was seven years old, and I just remember having to learn a new language and culture and just the food alone. I remember the first few days of school where the food just didn't taste well. We're not familiar with the culture and everything, and as you start growing up, you start to immerse yourself. You're immersed in this culture, this language, this system.

Like many individuals who moved to a new country, Lucas experienced challenges adapting to a different culture. Over the years, he learned to navigate and adjust to the cultural change. The next section describes Lucas's experiences with his immigration status.

**Immigration Status.** When reflecting on his experiences as a Student of Color, Lucas shared the challenges he faced with his immigration status. For example, when describing his aspiration to attend a four-year university right after high school, he shared:

For me, it was a struggle just because, at that time, I was undocumented, and so just knowing that in the back of your head, where you're applying for colleges, but you can't go to a college because you didn't have the correct documents. I realized that I wasn't going to be able to go to a four-year college; it was just heartbreaking, it was discouraging.

Here, Lucas described how, as an undocumented student, he was not able to attend a four-year university right after high school as he did not qualify for financial aid to help pay for his schooling. Next, I present Lucas's experiences with language.

**Language.** With Spanish as his first language, Lucas did not begin to learn English until he immigrated to the United States. As an immigrant, Lucas shared the challenges he experienced with language. For instance, he said:

Being an immigrant, a Latino immigrant coming in, and being an English learner, I think that really not only shaped me but also how I feel that has affected me. The effect comes in the sense that sometimes I get the feeling that I'm not being as articulate as somebody that would have been born here, like being an English only. And so, for me, it's always a challenge.

With English as his second language, Lucas has felt that his English is not as good as others whose English is their first language. He further shared how English has sometimes caused challenges with the parents he works with. He stated, "Sometimes when communicating with parents, you get that feeling that you're not being respected just because you may not know English like that." The section that follows describes the support systems Lucas has received throughout his educational and life experiences.



## ***Support Systems***

Throughout his educational journey, both as a student and as an educator, Lucas has had several individuals who have supported and encouraged him with his educational endeavors. These individuals served as a support system that helped Lucas strive for his aspirations. The following sections describe the support Lucas has received through mentorship, family, and peer support.

**Mentorship.** Lucas recalled several teachers he had in high school who believed in him and pushed him to his potential. He stated:

I could recall and give you a set of names that come to mind. You recall them because they took the time to talk to you, to get to know you on a deeper level and hear you out and encouraged you, and motivated you to continue with higher level education.

Lucas also recalled professors in college who encouraged him to pursue a career in education. He shared, “Having conversations with professors who would say, ‘You know what, have you considered teaching? You should consider substituting’, and gave me resources to go out there and pursue teaching.”

As an educator, Lucas has had mentors who have encouraged him to take on leadership roles. When describing reasons that influenced him to pursue school administration, he shared:

What pushed me to be an administrator, I would say it would have to be mentors that I've had, one of them being my director. She saw me in the classroom, and she said, ‘You’re doing great things, but think of it this way, as you start moving and getting positions where you oversee different systems, different programs, your impact grows.’

Here, Lucas revealed how the support and encouragement of other administrators and colleagues motivated him to pursue school leadership in order to have a greater impact on his school community. Lucas' family and peer support are presented next.

**Family and Peer Support.** Lucas shared the support he received from his family and peers while pursuing his education. For example, he stated:

So, I was the first one to go to college, and I thank my mom. Our parents pushed you, and they really talked to you about their sacrifice and the reason that they brought you here is for you to get that higher education.

Furthermore, Lucas shared how his circle of friends served as a system of support and motivation while attending school; he stated, “I think friends, right? I think you have a circle of people that continue to drive you and push you. I saw my friends being successful, and I would want to do the same thing.” His family and peer support motivated and encouraged Lucas to strive for his educational goals and aspirations. The section that follows describes Lucas’s culturally responsive leadership practices as an Administrator of Color.

### ***Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices***

Culturally responsive school leaders support their school communities in empowering and humanizing ways (Khalifa, 2018). As an educator and school leader, Lucas shared his leadership practices as he engages and supports his school community. His ability to connect through culture and life experiences and his equity-driven leadership practices are described below.

**Connecting Through Culture and Life Experiences.** When reflecting on his leadership practices and drive to support his school community, Lucas shared how one of his goals was to build relationships with his students and get to know them by name. He stated:

Starting from our TK students right there, we have about 40 TK students all the way to our sixth graders, where we have 63 students and a total of 470 students. When you start recognizing those students, acknowledging those students, calling them by name, and you start building those relationships, that's kind of what I envisioned.

Lucas further shared how he and the site principal are striving to provide opportunities for their school families to build relationships with one another. He shared:

One of the things that we're trying to create is a bridge with our two different families. We have a lot of our Latino families here, and we're getting more and more of the outside families. I feel like they're still not building those relationships [between families]. For us, it's having that bridge. How do we bring in both Spanish-speaking families and English-speaking families, and then again, getting them to co-exist but to really become partners.

Here, Lucas shared how he values positive relationships in his school community. He and the site principal are working to bring families together in order to support and empower their school community.

Furthermore, Lucas shared how he has been able to connect and support his school community through culture and shared experiences. For instance, Lucas grew up in the same school community where he works as an assistant principal. He shared:

I really want to say that I always tell them [parents and students] that I'm very honored to be serving in this community just because I grew up a few blocks down. One of the ways I'm able to make really just fast connections with them is that a lot of them immigrated here, and I had that same story where I immigrated here when I was seven years old. I

came here when I didn't know any English. I grew up the same way that they're growing up.

Lucas further shared how he is able to connect with his school community through shared cultural experiences such as sports. For example, he said:

Being a Latino, it's like most kids grew up playing soccer, and it's the same thing. 'Who do you go for? Chivas? America?' I can have a conversation with students, and I can have a conversation with the parents. And so, I feel those connections, those ties that I have to my culture, and they have them too, and so it really allows you to make those connections.

Lucas also shared his desire to serve as a role model and racial representation for his students and school community. He said:

I hear comments every now and then where the kids will say, 'Oh, you look like my *tio*' or whatever, and it's kind of silly, but it's fun at the same time because we need that. We need that because I think that lets students know that they see you and they see themselves, and if you were able to succeed, then they have that opportunity to succeed as well.

Racial representation is important for Lucas. He believes Students of Color need educators and leaders who look like them in order to serve as a sense of hope and motivation. The section that follows presents Lucas's equity-driven leadership practices.

**Equity-Driven.** As he reflected on his leadership practices, Lucas mentioned his role of ensuring his school community was welcoming of different identities. For example, he stated:

We want to make sure that we accept everyone and that we're inclusive. Knowing that kids are different, we have to be empathetic with all students no matter what. For me, as

an administrator, I really try to be very empathetic to all students and have an open mind.

We're here to serve all of our students, no matter what, no matter their socio-economic, no matter their gender, no matter their sexual orientation.

Lucas highlighted that as an administrator, it is really important to understand and accept the different identities of the students they serve. As a school leader, he strives to be understanding of his students' experiences and create spaces where their identities are acknowledged and validated.

Furthermore, Lucas shared how his school strives to empower its diverse students and change the reputation and deficit views of the school. He shared:

We're still continuing to serve our Latino predominant community, but it's expanding, where we are now accepting kids from other backgrounds. We have a few Asian students in our program and a few white students in our program. If you go back ten years ago, parents would have never selected our school to be their school of choice, so we're changing. We're changing everything for the better of all.

As an equity-driven leader, Lucas continues to strive for equity and racial justice in his school community. Through his own life experiences as a Student and Person of Color, Lucas is able to empathize and understand the school community he serves in order to advocate for their needs. I will now present Roberto's story.

### **Roberto**

Roberto was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States at the age of seven. He began his educational experiences in the United States in the second grade. His transition from the rural countryside in Mexico to California was challenging as he adjusted to a foreign language and culture. As a student during his K-12 experiences, Roberto recalled not feeling

connected to the curriculum and receiving poor grades. In college, he described experiencing success with his academics after learning how to navigate the system. Through his immigrant experiences, he has been able to empathize with students who share similar experiences. Initially pursuing a career in a government agency, Roberto realized that path was not for him while completing an internship. Influenced by his older sister, who was a teacher, Roberto decided to pursue a career in teaching.

Roberto began his educational career as an Elementary Dual Immersion (Spanish/English) Teacher. Encouraged and influenced by mentors, Roberto chose to advance his career as a school administrator. He has been serving as a school administrator for over fifteen years. His first role as an administrator was as an assistant principal, and he now currently serves as an Elementary school principal. Throughout his career as an educator, Roberto has only worked in Dual Immersion Schools. He shared how fortunate he's been working at Dual Immersion schools where "your language is valued, culture is valued, your background and lived experiences are valued." The sections that follow highlight themes from his narrative.

### ***Experiences With Discrimination***

When reflecting on his educational and life experiences, Roberto recalled facing discrimination as a Student and Educator of Color. His abilities as a Student of Color and leadership practices as a School Leader of Color have been questioned by teachers and colleagues. For example, as he spoke about his experiences as a student, Roberto shared how his teacher's expectations of him affected his connectedness and performance in school. He explained:

I think once I got into high school, everything became less personalized. So, I got into an environment where the teachers did not see your background as an asset. It was more of

that, you know, being relegated to the back. Not holding us as People of Color to a certain standard. So, I think my performance kind of reflected that. My freshman and sophomore years were not very successful.

Deficit views from teachers affected Roberto's performance in school. The lack of support and low expectations impacted his motivation to do well in school. He further stated, "I can do the work, but the motivation was not there."

Roberto also shared the challenges and difficulties he experienced in advancing his career as a school leader. He shared:

I would be overlooked or not given the opportunity even though I might have had a bit more experience and the right qualifications, but there was a statement that was told to me directly, 'You're just not the right fit for this.' That was difficult to swallow, knowing that I wasn't being given the opportunity based on some prejudgment and assumptions.

Despite having the qualifications and experience, Roberto was overlooked for principal positions at his previous district. He felt he was overlooked because of prejudgment assumptions based on his racial background. Roberto's experiences as an immigrant are presented next.

