

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP SCALE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article was to develop and validate an instrument for culturally responsive leadership. Specifically, an observation instrument was developed to assess principals' use of cultural responsiveness to lead schools. The instrument was evaluated for reliability and validity. The findings showed that there was acceptable inter-rater reliability for less than half of the survey items. In addition, the survey had high content validity. But the survey lacked construct validity. The findings were used to make implications for survey development and future research directions.

Keywords: Cultural Responsiveness, School Leadership, Observation, Assessment.

INTRODUCTION

For the last two decades, schools have continued to experience an increase in the number of students from culturally diverse backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, National Center of Education Statistics, 2013; Vespa et al., 2018). As a result, cultural responsiveness has been used to facilitate educators' effectiveness with these students. Cultural responsiveness is the competency to respond to the culturally diverse characteristics of other groups of people (Hopf et al., 2021). In school settings, it is the ability to use students' characteristics and experiences to create authentic experiences for them.

Much research has explored cultural responsiveness with regards to teaching (Gay, 2010; Hayes & Jaurez, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012; Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). An equally significant amount of research has explored culturally responsive leadership (Khalifa et al., 2016; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Merchant et al., 2013; Young et al., 2010). With regards to the latter, there are very few studies on the validity of cultural responsiveness to school leadership.

As such, the purpose of this paper is to describe my approaches to developing and validating an instrument to assess culturally responsive school leadership. The main goal of this research was twofold. First, I wanted to create an instrument that quantifies the role of cultural responsiveness in school leadership. Second, there was a need to provide principals with a mechanism that guides their efforts to address the needs of culturally diverse students (Sanders & Harvey, 2002).

Developing the Instrument

I used Cronbach & Meehl's (1955) steps to develop this instrument. The steps are as follows:

1. Identify and describe theoretical concepts that relate to the instrument
2. Measure the proposed constructs proposed by the theory
3. Conduct an empirical analysis of the hypothesized relations among the constructs and their observable manifestations.

Phase I-Theoretical Concept

In conducting a literature review, I found 4 key characteristics of culturally responsive leaders. First, culturally responsive school leaders actively promote a culturally responsive school context with an emphasis on inclusivity (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Riehl, 2000; Ryan, 2006). That is, they are committed to advocating for the inclusion of all students-especially students from traditionally marginalized backgrounds (Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Theoharis, 2007). They create a welcoming school environment for all students and their parents (Madhlangobe, 2009; Gooden & Dantley, 2012).

Principals Sustain Inclusiveness When they take the Following Actions

1. Convincing faculty and staff to embrace approaches that are inclusive and empowering to students (Madhlangobe, 2009).
2. Challenging behaviors that reinforce the exclusion and marginalization of students (Gooden & Dantley, 2012)

Second, culturally responsive school leaders validate the cultural backgrounds of their students. They recognize that the schools do not normally value of the backgrounds and lived experiences of students (Ginwright, 2007; Monkman et al., 2005; Ream & Rumberger, 2008; Yosso, 2005). As a result, they create policies and practices that allow students to do school while maintaining their identities (Alim, 2011; Horsford et al., 2011; Khalifa, 2015 & 2012). They create opportunities for students and families to share and integrate their lived experiences into the school.

Third, culturally responsive school leaders cultivate a climate of cultural responsiveness within their schools (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). Specifically, they create structures that normalize cultural responsiveness throughout their schools. Evidence to this effect can be seen in areas such as discipline policies and curriculum and instruction. Within this context, students and faculty and staff learn and grow in an environment of responsiveness and inclusiveness.

Fourth, culturally responsive school leaders excel in the development of others. Specifically, they are able to develop cultural responsiveness within their faculty and staff members (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). That is, they provide they provide faculty and staff members with opportunities to become culturally responsive leaders.

Phase 2: Measurement of Constructs

Using the literature as a guide, I identified 4 strands of culturally responsive school leadership. The strands were inclusiveness, validation, cultivation, development, and engagement. I used these strands to develop a Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL) instrument.

The CRL instrument consists of the following categories: inclusiveness, validation, cultivation, and development. I added operationalized indicators to each category. I then piloted the instrument in 4 school districts. Afterwards, I sent the instrument to two experts in the fields of cultural responsiveness and school leadership.

The CRL instrument was rated in accordance to the principal's display of culturally responsive leadership skills. Display was measured in two ways. One way was the direct observation of principal's display of cultural responsiveness in the school. The other was the review of evidence of the principal's commitment to being a culturally responsive leader.

Skills were coded as either yes for observed or no for not observed. A principal was rated as having a low rate of CRL if his/her raw score fell between 0 and 7. The principal was rated as having a medium rate of CRL if his/her raw score fell between 8 and 15. The principal was rated

as having a high rate of CRL if his/her raw score of between 16 and 22.