### ***Experiences as an Immigrant***

Like many individuals who immigrated to a new country, Roberto experienced difficulty adjusting to a new culture and language. As he reflected on his life experiences, Robert recalled feeling "stuck in two worlds" when he first immigrated to the United States. Roberto shared the challenges that he experienced when first immigrating to the United States at the age of seven.

He shared:

Like many of our families and many of our community members, it's a challenge making that transition coming from a very rural countryside part of Mexico to a developed country and trying to integrate and blend in in a community that I was not familiar with. And it was completely foreign in terms of the language and the culture. So that was obviously a challenge. Roberto further shared the challenges he faced when adapting to a new culture as an immigrant student. He said:

To be quite honest, those first few years of school it was more survival. Because it was more survival, my focus and energy was not entirely on academics. Although I do understand now that I was learning because I got to the point where I was able to navigate the curriculum and the content language, but my recollection of that journey is almost non-existent. Again, because I think my thought process and my brain power was focused more on the day-to-day survival of the school.

His experiences as an immigrant and attending a school where the language, culture, and curriculum were different was a struggle for him. Roberto has little recollection of his early years in school when he first immigrated to the United States as he was in survival mode adapting to life changes.

Furthermore, when reflecting on his life experiences as an immigrant person, Roberto remembered feeling the struggle of navigating his different identities as a teenager. He stated:

I think growing up, it's common with students in our community or just people in our community that you're kind of stuck in two worlds. You're trying to navigate where you are, and your culture, your background, your language, and you want to validate that, but there's also this strong component that just kind of keeps pulling you in a different



direction. So, having to navigate that and as a teenager, those are two very opposing powerful forces.

Here, Roberto recalled his experiences with navigating his identity as an immigrant. He struggled with navigating his cultural background with his new experiences and culture. The support systems Roberto has received throughout his educational and life experiences are described next.

### ***Support Systems***

Throughout his life and educational experiences, Roberto had a support system that consisted of family, teachers, and colleagues. These individuals encouraged, motivated, and supported Roberto as he navigated through his experiences. His experiences with mentorship and family support are presented in the sections that follow.

**Mentorship.** Roberto has had multiple mentors who supported him and encouraged him to pursue his goals as a Student and Educator of Color. For example, when reflecting on his experiences as a Student of Color, he shared:

My freshman and sophomore years were not very successful. Not that I can't do the work, but the motivation was not there. It was not until my junior year that I met really good teachers that had a tremendous impact. My Spanish teacher and my U.S. History and Government teacher. They were the ones that really pushed me and said, 'No, this is not okay. Listen, you can do better than this; this is not you.' Being able to recognize that there was more that I could offer and pushing to demonstrate that kind of got me to the point where now I was heading in the right direction. I was able to go straight into a four-year college and pursue what I needed to pursue.

The mentorship of his teachers in high school encouraged and motivated Roberto to pursue higher education. These educators believed in him as a person and human, which ultimately had a positive influence on Roberto's life.

Furthermore, as an educator, Roberto has had mentors who have encouraged and supported him to advance in his career. Roberto recalled a particular mentor who had a tremendous influence on him. He shared:

I was going to get my Master's in Curriculum and Instruction. And so, I talked to my principal at that time, and I let him know what my plans were to go back to school and get my Master's in Curriculum and Instruction. He sat down with me and just outright told me that should not be the path that I should be taking. He told me you need to be looking into school administration. It was a pretty good conversation that I had with him. We talked about the impacts and, the positives, and the challenges that come with it. After that conversation I had with him, I think that prompted me to look more into what I actually wanted to do. Sure enough, after giving it some thought and consideration, I decided to move forward with going back to school to get my Master's in School Administration. He was just very supportive. Right after I got my master's, he took me as his assistant principal. To the moment, I'm very thankful for that opportunity that he was able to provide and that guidance that he gave me.

The support and mentorship that Roberto received from his teachers and former principal motivated him to pursue school administration. As Roberto shared, the guidance, encouragement, and mentorship of his former principal motivated him to pursue what he wanted to do. The support Roberto has received from his family is presented next.

**Family Support.** Roberto shared how his family has supported him throughout his educational experiences. For example, he stated:

I was very fortunate because I did have a supportive family structure, and because of that, I think I was able to really have a focused approach in school. I was able to be on task and do what I needed to do in order to be successful.

Additionally, Roberto shared how his sister's support and experiences with teaching ultimately influenced him to pursue a career in teaching. He said:

I have an older sister who became a teacher a couple of years before me. I was able to see how she began her career and how she was just elated to be able to work with students and that population. That kind of sparked my interest. And while I was still in college, I started volunteering at schools. It kind of fed my soul and got me more into that direction of education.

Roberto's familial support served as a sense of motivation and support as he pursued his goals and aspirations. The next section describes Roberto's culturally responsive leadership practices as a School Leader of Color.

### ***Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices***

Roberto shared his leadership practices as the principal of his school community. His leadership practices include connecting through culture and life experiences as well as equity-driven practices. These leadership practices are described in the sections that follow.

**Connecting Through Culture and Life Experiences.** Roberto described how his culture and life experiences have influenced him to foster positive relationships with his school community. This includes fostering positive school relationships with staff, students, and families. For example, he shared:

I let my background influence the way I build those relationships with people. You know, for us Latinos, and especially if you come from a heritage, were coming from the countryside where you welcome people and you offer them even if it's a '*plato de frijoles and tortillas*' and that's all you have left. You still offer that to your guests. So coming in with that philosophy, and on top of that, coming from the *campo*, the countryside, where it's very communal.

Roberto's cultural background and life experiences have instilled a drive to build community through positive relationships. He further shared how his life experiences and cultural background influenced his drive to foster positive relationships with staff. He stated:

I like to come in, you know, approach the job with a smile, crack jokes, and just have fun. I think that's part of Latino blood. And I love that. I love that because we can be genuine here. I mean, just the other day last week, it was our last teacher day on Friday, and I brought carne asada for the staff. We're out there during lunchtime, we're having carne asada, chile, beans, and we're playing Chalino Sanchez, we're playing *banda*, we're playing *cumbias*, and I love that because it lets us be who we are.

Roberto's cultural background influences how he interacts and builds relationships with his staff. He leads through his cultural identity.

Roberto also shared how he has been able to connect and empathize with students through shared culture and life experiences. He shared:

Having the background of being an immigrant to the country, having to learn the language, helped me empathize, and helped me understand the struggles and the challenges that my students were going through. Because 100% of my students were language learners, whether they're learning Spanish, whether they're learning English,

100% language learners. So having that experience, that personal experience of what it is to struggle in learning a language, helped me develop my practice even more and helped me be more empathetic to their journey.

Being able to relate to his students' experiences has allowed Roberto to be more empathic and understanding of the struggles his students may be facing. The next section describes Roberto's equity-driven leadership practices.

**Equity-Driven.** Roberto shared how his school takes an asset-based approach with the students that they serve. He stated:

I think the diversity that we have linguistically; it's pretty cool to see where you're empowering students that speak Spanish at home. And we use that as an asset and not a deficiency. So that's really cool to see, and really, it's a joy for us to be able to develop and empower them.

As an administrator working at a Dual Immersion school, Roberto described the unique culture of his school, where students' languages are validated and celebrated. The school staff and him encourage students to use their home language both at school and at home.

Additionally, when reflecting on his leadership practices, he shared how he has a moral responsibility to ensure his students feel safe and validated for who they are. As the school leader on campus, Roberto shared how he advocates for the LGBTQ+ youth at his school. He stated:

Some of the decisions that I've made, especially with one of the most current underlying political debates or socio-political debates out there, which is the whole issue of students that identify in the LGBTQ+ community. And we have served several of those students, and so I think I have a moral responsibility to make sure that those students feel safe, that they feel empowered to be who they are. And I know I'm going to get some

backlash from some parents or some other people that have a completely different viewpoint because of their political background or their social-political background and philosophy. Nonetheless, the decisions that I'm making are in the best interest of the student, some of those decisions are based on law.

Roberto believes in validating and supporting the identities of students, such as the LGBTQ+ youth at his school. As an equity-driven leader, Roberto is willing to advocate for his students even if he might receive parent/community backlash. His leadership practices are influenced by his cultural and life experiences. Next, I present Diego's story.

### **Diego**

Diego was born and raised in Southern California and attended both his K-12 and higher education in Southern California. During his K-12 experiences, Diego described doing well with his academics and was very involved in extracurricular activities. Diego recalled attending schools where the majority of the student population shared similar racial backgrounds. He was also a first-generation college student. During his early years in college, he recalled being required to take remedial classes in math and English and receiving his first failing grade. Despite these obstacles, Diego graduated with his bachelor's degree and ultimately earned a master's degree. Influenced by former teachers and his desire to represent more Teachers of Color, Diego decided to pursue a career in education during his undergraduate studies.

Diego began his career in education as an elementary teacher. He has taught various grade levels at the elementary level. As a teacher, Diego was eager to create a classroom that was engaging for student learning and supportive of students' and their families' experiences. After teaching for several years, Diego was encouraged by colleagues to pursue school administration.

He currently serves as an assistant principal at an elementary school in the same district he taught. In the sections that follow, I will present themes that emerged through Diego's narrative.

### ***Experiences With Discrimination***

When reflecting on his experiences as both a student and educator of Color, Diego recalled multiple instances where he experienced discrimination because of his racial identity. For example, as he spoke of his experiences as a student, Diego shared a particular instance where one of his teachers refused to call him by his birth name; he stated, "Everyone called me by my name, and one teacher kind of refused, so it was just like [western name], and it just stuck." Additionally, Diego shared instances when his teachers had low expectations of him and peers with similar racial backgrounds. For example, he shared:

Higher education was never discussed until the eighth grade. There were never long-term goals set; it was just you got to third grade, you can go to fourth, do good in fourth, you can go to fifth; it was always like that. I guess maybe to them, they felt it was long-term, but in reality, looking at it now, it's a short-term goal. You want those kids to do well in fourth grade so they can go to middle school, but there was never an emphasis on like we're teaching you these life skills; we are teaching you a foundation in math or science so that you can be ready for college.

Furthermore, as he spoke about his experiences as an assistant principal, Diego described racial microaggressions that he has experienced as a School Leader of Color. He stated:

There's been some Fridays where I'm on campus walking around with my radio and my T-shirt, and the paint department, or electricians, or gardeners are inside the school, and they'll be like, 'Oh, are you the plant manager? Are you the custodian?' And I'm like, 'No, I'm the assistant principal.'

In this particular instance, other personnel on campus automatically assumed his role in the school, such as a maintenance worker, other than being one of the leaders on campus. Whether intentional or unintentional, these individuals had particular views and attitudes toward Diego as a Person of Color. The next section presents the support systems Diego has received throughout his educational and life experiences.

### ***Support Systems***

When reflecting on his experiences as a Student and Educator of Color, Diego mentioned several individuals who have served as a form of support throughout his educational journey. These individuals provided moral support, which helped motivate him to pursue his goals and aspirations. Diego recalled the support he received from his advisor and mentor when he was completing his student teaching; he shared, “he always made an effort to come to observe and help me modify my instruction so that I could become a better teacher...he kind of understood me.” Diego also shared the support and mentorship he received from his former teachers as he was pursuing a career in teaching. He stated:

When I was ready to go into teaching, they [former teachers] opened up their classroom, and it allowed me to work with small groups and allowed me to see their style of classroom management. They kind of got me excited about teaching.

Diego’s advisor at the university level and his former teachers served as a support system. They motivated and guided him as he pursued his career aspirations as a teacher and educator.

When he spoke about his transition from a teacher to an assistant principal, Diego mentioned the support and encouragement he received from his principal to take on the next step in his career as an administrator. He shared:



My principal said, ‘You know, the current assistant principal won't be returning next year. I want you to apply.’ I was kind of hesitant because I thought I made a good impact as a teacher like I love teaching. But then my administrator said, ‘I think you can make a bigger impact out of the classroom,’ and that's when I stepped up.

Diego’s formal principal believed in his abilities as an educator and school leader. The support from his principal ultimately influenced and motivated Diego to pursue a career in school administration. The section that follows describes Diego’s experiences and leadership practices as a School Leader of Color.

### ***Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices***

Diego reflected on his role as an educator and leader. He identified several leadership practices he utilizes to connect with and support his school community, such as connecting through culture and life experiences as well as appreciating the diversity of the school community. These practices are described below.

**Connecting Through Culture and Life Experiences.** Diego shared how he values the importance of building positive relationships with students and their families. For instance, he stated, “For me, it's [the school] a welcoming environment, making everybody feel welcome. I know 90% of the kids by name, and that creates a lot of trust. Because they [parents] are dropping off to somebody that knows their child.” Diego also shared how he makes it a point to go out and visit classrooms and be out at lunch and break to build relationships with students further. He stated, “It’s a different kind of rapport when they consistently see you out there. And essentially, it comes down to issues like if there's a problem, they’re more likely to come talk to you before it escalates into a fight.” Here, Diego highlighted that by building relationships with

students, there is a level of trust and rapport that allows students to approach him when there are issues at school.

Furthermore, Diego shared how, as a school leader on campus, he encourages teachers to build rapport with students and their families. For example, he stated, “For me, it's just advocating to my teachers that they need to know who their kids are, like fairly quickly...and we need to know their names.” He prioritizes fostering positive relationships with students and their families in order to create a welcoming and supportive school environment.

Diego mentioned his ability to empathize and support English Learners students. He shared:

I was an English Learner as a child until up to like third grade. I will make the effort during my busy day to pull them into my classroom and teach them English. I really try to make the effort to work with that student population.

Diego emphasized his willingness to support the English Language Learner students at his school site as he is able to relate to their educational experiences. Diego also shared his desire to connect and serve as a role model to students, including Students of Color. For instance, he said:

I want to mentor or, at least, be that role model for other people. It doesn't have to be for other People of Color, but ideally, that would be nice, too, because we want to reflect what our schools look like.

Diego further shared his desire to serve as a role model for students, especially Students of Color. For example, when reflecting on becoming an educator, he shared:

I didn't see my first Latino teacher until ninth grade. He happened to be our English teacher for my freshman year of high school. And I'm just like, ‘oh my god like it took me ten years in my academic career to finally see the first person [teacher] of Color,’ so

that was also very motivating to feel like, ‘oh my god, I'm going to be in a classroom where the kids are going to look like me or the kids are going to identify and look at me and even the parents.’

Diego realizes the importance of racial representation for Students of Color and their families. Despite experiencing discrimination as a Student and Educator of Color, Diego desires to be a role model for students and build connections through shared culture and life experiences. Next, I present Diego’s appreciation of the diversity of the school community he serves.

**Celebrating Diversity.** When reflecting on both the present and his future hopes for his school community, Diego mentioned the importance of appreciating diversity within the school. For example, he shared:

I like promoting diversity, and that’s kind of where we want to continue. We have been able to bring a Brazilian group, and we have been able to bring performances from different parts of the world. So, being able to expose that diversity to our students is what I want to continue seeing our school go.

As a School Leader of Color, Diego values diversity and hopes to continue appreciating the diversity of various cultures and identities within his school community. Diego’s culturally responsive leadership practices are influenced by his own educational and life experiences. I will now present Carlos’s story.

### **Carlos**

Carlos grew up in Southern California and is proud of his Colombian roots. He attended both his K-12 and higher education in Southern California. He recalled being very involved and motivated to do well in his academics during his K-12 educational experiences. Additionally, during his middle and high school years, Carlos was very drawn to literature. He ultimately

decided to major in English Literature in college and planned to pursue a career in journalism. He recalled connecting with his Professors of Color and finding his voice through literature. After completing his undergraduate studies, Carlos was unsure of his career plans. He began working as a substitute teacher and then as an instructional aide supporting students with disabilities. Influenced by these experiences, Carlos attended graduate school for his master's and teaching credential in Special Education.

Soon after, Carlos began his career as a Special Education Teacher at an Elementary school. Carlos shared his joy and passion for working with students with disabilities. After teaching for several years, Carlos began his new role as a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), where he served as an instructional coach and supported special education teachers in his district. He then served as an assistant principal at the high school level for several years. Currently, he serves as school principal for a middle school. The sections that follow describe themes from Carlos's story.

### ***Experiences with Discrimination***

Carlos shared instances where he experienced discrimination because of his identity. He described experiencing discrimination from educators, colleagues, and peers. Carlos's experiences with racial microaggressions and lateral/horizontal violence are presented below.

**Racial Microaggressions.** When reflecting on his experiences as a Student of Color, Carlos remembered a particular instance where one of his teachers did not validate him as a learner. He shared:

In elementary school, I felt like I really wasn't validated as a learner. I remember one particular incident when I was a fifth grader where I was scheduled to take the Gifted and Talented Education Test (GATE). And as I was getting ready to go over to take the

GATE test, my fifth-grade teacher said, ‘You're never going to pass; you’re not smart enough to be in that class.’ That was kind of like my elementary experience where it was like, you have these teachers that you didn't have any connection to and really didn't understand your existence or experience.

Deficit views from his teachers and a lack of understanding of his experiences as a Student of Color was a challenge for Carlos.

As he continued to reflect on his experiences as a Student of Color, Carlos further shared how his teachers had low expectations of him. For example, he shared:

I really worked hard, but at the same time, I always was confronted with people that just didn't really believe in me or just thought that I was just kind of like another poor Latin kid in the school, and just kind of had low expectations. But I never had low expectations for myself.

Despite experiencing low expectations from educators in school, Carlos believed in himself and his abilities.

Carlos recalled instances where his leadership skills and/or goals and aspirations were questioned by other educators and colleagues. For instance, he stated:

They [colleagues] will say stuff to you like, ‘Well, you're just moving up; you're just trying to work really hard or look really good because you just want to move up the ladder.’ But why is it not okay for me to move up the ladder? Why is it not okay for me to be ambitious?

Here, Carlos revealed how his aspirations and career goals are questioned by his colleagues as a School Leader of Color. He is questioned about his ambition and career goals. Carlos’s experiences with lateral/horizontal violence are described next.

**Lateral/Horizontal Violence.** Carlos revealed instances where he experienced discrimination from other People of Color. While he was in high school, he recalled inappropriate questions and remarks made toward him by his peers of Color. For example, he shared:

As a person that is Colombian and then in the 90s while growing up, Colombia was considered to be like a horrible place; it was connected to drug lords, it was connected to the drug war. It was like whenever people would find out that you were Colombian, there was always like, ‘Oh, are your parents drug dealers? Do your parents have cocaine in their house, you know, stuff like that.’ I went to predominantly Latino schools, and a lot of the people that were saying stuff like that to me were Mexican students.

Carlos further shared instances where he has experienced discrimination from other People of Color. For instance, as an educational leader, he revealed facing discrimination from parents. He stated:

I think there is a lot of reverse discrimination. Sometimes, you think that by being Latino and by working in the Latino community that, you're going to find that support in parents, and you don't; it's almost like you get the reverse. And I don't know if it's because I'm not Mexican, and maybe I speak Spanish in a different manner.

Here, Carlos described the challenges and lack of support he received from Latinx parents in his school community. These challenges make it difficult for Carlos to connect with parents. He questioned if his different cultural background may contribute to the lack of support/discrimination. The section that follows describes the support systems Carlos has had throughout his educational and life experiences.

### *Support Systems*

While sharing his story, Carlos mentioned several mentors who guided and supported him as he pursued his education and career goals. These individuals not only provide support but also hope for Carlos. During his undergraduate studies, Carlos had Professors of Color whom he connected with and encouraged his love for literature. For example, he shared:

I was lucky enough to take this class with this professor who was African-American, and he was in charge of African-American Literature at the school. He opened up my eyes to a whole world of literature that I had never read before. And he was just amazing; he would just say things that were like so thought-provoking.

Carlos further shared how he felt validated and supported by his Professors of Color. His Professors of Color motivated him to pursue his passion for literature. He said:

I felt more inclined and didn't feel othered because I was like, I was being taught by a Person of Color and other Professors of Color. Therefore, I felt like they were speaking to me, like I understood what they were saying to me.

Furthermore, Carlos revealed the mentorship he received in graduate school while pursuing a degree and teaching credential in Special Education. When describing his experiences in graduate school, he stated:

I ended up at a school where I felt like I was very supported because I had a really great academic advisor. She was the one that encouraged me and, so I didn't really worry about the price tag of the school. I just kind of was like, this is where I need to be because she's such a great person, and I felt like she was such a great human being, and I felt like she was someone that was very supportive and just very encouraging.

The mentorship that Carlos received from his professors served as a beacon of hope and motivation. These individuals influenced Carlos to pursue his love for literature and his career as an educator. Carlos's culturally responsive leadership practices are presented next.

### ***Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices***

As a school leader, Carlos values the relationships that he is able to build with his school community in order to serve best and support them. When reflecting on his leadership practices, Carlos revealed his commitment to advocate for his students and school community. His ability to connect through culture and life experiences with his school community and his equity-driven leadership practices are described below.

**Connecting Through Culture and Life Experiences.** As a school principal, Carlos shared how he prioritizes parent engagement. He understands the value of having parents involved in school and ensuring that their voices are heard. He shared:

I do a lot of parent engagement. You know, the parent comes to the office, I'm not one that says, 'Oh, if they're not on the schedule, like if they haven't scheduled an appointment, I'm not going to sit with them.' Because our parents work and I don't know if they'll be able to come back another day. So, they're willing to come to the office to speak to you because it's something that is important to them, so I have to give them that time. We need to make sure that parents feel valued, and we need to make sure that they feel listened to. So that is a big push, and I follow the same thing too with students and teachers.

Here, Carlos revealed his value for parent engagement and ensuring that parents of his school community feel valued and listened to. Carlos feels the same way when it comes to students and



teachers. He is committed to ensuring that his whole school community feels valued and listened to.

As he reflected on his life and educational experiences, Carlos mentioned the importance of racial representation and empathizing with students' experiences. He stated:

I never really saw anybody that kind of was my background as either a teacher or much less an administrator. And so, therefore, you know, if you see people that kind of know your own struggles and your own obstacles, it makes it a lot easier for you to seek out help or just seek out someone to understand where you're coming from. That's always been the thing that has always pushed me and has always been in the back of my mind.

Carlos shared the importance of having school leaders that look and relate to the students that they serve. He identified the influence School Leaders of Color can have on Students of Color by being able to empathize and understand their experiences.

Carlos further elaborated on the importance of building relationships with students through mentoring. He said:

I don't talk to students in a manner that is disrespectful. If I am upset, I'm always one to show them like, 'I'm so sorry for the way that I reacted to that situation. I apologize because I should have kept my calm. I should have kept myself collected.' Because it's not just about reading, writing, and math, it's also about character building. And so, you need to be able to show these kids how you are able to handle stressful situations, how you're able to handle yourself when you get out of character when you're stressed. At the end of the day, you need to build relationships with them. Because that was the biggest thing. If you don't build relationships with kids, they're not going to listen to you.

Here, we see how Carlos values the importance of building relationships with students. Carlos revealed his commitment to mentoring students beyond just academics and leading by example. Carlos's equity-driven leadership practices are presented in the section that follows.

**Equity-Driven.** Working at a school community that serves a diverse student population from different backgrounds and identities, Carlos shared the importance of creating a space for students to speak their truth. For example, he said:

I've worked with students that identify as non-binary. I work with students that identify as gay and lesbian. Do I understand people who describe themselves as transgender or non-binary? No, I don't.... but it's not my place to discriminate against that. It's my place to create an environment that is safe for that person to be able to speak their truth.

While not understanding or relating to some of the identities and experiences of students, as a school leader, Carlos is committed to ensuring students' identities are valued and heard within the school community.

As the school principal, Carlos shared how he consistently reflects on his leadership practices to ensure he does not abuse his powers. For instance, he shared:

I think just working with the staff, and working with the students, and working with the parents. I mean, every interaction is one to learn from. And I think that's what I take away from the most is just really making sure that I understand what is my purpose and how and not to abuse my power, my position of authority, and to really interact with the students. You have to; that's where you have to come from.

Here, Carlos revealed the importance of self-awareness of his powers as the school principal. As an equity-driven leader, Carlos is critically self-reflective about his practices. He understands the

need to humanize interactions as he collaborates and serves his school community. Gabriel's story is presented next.

## **Gabriel**

Gabriel was born and raised in Southern California. Gabriel's first language is Spanish, and he was labeled an English Learner when he enrolled in school. He remembered facing challenges as an English Learner, such as deficit views from educators and access to rigorous classes. As a student, Gabriel focused a lot of his energy on school and his learning. He was a first-generation college student, being the first person in his immediate family to attend college. Throughout his educational experiences, he had several educators who were very supportive and encouraging, which ultimately influenced him to pursue a career in teaching. He began his educational career as a High School Science Teacher. Gabriel described his love for teaching. As a teacher, he worked with diverse groups of students and used culturally responsive practices in order to connect and make the content relevant to students' lives.

As a lifelong learner, and with the encouragement of colleagues and loved ones, Gabriel returned to graduate school and earned his Doctor of Education degree. Gabriel described his passion for teaching and being in the classroom that he had not considered pursuing school administration until he began his doctoral studies. He noticed the impact school leaders have on their communities and the lack of school Administrators of Color at his school and district. Influenced by mentors and his commitment to making a large impact within the school community, Gabriel decided to pursue school administration. He currently serves as an assistant principal at a comprehensive high school. Gabriel aspires to become a school principal in the near future and ultimately serve as an administrator at the district level. Themes from his story are presented in the sections that follow.

### ***Experiences with Discrimination***

As he reflected on his educational and life experiences, Gabriel recalled facing discrimination from various individuals. As a Student of Color, he experienced discrimination by his teachers, and as an educator of Color, he has experienced discrimination from colleagues. When reflecting on his experiences as a Student of Color, Gabriel experienced racial microaggressions from teachers. For example, he shared, “I remember I had negative experiences with some teachers that would make comments like ‘Oh, you write so well for an English Learner’ or just not having that confidence and belief in me.” Gabriel further recalled needing to advocate for his education when educators had low expectations of him. He said:

I had to learn at an early age to advocate for my education. It was challenging, and they would treat you like you didn't know what you were talking about. ‘Oh, well, you know, you may not be ready for that.’ So, it was a lot like having to prove your worth and like your sense of belonging.

Gabriel’s abilities as a Student and Learner of Color were questioned by teachers and educators. Labeled an English Learner, Gabriel was placed in lower-level classes and had to learn to advocate for his education.

As a science major in college, Gabriel recalled experiencing deficit views from peers. He shared:

When I was in college classes, I was in science classes, and comments were made by other classmates, usually predominantly Asian or white. Like, ‘Oh, what is he doing here?’ It’s always that question of, like, I was a pre-med student. ‘Why are you here?’ Here, Gabriel shared the negative remarks he received from his peers. His ability to pursue a science degree was questioned by his peers because of his racial background.

When reflecting on his experiences as an educator, Gabriel shared the discrimination he has received from colleagues. For instance, when describing his experiences as an Educator of Color, he shared:

You still face racism; you still face discrimination. You're always going to be somehow looked down upon as less than everybody else. Comments are made like, 'Oh, well, you were hired to meet a demographic, or it's because you were bilingual.' It's never because you deserve to be there.

Comments made by his colleagues, like being the “diversity hire,” were forms of racial microaggressions toward Gabriel. As he shared, his colleagues did not see him for his abilities as an educator but rather hired him to meet a certain demographic.

Gabriel further shared the discrimination he received from his colleagues. For example, as an Educator of Color, he was faced with more responsibilities than his white colleagues. Gabriel shared how his colleagues would expect him to teach English to all of their English Language Learner students; he stated:

They'd [colleagues] be like, 'It's not my responsibility to teach them English.' But at the same time, it's your responsibility to make sure that the content is accessible because we are all credentialed to teach English Language Learners. Doesn't matter how; what matters is how you get them there. But you would hear, 'Oh, it's not my job. You're fantastic because you speak Spanish.'

Because of his racial background, Gabriel's colleagues placed more responsibility on him when supporting students. The next section presents Gabriel's support systems throughout his educational and life experiences.

## ***Support Systems***

Gabriel has had multiple individuals throughout his life and educational experiences who have mentored, supported, and encouraged him to reach his goals. These individuals have helped Gabriel navigate the educational system as a Student and Educator of Color. When reflecting on his experiences as a Student of Color, Gabriel remembers a particular teacher in high school who believed in him. He shared:

I had a teacher who was like from the start, she's like, 'You can do whatever you want.' She believed in me. So, I think I took a lot of that and just kind of helped guide my future to where I am now.

When describing the support he received from his teacher, Gabriel further shared:

I had a science teacher that impacted me in a positive way, which was like, 'You can do whatever you want.' And she drove me into the teaching force and guided me... just having that person that believed in you kind of helped me get to where I am.

The support and encouragement of his teacher helped Gabriel strive for his goals as a learner and educator.

Gabriel recalled the mentorship and encouragement that he received from one of his former principals. When sharing what influenced him to pursue school leadership, Gabriel said:

I think it was my first female Latina doctorate principal I had. She kind of tapped me on the shoulder, and she's like, 'You know, you're not going to be in the classroom forever.' And I laughed it off, and I'm like, 'Haha, ¿qué? ¿cómo usted?' But I would say that's really what kind of just sparked the interest. Having that representative, that mentor.

Here, Gabriel revealed how the mentorship and support he received from his Principal of Color guided and encouraged him to pursue a career as an administrator. The section that follows describes Gabriel's culturally responsive leadership practices.

### ***Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices***

When reflecting on his leadership practices as a school leader, Gabriel shared various practices he uses to connect with and support his school community. Gabriel revealed his commitment to connecting and supporting students and families by connecting through culture and life experiences as well as striving for equity. These practices are described below.

**Connecting Through Culture and Life Experiences.** Gabriel described how his culture and life experiences influence the way he connects with families and the decisions he makes as a school leader. He stated:

Every decision I make correlates back to me growing up and my family. Everything you do and how you decide to move forward with the decisions you're going to make, be it a disciplinary action, you have to know the root cause and the impact you're going to have amongst the community.

Here, Gabriel revealed how he connects his culture and life experiences to his role as a school leader. He is self-aware of how his life experiences influence his leadership practices.

Gabriel further shared how he is able to connect with his students through shared culture and life experiences. For example, when describing how he empathizes with his students, particularly Latinx young men, he shared:

I'll share out publicly like, you know, 'I grew up in a Latino community. I understand males. We don't talk about our emotions. But if you don't learn how to navigate that world right now, it's going to be worse as an adult. And when you're an adult Latino,

you're going to be targeted much more, at least for Latino males. You'll be targeted a lot more for your anger, the way you talk back when you raise your voice like those things are going to be easy targets for people to point you and then link you into a criminal justice system; if you don't learn how to navigate that world and how to deal with it appropriately and develop those coping mechanisms.'

Working in a school community close to where he grew up, Gabriel can relate to many students' experiences. Through his own life experiences as a young Latinx man, Gabriel is able to relate to and mentor the young Latinx men in his school community.

Furthermore, Gabriel shared how his cultural and life experiences influence how he fosters positive relationships with his school community. He shared:

I love what I do. I love our community. I try to build that kind of family sense but not forced... I think that stems from my practice right now, which is Mexican; at least in my culture, we take care of everybody.

When describing how he connects with students and their families, he further shared:

I usually try to think about things like, 'What can I do to connect the families?' Usually, for me, it's even the way I talk to them; like if parents come in, I'm like, '*¿Cómo están comadres?*' The kids pick up on it, and it makes them smile, and it's like just trying to develop that sense of community, and I want the parents coming in like, you know, trying to build that parent support. And just building that and letting them know that I'm just here as a representative. Yes, I'm a leader, but at the same time, I come from your community, and that's where I grew up, and that's where I'm at.

Gabriel also shared how he connects and empathizes with LGBTQ+ youth through his queer identity and experiences. He said:



I've talked with students sometimes, and they'll be having conversations about things like, you know, my parents don't understand that I am ABC or identify as ABC. I'm like, 'Yeah, I get you.' And then they look at me, and then I kind of let them know my backstory...It's going to be hard for your parents to understand. It's kind of like you turn into this counseling kind of session. I'm not a counselor, but it's my story, so hopefully, that helps them understand. I'm trying to see their perspective through their lens.

Through his own life experiences as a queer person, Gabriel empathizes with the experiences of the LGBTQ+ youth students at his school. He is able to connect with them and understand their experiences as queer people. The next section presents Gabriel's equity-driven leadership practices.

**Equity-Driven.** Gabriel shared how he values inclusivity and understands the importance of being inclusive of all people and their identities. For instance, when describing how he communicates with students and their families, he shared:

When I'm talking to families, I always try to be very cognizant of the terminology I'm using. So, if I'm talking amongst families, I like to say partners like to be inclusive and even with children. You never like to imply, you know, your boyfriend, your girlfriend. It's like, 'Did your partner do this?' Because you never know nowadays, it's a new generation, it's a new world. We're living in a very progressive time, but you also have to be respectful and mindful of those around you.

As an equity-driven leader, Gabriel ensures that he includes the various identities of his school community. He is self-reflective and aware of the verbiage he uses when interacting with students and families.

As a school leader, Gabriel is aware of the inequities that Students of Color face. He shared how he reflects on these inequities and continues to think of solutions to address these issues. For instance, he said:

When we're striving to kind of break that [inequities] and kind of go against the grain.

You're going to run into a lot of challenges like, I'll give an example, why is the lack of representation in high achievement College Board classes, AP classes, usually a lack of representation? I have a majority [Latinx students] in the school, but I have a minority in the classes. How is that equitable? It's like you're fighting multiple layers. The first one is a belief system that is outdated and that all these kids can't be successful. The second is that the curriculum is not representative of those students. Why don't we see them in science and English? Why don't we see them in those other core advanced classes? That's my personal thing, where I look at it, and obviously, I'm not going to fix it, but what can I do to mitigate the impact?

Gabriel is aware of inequities among Latinx students within his school community. He is constantly reflecting on ways the school can address these inequities to support and empower the students they serve. His educational and life experiences have influenced how he supports his school community as an Administrator of Color. The section that follows presents Raul's story.

## **Raúl**

Raúl was born and raised in Southern California. For his K-12 education, Raúl attended a public school district in Southern California. During his early education years, Raúl was labeled an English Learner and, therefore, was placed in a specific cohort while attending school. Since the 6th grade, he knew he wanted to pursue a career in teaching. During his high school career, he connected with one of his math teachers, which ultimately influenced him to pursue a career

as a math teacher. As a first-generation college student, Raúl had to learn how to navigate the higher educational system as he was the first person in his family to apply and attend a university. For his undergraduate studies, Raúl attended a predominantly white institution where he experienced “culture shock.” He joined culture clubs on campus, which provided him with the opportunity to meet and connect with other students with similar backgrounds.

As a teacher, Raúl wanted to help students and make math more adaptable for them. He described his math classes as engaging and student-centered. As an Educator of Color, Raúl also wanted to serve as a role model for all his students, especially Students of Color, and encourage them to pursue their aspirations and goals. Raúl values his education and holds two master’s degrees and a Doctor of Education degree. He served as an instructional coach before his current role as a high school assistant principal. Raúl shared his aspiration of serving as a high school principal in the near future. Below, I present themes from his story.

### ***Experiences with Discrimination***

As he shared his story, Raúl recalled multiple instances where he experienced discrimination because of his race and other identities. He shared his experiences with discrimination as a Student and Educator of Color. His experiences with racial microaggressions and lateral/horizontal violence are described in the sections that follow.

**Racial Microaggressions.** When reflecting on his experiences as a Student of Color, Raúl recalled how teachers did not have high hopes for him and students with similar backgrounds. He said, “Our teachers didn't have high hopes for us, for me, in this case. They didn't have high hopes for us, and I think it's because of our background.” He further shared:

Just the fact that when they saw me, or they saw, like, our group of students, they are like ‘Oh, you know what this student won't get into a four-year university.’ If they do, they

will go through community college first... but for them to see me as a teacher in the making, I don't think they did. I don't think they could envision that.

As a Student of Color, Raúl experienced deficit views from his teachers because of his racial background. He felt they had little hope for him and his peers with similar backgrounds.

Furthermore, as an Educator of Color, Raúl recalled instances where he faced discrimination from other adults. For example, when working with other educators, he shared, “I did have that connection with the teachers, but there are always a few teachers at each school site that it was different. It was harder to work with because of the way I look or of my background.” Additionally, Raúl shared deficit views he has experienced with some parents because of his racial background. He said, “They [parents] think that just because I'm Hispanic, I don't know. But then when I pulled out my business cards, I'm like, ‘No, look, I'm a doctor.’ Raúl experienced deficit views from both educators and parents because of his racial background. This affected the working relationships he has with teachers and parents. As shared by Raúl, there were instances where he felt the need to share his educational level to gain credibility with parents. Next, Raúl’s experiences with lateral/horizontal violence are presented.

**Lateral/Horizontal Violence.** Raúl shared his determination to achieve his goals for himself and prove to others who did not believe in him. He recalled a particular incident when someone with a similar racial background did not believe in his abilities as a Person of Color. He stated:

So, once I finished High School, I was doing an office assistant job at a high school.

There was one time that I was talking to a custodian, and I think it was maybe two years into college. I was like, ‘Oh, hey, you know, in the future, I would like to be an assistant principal.’ He's like, ‘You become an assistant principal or a principal? No.’ But it was

someone of the same race, you know, same as me, saying, ‘Oh, you can’t.’ At the end of the day, I want to accomplish something for myself, but I also want to accomplish for the people that didn’t think that I could go that route [school administration].

Raúl’s experiences with discrimination have ignited his motivation to pursue his goals and prove to those who didn’t believe in him because of his racial identity. Not only has he experienced discrimination from teachers and colleagues but also by other People of Color. The next section presents the support systems Raúl has had through his educational and life experiences.

### ***Support Systems***

Several individuals in Raúl’s life have served as a support system. Raúl shared the support he received from educators and peers while pursuing his educational and career goals. His support from mentorship and peers are described below.

**Mentorship.** When reflecting on his experiences as a Student of Color, Raúl shared a particular teacher in high school who supported him and influenced him to pursue a career in teaching. He said, “It wasn’t until I got into my senior year that I did have a female teacher that helped me a lot once I told her, ‘Hey, you know this is what I’m planning to be [teacher] in the future.’ Raúl further elaborated by saying, “I got support from my teacher, who was a math teacher. She was determined to get something for me.” Raúl’s math teacher during his senior year served as a support system and mentor, which helped motivate Raúl to pursue a career as a math teacher. The section that follows describes Raúl’s peer support as he navigated his education.

**Peer Support.** While attending a predominantly white institution for his undergraduate studies, Raúl described how support from his peers helped him navigate through school. For example, he said:

I did join a club on campus, well, a few clubs on campus, and one of them was the MECHA<sup>1</sup> group. I felt very safe because there were people of the same color...we did meet every single week on Wednesdays, but that was a safe space for us to just learn from each other but also to like vent on what was happening.

Raúl further shared the peer support he received during his junior and senior years in college. He stated:

Going into my junior and senior year, now that my classes were smaller and more in the math department, a lot of People of Color were there now. But the fact that we all had things in common, but also when we got together, we even tried to get some of the same classes too. So, you know, when it was time to enroll for the spring or the fall or the summer, we tried to get some of the same classes; that way, at least, we will not be alone in the bigger classes. At least, we will have a peer in there as a support system.

The relationships and connections that Raúl built with peers who shared similar racial and life experiences served him as a support system through college. Raúl's culturally responsive leadership practices are presented in the sections that follow.

### ***Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices***

When reflecting on his experiences as a school leader, Raúl shared how he is able to connect with students and their families through culture and life experiences. He also shared his commitment to validating and celebrating different cultures within his school community. These practices are described below.

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<sup>1</sup> MECHA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) is a student organization in higher education that promotes cultura and historia. MECHA recognizes the voice of Latinx students and aims to create unity among students on campus (UCLA Community, para. 1).

**Connecting Through Culture and Life Experiences.** Raúl revealed his desire to become an administrator in order to connect and support students with similar backgrounds. He stated:

I think it was more of seeing the current admin at my school sites. There were a lot of them that didn't look like me. So, I just wanted to become an admin that way for the students that I serve. That way, they could relate to someone...especially knowing Spanish, a lot of our community here still speak Spanish. So that is a huge plus. Someone that speaks like them.

Raúl further shared how he and the school principal use language to support and connect with parents. When holding meetings with parents, he shared:

If I know for a fact that most of them [Parents/Guardians] do speak Spanish, either me or the principal, we hold them in Spanish for the meetings. We always give the opportunity for parents to get some type of translations... they like to see someone that could talk to them in their language. Not only having someone that could translate for them but also someone that knows their culture, someone that knows what they have been going through.

As an Educator and Leader of Color, Raúl described his desire to connect with students and support students who share similar backgrounds as him. He also shared how he is able to connect and support parents through shared culture and life experiences, such as speaking to them in Spanish. Raúl's celebration of diversity as a school leader is presented next.

**Celebrating Diversity.** As he reflected on his leadership practices, Raúl shared his value in ensuring that his school community is inclusive and appreciative of different cultures and identities. When reflecting on his leadership practices, he shared, "During the lunch times, we

usually have our students play some songs. There's a table where the students come in, they ask for songs... and so just to let everybody embrace different [culture] songs.” Additionally, when sharing his continued hope for appreciating diversity and being inclusive in his school community, he stated,

I think we need to be more inclusive amongst our school site even more, not of a certain group, but for all the groups...But also every month, do something for every group, not only a specific group but for other groups. We need to get to know the community and the families as well.

As a school leader, Raúl celebrates the diversity of his school community. He hopes to continue finding other avenues to be more inclusive of the diverse students and families that they serve. Thus, his leadership practices to support and empower his school community are influenced by his educational and life experiences.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the counterstories of the six participants of this study. Their stories revealed the various challenges they faced as Students and Educators of Color. These challenges included discrimination through racism and oppressive structures. Additionally, their stories highlighted the support they received from various individuals as they navigated the educational systems as Students and Educators of Color. More importantly, the counterstories of the participants highlighted their perseverance and strength as they overcame oppressive structures. The participants shared how they can connect, empathize, support, and advocate for their school communities through their leadership practices. Common themes were identified across the participants’ stories. However, to honor and center their voices and unique experiences, their individual stories were presented in this chapter. Chapter Five discusses how the participants’



stories address the research questions of this study, connect to the theoretical framework of this study and current research, and describe implications for practice, limitations, and areas for future research.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This study aimed to examine the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators by centering their voices. The following research questions were explored:

1. In what ways have TK-12 Latinx men administrators' educational and life experiences influenced their current leadership practice?
  - a. How has their experience with race and racism influenced their practice?
  - b. How has their experience of other salient identities influenced their practice?

In this chapter, I discuss the findings, as presented in Chapter Four, and connect them to the theoretical framework of this study and the relevant literature described in Chapter Two. I then discuss the implications and applications of the findings. Finally, I outline the study's limitations, make recommendations for future research, and offer some concluding and final thoughts.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The findings of this study revealed how the participants' educational and life experiences have influenced their leadership practices. Five main findings will be explored in this chapter; they are: 1) Persevering through discrimination, 2) The influence of mentorship, 3) The influence of family and peer support, 4) Building connections through culture and life experiences, and 5) Equity-driven leadership practices. These findings will be discussed in the following sections as they relate to the research questions of this study, the theoretical framework of this study, and relevant research.

#### **Persevering Through Discrimination**

The participants' narratives revealed their experiences with persevering through discrimination. I will first discuss their experiences with discrimination as Students of Color. Next, I will discuss their experiences with discrimination as Educators and Administrators of

Color. Through their narratives, the participants shared the various forms of discrimination and oppression they faced as Students of Color. A LatCrit theoretical framework recognizes the intersection of race and other oppressions that Latinx People face throughout their educational experiences (Huber, 2010). For instance, participants faced discrimination from educators (e.g., Teachers and Counselors), such as being seen through deficit views. The participants recalled multiple instances where educators made deficit comments about their abilities as Students of Color. Additionally, educators had set low expectations for their achievement by not having goals or high expectations of them. This is very similar to the research on the PK-12 educational experiences of young Latinx men, which has shown that young Latinx men have negative experiences with teachers, counselors, and administrators and receive unfair treatment because of their racial/ethnic background (Brown & Rodríguez, 2009; Halx & Ortiz, 2011).

Furthermore, through their narratives, it was revealed that participants faced discrimination as Educational Leaders of Color. Examples of discrimination that participants experienced included being overlooked for job promotions, having their goals and aspirations questioned by colleagues and their abilities as educators and leaders, and being mistaken as maintenance workers by visitors on campus. These forms of discrimination are examples of racial microaggressions that the participants have faced as Educators and Leaders of Color. Aligned with the participant's experiences, research also shows that PK-12 School Leaders of Color experienced resistance and low expectations from their colleagues (Aaron, 2019; Martinez et al., 2016; Peterson & Vergara, 2016).

The findings of this study also revealed that some of the participants of this study experienced discrimination from other People of Color. For instance, through their narratives, participants shared how they experienced low expectations from other People of Color, as well

as a lack of rapport and support from other adults such as student's parents. Similarly, Flores (2018) and Reed (2012) found that School Leaders of Color have experienced cultural barriers while working with students and families with similar ethnic/racial backgrounds as them. Parents have viewed school leaders as privileged and therefore felt that School Leaders of Color could not empathize with their experiences (Flores, 2018). Despite experiencing various forms of discrimination and oppression, the participants of this study persevered discrimination by navigating the educational system as Students and Educators of Color as they all hold advanced degrees and serve in leadership roles in TK-12 educational settings. These experiences have influenced their practices as School Leaders of Color as they strive to support and empower their school communities. Next, I discuss the influence that mentorship had on participants' educational and life experiences.

### **The Influence of Mentorship**

Mentorship played a key role in the educational and life experiences of the participants of this study, as detailed by the findings. First, I will discuss how mentorship played a role in participants' experiences as Students of Color. Then, I will discuss how mentorship influenced participants' experiences as Educators of Color. The participants' narratives revealed the tremendous influence that mentorship had on them during high school. For instance, participants recalled having teachers in high school who motivated them, believed in them, and encouraged them to pursue higher education and careers as teachers. The mentorship from educators while in high school served as a support system and hope as participants strived for their educational and career goals. These findings are similar to the research on the experiences of PK-12 young Latinx men. For example, Brown and Rodriguez (2009) found that young Latinx men desire a strong connection with school personnel. The authors mentioned the importance of educators

making connections with students to support them through their educational goals and aspirations.

As participants reflected on their experiences as Educators of Color, the influence of mentorship was also highlighted. For instance, through their narratives, participants revealed the influence a former colleague/administrator had on them as teachers to pursue careers in school administration. Former administrators served as mentors as they motivated, encouraged, and empowered participants to pursue careers as educational leaders to make a more significant influence in their school communities. Ultimately, the mentorship they received from colleagues and administrators had an immense influence on participants pursuing school leadership. Similarly, research has shown that PK-12 School Leaders of Color have had mentors who have supported and motivated them to pursue careers as PK-12 educational leaders (Martinez et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2020). Thus, the support through mentorship from both teachers and colleagues that participants received as students and educators has had a positive influence on the experiences of the participants as they pursued both their educational and career aspirations. The section that follows describes the influence family and peer support have had on the educational and life experiences of the participants of this study.

### **The Influence of Family and Peer Support**

Through their narratives, it was revealed that family and peer support had a positive influence on participants' experiences as they pursued their educational and career goals. Participants shared how their families supported their education and career aspirations. The support from their families served as a sense of hope and inspiration for participants as they navigated their education. Similarly, Sáenz et al. (2020) found that emotional and moral support from family served as a sense of motivation and inspiration for Latinx men as they pursued their

higher education. Additionally, some of the study participants also revealed how peer support was instrumental in their success in higher education. Research shows that peer support had a positive influence on the experiences of Latinx men in higher educational settings (Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Pérez & Taylor, 2016). Thus, both family and peer support served as a support system for the participants of this study as they pursued their educational and career goals. In the next section, I will describe the participants' drive to build connections through culture and life experiences.

### **Building Connections Through Culture and Life Experiences**

Through their narratives, participants shared how they connect and support their school communities through culture and life experiences. A LatCrit framework examines the experiences of Latinx communities, such as immigration status, language, ethnicity, and culture (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Huber, 2010). The participants of this study described how they connect with their school communities through language, parent engagement, and life experiences. These leadership practices are described in the sections that follow.

#### ***Language***

Language has served as an advantage for participants as they connect and support their school communities, as evidenced by their narratives and the findings. For example, participants shared how students' home language is encouraged and validated in their learning. Some participants also shared how they speak Spanish to students' Spanish-speaking parents during individual and group parent meetings. Some participants also shared how they connect with students through shared language (e.g., Spanish). As they build rapport and positive relationships with students and staff, some participants shared how they connect through Spanish-speaking music. Research on the experiences and leadership practices of School Leaders of Color shows

that PK-12 school leaders connect with their school communities through language (Murakami et al., 2018). Sharing a common language has allowed school leaders to form rapport and positive relationships with students and their families (Murakami et al., 2018). Next, I discuss how participants encouraged parent engagement through their leadership practices.

### ***Parent Engagement***

Through their narratives, some of the participants of this study shared how they value parent engagement and building rapport with students' parents. For example, participants discussed how they meet with parents at school and ensure that parents have the opportunity to have their voices heard. Some participants also shared how they are constantly finding ways to connect with parents and involve them on campus so that different families can work together and co-exist as they support students. Parent engagement was evident as part of their leadership practices with some of the participants of this study. Similarly, research shows that PK-12 School Leaders of Color value the importance of involving families within the school community by getting them involved with school events and allowing them opportunities to be part of the decision-making process of the school (Baxley & Lac, 2019; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Additionally, School Leaders of Color have engaged in community walks and community partnerships to help increase parent and community involvement in their schools (Flores, 2018; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020). The following section discusses how participants connect with their school communities through life experiences.

### ***Life Experiences***

The participants' narratives revealed how they connect with students and families through life experiences. For instance, participants shared how they were able to connect and empathize with students' experiences as Students of Color. Other educational and life experiences, such as

being English Learners and Queer students, have provided opportunities for the participants of this study to resonate and connect with students who are also English learners and/or Queer. Research has shown that PK-12 School Leaders of Color have been able to build rapport, empathize, and support students and families through shared similar life experiences (Hernandez et al., 2014; Murakami et al., 2018).

Furthermore, some of the participants of this study shared their experiences as immigrant students. These participants shared how they were able to connect and empathize with students and families who shared similar experiences with immigration. A LatCrit theoretical framework allows for the opportunity to explore experiences that are unique to Latinx communities, such as immigration status (Huber, 2010; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). Through their experiences with immigration, these participants shared how they could empathize with students and their families by learning a new language and immersing themselves in a different culture. Additionally, through their narratives, participants shared how their Latinx culture influenced their leadership practices. For instance, Latinx cultures are very communal and value forming positive relationships and a sense of community. Participants shared how they bring their culture to their practices as they strive to support and build rapport with students and their families. As Roberto stated, “It’s part of Latino blood.” Next, I discuss participants' equity-driven leadership practices.

### **Equity-Driven Leadership Practices**

The participants’ stories informed their equity-driven leadership practices as they supported and empowered their school communities. Critical Race Counterstories highlight the experiences of individuals who have resisted racism and strive towards a racially just society (Yosso, 2006). Through their narratives, participants shared how they advocate for their LGBTQ+ youth students to ensure their identities are validated and affirmed in school. Some



participants shared how they viewed students' home language and experiences as an asset in their learning. Additionally, several participants shared how they advocate for their Students of Color to have access to higher-level classes and reflect on their leadership practices to ensure they do not abuse their powers as educational leaders.

These equity-driven leadership practices are similar to current research on the leadership practices of PK-12 Administrators of Color. For example, research has reported that PK-12 School Leaders of Color challenge deficit views their school's staff and/or the district have on minority students (Baxley & Lac, 2019; Flores, 2018; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). PK-12 School Leaders of Color advocate for social justice and equity issues their school communities face (Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Thus, the participants' equity-driven leadership practices to support, empower, and advocate for their school communities relate to current research on School Leaders of Color leadership practices. The participants' experience with discrimination has influenced their practices towards equity and racial justice in their school communities. I will now present a summary of the findings of this study.

### **Summary of Findings**

The findings of this study revealed how the educational and life experiences of the participants in this study influenced their leadership practices as TK-12 educational leaders. Through their own experiences with racism and other oppressive structures, the participants of this study were able to connect and empathize with students' and families' experiences. Additionally, through shared cultural experiences such as language, participants of this study were able to build rapport and support their school communities. Participants' own culture and educational life experiences, such as immigration, learning a second language, mentorship, and queer identities, have provided the opportunity for participants to understand and connect with

students' and families' experiences. The participants' leadership practices have been influenced by their educational and life experiences as they strive towards racial justice in advocating, empowering, and supporting their school communities. These experiences have implications for practices for TK-12 and higher educational institutions. These implications will be discussed below.

### **Implications for Practice**

This study examined the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators by centering their voices. The findings of this study identified the various forms of discrimination that participants experienced as Students and Educators of Color. Additionally, findings revealed the support system participants received as they navigated their educational and career goals. Their drive for equity was also highlighted through their experiences. These findings have implications for practice for TK-12 school districts, teacher education programs, and administrative services credential programs. The following sections discuss these implications.

#### **Implications for TK-12 School Districts**

The findings of this study identified several implications for TK-12 school districts. The need for mentorship programs for young Latinx men students and Educators of Color, racial justice training for educators, and hiring and retaining School Leaders of Color are discussed below.

##### ***The Need for Mentorship***

The findings of this study revealed the influence mentorship had on participants as both Students and Educators of Color. Mentorship served as a support system for participants. Young Latinx men need mentors who will support and guide them through their educational endeavors (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011). Mentorship from educators during high

school had a positive influence on participants to pursue their educational and career goals. School districts should implement mentoring programs to ensure young Latinx men have access to mentors on campus, particularly at the high school level. These mentors can be teachers, administrators, peer mentors, and other school staff who can support and empower young Latinx men with their educational and career goals and aspirations.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also revealed the influence mentorship had on participants as educators. All study participants shared how they had former administrators and/or colleagues who supported them, motivated, and influenced them to pursue school leadership. Current School Leaders of Color have the ability to mentor and guide Educators of Color who are thinking of pursuing school administration (Martinez et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2020). School districts should also implement mentoring programs for Educators of Color to ensure Latinx men educators have access to mentors who serve as a support system. Mentorship for Latinx men educators may help with belonging and job satisfaction and possibly encourage Latinx men educators to advance their careers as TK-12 administrators. Next, I discuss the need for hiring and retaining School Leaders of Color in TK-12 educational settings.

### ***Hiring and Retaining School Leaders of Color***

There is a need for school districts to hire and retain more School Leaders of Color. Similar to current research on the experiences and leadership practices of PK-12 School Leaders of Color (Aaron, 2019; Baxley & Lac, 2019; Flores, 2018; Miles Nash & Peters, 2020; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019), this study highlighted the culturally responsive leadership practices of school leaders as they support and empower their school communities. School leaders of Color empathize with students' experiences and advocate for equity and justice in their communities. With more than half of students in public schools identifying as Students of Color (Superville,

2021), it is imperative for school districts to hire and retain school leaders who can resonate, understand, and empathize with the experiences of the school communities that they serve. School districts can do this by recruiting and hiring School Leaders of Color. School districts can partner with local teacher education and school leadership programs to recruit Educators and Leaders of Color to serve their school communities. I will now discuss the need for training TK-12 educators on racial justice practices.

### ***Racial Justice Training for TK-12 Educators***

The findings of this study suggest the need for training TK-12 educators on racial justice practices. Similar to research on the experiences of young Latinx men in education (Brown & Rodríguez, 2009; Halx & Ortiz, 2011), all participants faced racial discrimination as Students of Color. Most of the discrimination they experienced was from adult educators on campus (e.g., Teachers, Counselors, Administrators). Additionally, as Educators of Color, participants also faced discrimination from colleagues. Thus, this study suggests the need to offer training on racial justice practices for TK-12 educators to support them with awareness of their biases, deficit views, and other racist practices towards communities of Color. Training on racial practices may also support educators in implementing systems and practices that dismantle oppressive systems in our PK-12 educational settings (Baxley & Lac, 2019; Flores, 2018; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). This training should be ongoing for new and veteran staff to continue discussing ways to dismantle oppressive structures and strive for equity. Next, I discuss the implications for higher education institutions.

## **Implications for Higher Education Institutions**

The findings of this study suggest implications for higher education institutions. The need for hiring and retaining Professors of Color and racial justice curriculum in both teacher educator and educational leadership programs are discussed in the sections that follow.

### ***Hiring and Retaining Professors of Color***

Given the findings of this study, higher education institutions should hire more Professors and Leaders of Color. Latinx men need professors and mentors to guide and support them in their higher education (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz et al., 2018). Some study participants shared how they could connect and receive support from Professors of Color as they navigated higher education as Students of Color. Professors of Color might empathize with Students of Color experiences and serve as mentors, especially for young Latinx men as they navigate higher education. Higher education institutions can hire more Professors of Color by making it a priority to hire Professors of Color across their campuses actively. Next, I discuss the need for a racial justice curriculum in teacher education programs.

### ***Racial Justice Curriculum in Teacher Education Programs***

The findings of this study also suggest the need for a racial justice curriculum in teacher education programs. To reduce the discrimination young Latinx men face from their teachers (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2011), pre-service teachers should have the opportunity to learn and engage in conversations regarding racism and oppressive structures in TK-12 educational settings. Moreover, teacher education programs should equip pre-service teachers with knowledge, skills, and practices to address equity issues in TK-12 schools and challenge the status quo. Teacher education programs should ensure teachers can advocate for all their students, especially students from marginalized communities (e.g., Students of Color,

LGBTQ+ youth), by engaging them in reflective practices to break down barriers and dismantle oppressive structures. The section that follows discusses the need for a racial justice curriculum in TK-12 educational leadership programs.

### ***Racial Justice Curriculum in TK-12 Educational Leadership Preparation Programs***

There is a need for a racial justice curriculum in TK-12 educational leadership preparation programs. School leaders have the ability to support their school communities with equity-driven practices (Baxley & Lac, 2019; Flores, 2018; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2019). Aspiring school leaders should gain an understanding of racist and oppressive structures in TK-12 schools. Additionally, aspiring school leaders should be equipped as change agents to break down systemic barriers and advocate for all their students, including students from marginalized communities such as Students of Color. TK-12 educational leadership preparation programs should ensure their curriculum reflects the needs of school communities that aspiring school leaders will serve (Carpenter & Diem, 2013; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Gooden et al., 2018; Peterson et al., 2013). Thus, a racial justice curriculum is needed in TK-12 educational leadership preparation programs to support aspiring school leaders striving for equity and social justice in our TK12 schools. Next, I discuss the limitations of this study.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations in this study, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The first limitation was the limited number of participants in this study. A total of six participants who currently serve as administrators in TK-12 educational settings in Southern California participated in this study. The number of participants was appropriate for the methodology. However, due to the limited number and small focus on region, etc., the transferability, while appropriate, might be limited.

Although some of the participants of this study identified with other marginalized communities such as LGBTQ+, the selection criteria for this study did not purposely examine the experiences of Latinx men who also identify with other marginalized communities such as Queer TK-12 Latinx administrators or TK-12 Latinx men administrators with Disabilities, etc., these other intersecting identities may have impacted their results without it being explicit. Finally, some of the participants of this study opted to have their interviews conducted via Zoom. Conducting interviews over Zoom may have made it more challenging for me to build rapport with some participants. Zoom interviews also made it difficult to read their body language as I asked questions and they shared their stories. I will now discuss recommendations for future research.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

With scant literature on the topic, more research is needed in examining the experiences of PK-12 Administrators of Color, broadly defined. Additionally, there is even less scholarship examining the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators. More research on this particular group's experiences and leadership practices would benefit TK-12 school districts. There is also very little research utilizing a counterstory research methodology to examine the experiences of Administrators of Color. Utilizing this research methodology may allow for the opportunity to highlight the stories of Administrators of Color who have persisted through racism and strive for an equitable and just society.

Additionally, scholars should consider the experience of language fluidity in future studies with Communities of Color. For instance, providing spaces for People of Color to express their stories in their native language as well as presenting their experiences as they are told (e.g., native language) to honor their voices and stories in authentic, powerful, and meaningful ways.

These unique ways of presenting participants' stories challenge dominant narratives of People of Color through their native language and experiences.

This study examined the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators who serve leadership roles at the school site level (e.g., assistant principal, principal). It would be interesting to study the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators who serve leadership roles at the district level, such as Directors, Assistant Superintendents, and Superintendents. Most district leaders served as site leaders before serving at the district level, and therefore, it would be insightful to learn of their experiences and leadership practices from the district lens. Also, it would be interesting to conduct studies on the experiences of Latinx men administrators in higher education institutions. Their experiences and leadership practices at the college/university level may be insightful for higher education leadership.

Furthermore, it would be insightful to learn about the experiences of Teachers of Color who work with Administrators of Color. It might be interesting to learn how their teaching practices and school involvement are influenced by their Leaders of Color. Another recommendation for future research is student and parent/guardian of Color experiences with collaborating and working with Administrators of Color. Student and parent/guardian voices may provide insight into the influence of TK-12 Leaders of Color through a different lens. Also, student and parent/guardian voices may highlight the need to hire and retain School Leaders of Color in TK-12 educational settings. Next, I conclude this dissertation with my final thoughts.

### **Final Thoughts**

This chapter discussed the findings, implications for practice, limitations, and recommendations for future research of this study. The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of TK-12 Latinx men administrators by centering their voices. A LatCrit framework



(Huber, 2010; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001) was used to examine the unique experiences of Latinx communities, such as the Latinx men administrators of this study. The findings of this study revealed the participants' experiences with discrimination and oppressive structures as both Students and Educators of Color. The findings of this study also revealed the support participants received through mentorship and family as well as their culturally responsive leadership practices as TK-12 educational leaders. Additionally, the findings of this study highlighted participants striving for equity and racial justice.

My goal for this study was to provide participants with the opportunity to share their voices and stories as Latinx men of Color. Each participant in this study shared their unique stories of survival and striving for equity. My hope for this study was to highlight the voices of the participants of this study and offer a different narrative often not heard of by men of Color in education. I also hope this dissertation serves as a reminder of the continued effort to challenge systemic barriers in educational settings for marginalized groups and strive for equity and social justice. Finally, this dissertation was my commitment to equity and social justice as we strive for a racially just society.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Recruitment (Screening) Email**

Hello (insert name),

My name is Pedro Espinoza, and I am a PhD student at Chapman University. I am seeking volunteers for my dissertation research study on the experiences and practices of PK-12 Latinx Men Administrators.

I am looking for individuals who self-identify as:

- Latino and/or Latinx
- Men
- Currently works as an administrator (e.g., assistant principal, principal, director, etc.) in a PK-12 educational setting

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in participating in this study, please respond to this email. If you choose to participate in this study, you will participate in two individual interviews that will last approximately 60 minutes each at your chosen location (e.g., school site, Zoom).

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions regarding the study.

Best,  
Pedro

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Guides**

#### **Interview #1**

Hello, thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my study on the experiences and leadership practices of PreK-12 Latinx men administrators. The purpose of this study is to examine how the identities and both the educational and life experiences of Latinx men administrators influenced their leadership practices. This interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you do not feel comfortable answering a question or want to skip a question, please let me know. Also, if at any point you do not want to continue, we can stop the interview. To protect your privacy and confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used when data is written up and shared. Do you have a pseudonym you would prefer for me to use? If not, I would be glad to create one for you.

I will audio-record our conversation so that I can focus on what you are saying rather than taking notes. I will stop the recording at any time if you do not want to be recorded. May I have your permission to record our conversation? Thank you. Please read and sign the consent form. Do you have any questions regarding the consent form? The questions for this interview will focus on your educational and professional background as well as your past educational and professional experiences.

We will start our interview with a few demographic questions.

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. How do you identify your race/ethnicity?
4. What is your educational background and training?
5. How many years have you been working as an educator?
6. How long have you worked as a school administrator?

The next set of questions will be regarding your past educational and professional experiences

7. Tell me about how your identity as a male of Color influenced your PK-12 educational experiences.
  - a. Can you describe any challenges you experienced because of your racial/ethnic identity?
  - b. Can you describe any positive experiences you experienced as a result of your racial/ethnic identity?
8. How did any other identities influence your PK-12 educational experiences?

9. Now tell me how your identity as a male of Color influenced your higher education educational experiences?
  - a. Can you describe any challenges you experienced because of your racial/ethnic identity?
  - b. Can you describe any positive experiences you experienced as a result of your racial/ethnic identity?
10. How did any other identities influence your higher education educational experiences?

I will now ask you questions about your past professional experiences as an educator of Color.

11. Can you tell a bit about what influenced you to pursue a career in PK-12 education?
  - a. How did your racial/ethnic identity influence this decision?
  - b. How did any other identities influence this decision?
12. Prior to becoming an administrator, how did your racial/ethnic background influence your experiences as an educator of Color?
13. How did any other identities influence your experiences as an educator of Color?

Based on our conversation today, is there anything else that you would like to share with me before we end today?

Thank you for your time and for sharing your experiences with me. Our next interview will take place on \_\_\_\_ (insert date & time) \_\_\_\_\_. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns you may have in the meantime.

## Interview #2

Hello. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me again. This interview will focus on your experiences and leadership practices as a current PK-12 administrator of Color. As with our previous interview, if at any time you do not want to answer a question, you want to skip a question, or go back to one, please let me know. Additionally, if at any point you do not want to continue, we can stop the interview. With your permission, I will now start our audio recording.

I will now ask you questions regarding your current role and leadership practices as an administrator of Color.

1. Can you begin by telling me what influenced you to pursue school administration?
  - a. How has your identity, or identities, influenced this decision?
  - b. How have your past educational and life experiences influenced this decision?
2. Please describe the demographics of your school community.
  - a. How has this informed your leadership practices?
  - b. Why is this important to you?
3. Please share with me some of the leadership practices you utilize to support your school community.
4. As a leader of Color, how has your racial/ethnic identity influenced your leadership practices?
  - a. Why is this important for you?
5. Are there any other identities that shape and inform your leadership practices? If so, how?
6. What are some challenges you have experienced as an administrator of Color?
  - a. Could you elaborate on this?
7. What positive experiences have you experienced as an administrator of Color?
  - a. Could you elaborate on this?
8. What are your aspirations and/or hopes for the school community (ies) that you serve?
  - a. Why is this important to you?
9. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your role, experiences, and leadership practices?

Thank you for your time and for sharing your experiences with me. Once I have concluded the interviews, I will type up the transcripts and analyze the results. You will then have the opportunity to review a summary of your responses to the questions of your interviews to ensure your responses resonate with you and your experiences. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent

CU IRB: Adult Informed Consent – Rev. May 2022

#### ADULT INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

##### Title of Study

*The Counterstories of PK-12 Latinx Men Administrators*

##### Members of the Research Team

Principal Investigator: Whitney McIntyre Miller, Ph.D.

Investigator: Pedro Espinoza

##### Key Information

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. You should take your time deciding whether you want to participate.

If you agree to participate in this study, this research will involve:

- Individuals who are 18 years or older
- Identify as Latino and/or Latinx
- Identify as Men
- Work as a PK-12 administrator
- Procedures will include two separate individual interviews
- Each interview will take 1 hour each
- Risks that do not exceed what would typically be encountered in daily life
- You will receive no compensation for your participation

##### Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

##### Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you self-identify as men, Latino and/or Latinx, and work as an administrator in a PK-12 educational setting.

##### What is the reason for doing this research study?

This research seeks to examine how the identities and both educational and life experiences of Latinx men administrators influenced their leadership practices.

**What will be done during this research study?**

You will be asked to complete two individual interviews. Each session will take 1 hour in your chosen location (e.g., school site, Zoom).

**How will my data be used?**

Your data will not be used in future research studies or shared with other researchers. Your data will be analyzed and shared for my doctoral dissertation.

**What are the possible risks of being in this research study?**

As with any study involving collection of data, there is the possibility of breach of confidentiality of data. Other risks in this research include possible emotional and/or psychological distress because the interviews involve sensitive questions about your experiences as an educator and person of Color.

It is possible that other rare side effects could occur that are not described in this consent form. It is also possible that you could have a side effect that has not occurred before.

**What are the possible benefits to you?**

You are not expected to get any direct benefit from being in this study. However, by participating in this study you might increase your understanding and awareness of your experiences as a Latinx men PK-12 administrator.

**What are the possible benefits to other people?**

The benefits to science or society may include a better understanding of the importance and need of hiring and retaining PK-12 Latinx men administrators.

**What are the alternatives to being in this research study?**

You may choose not to participate in this study.

**What will participating in this research study cost you?**

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

**Will you be compensated for being in this research study?**

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research study.

**What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?**

Your welfare is the primary concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact a research team member.

**How will information about you be protected?**

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The data will be stored electronically in my password protected laptop and will only be seen by me during the study and will be destroyed right after my degree conferral.

The only people who will have access to your research records are the research team members, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. Information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but the data will be reported as a group or summarized data, and your identity will be kept strictly confidential. We cannot guarantee total privacy.

**What are your rights as a research participant?**

You may ask any questions about this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in the study or during the study.

For study-related questions, please contact the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form. For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research, contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (714) 628-2833 or [irb@chapman.edu](mailto:irb@chapman.edu).

**What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?**

**You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study (i.e., “withdraw”) at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with Chapman University. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.**

**Documentation of informed consent**

You are voluntarily deciding whether to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered, and (4) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

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Printed Name of Participant or Legal Guardian

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Signature of Participant or Legal Guardian

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Date



**AUDIO RECORDING:**

I have received an adequate description of the purpose and procedures for audio recording sessions during the course of the proposed research. I give my consent to allow myself to be audio recorded during participation in this study, and for those records to be reviewed by persons involved in the study, as well as for other professional purposes as described to me.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes**, I agree to allow the research team to **audio record** my interview(s).

\_\_\_\_\_ **No**, I do not wish to have my interview(s) **audio recorded**.

Signature of Participant or Legal  
Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_ Date