Phase 3: Testing the Constructs

Following Cronbach & Meehl's (1955) recommendation, I tested the hypothesized relations among the constructs. I specifically used the instrument to identify the CRL behaviors among principals. Through this process, I was able to identify indicators of the most frequently observed behaviors among principals. I was also able to identify the indicators that had acceptable rates of inter-rater reliability.

Setting

I piloted the CRL instrument in 4 school districts. Two school districts were located in a suburb of a large metropolitan city. The other two school districts were located in an urban area of the same city.

Permission to visit the schools was given by the superintendent of each school district. Participating principals agreed to be observed with the CRL instrument. All of the principals signed a consent form before being observed by me.

Participants

I observed 25 principals with the CRL assessment instrument. This population consisted of 11 males and 14 females. There were 10 elementary level principals and 7 middle school principals. The remaining 8 principals led high schools. Of this population, 12 principals were White. The remaining racial compositions of participants were as follows: 6 Black principals, 5 Hispanic principals, and 3 Asian principals.

Procedures

Over a 40-day period, I visited the principals' schools. I carefully observed the principals during the parts of the school day:

1. Before School-I evaluated the principals' approaches to starting the school day for faculty, staff, and students.
2. During School-I evaluated the principals' approaches to completing daily tasks. These tasks ranged from addressing discipline to conducting classroom observations.
3. After School-I evaluated the principals' approaches to ending the school day.

All evaluations consisted of observations and denotations. Observations focused on observing principals' actual display of culturally responsive leadership skills. For denotations, I reviewed evidence of indicators that highlighted the principal's commitment to being a culturally responsive school leader. Evidence to this effect was seen in any information that emanated from the influence of culturally responsive leadership. Data from the visits were analyzed to identify the content validity and construct validity of the CRL scale. Items were reliable if they had a rating of or above 0.80. If the rating was less than 0.80, the reliability was considered to be less than acceptable.

RESULTS

Raw Scores of Principals

The instrument scores could range from 0 to 22. A score of 22 meant that all of the indicators were observed or highlighted during the observation. If scores were less than 22, then some or less than some of the indicators were observed during observations.

The range of scores for the 25 participants was between 5 and 16. The results showed that

14 of 25 (56%) principals scored in the low range with regards to their use of CRL. The specific scores for this group of principals were 5 (6 principals), 6 (5 principals), and 7 (3 principals).

In addition, 10 of 25 (40%) principals scored in the medium range with regards to using CRL. The specific scores for this group of principals were as follows: 8 (2 principals), 19 (2 principals), 12 (1 principal), 13 (3 principal), 14 (1 principal), and 15 (1 principal). Only 1 of 25 (4%) principals scored in the high range of using CRL. The principal's score was 16.

The most observed indicators were from the categories of inclusiveness. These indicators were followed by indicators from the category of development. The indicators from the categories of cultivation were the least observed during the observations (Table 1).

Table 1 FREQUENCY OF OBSERVED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS	
Leadership Behaviors	Category
1. Ensuring that curriculum and instruction materials and resources reflect the cultural makeup of the students in the school.	Inclusiveness
2. Connecting students and faculty and staff to external organizations and resources that is responsive to their cultural backgrounds.	Inclusiveness
3. Ensuring that culturally diverse groups of faculty and staff members serve as interview panels for hiring new faculty/staff members.	Inclusiveness
4. Encouraging faculty and staff to become formally and informally educated on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Development
5. Providing faculty and staff with ongoing support for addressing the needs of culturally diverse student populations.	Development
6. Providing faculty and staff with information that enhances their awareness of the relevance of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the school.	Development
7. Making provisions for teachers to receive training on topics and issues about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students.	Development
8. Ensuring that faculty, staff, and administrators are aware of how their own cultural norms and behaviors influence the culture and climate of the school.	Development
9. Creating schoolwide instructional practices that address the characteristics and lived experiences of culturally diverse students.	Validation
10. Ensuring that school policies emphasize high expectations for cultural responsiveness throughout the school.	Cultivation
11. Ensuring that school policies and procedures are sensitive to the culturally diverse makeup and perspectives within the school.	Validation
12. Creating policies and guidelines for addressing cross cultural conflict in sensitive ways.	Cultivation
13. Ensuring that extracurricular activities are inclusive of community members from different cultures.	Inclusiveness
14. Enacting formalities and procedures for welcoming families and community members to the school in culturally responsive ways.	Cultivation
15. Creating opportunities for families and communities to add their lived experiences to the development of specific policies and programs.	Validation
16. Cultivating a school environment that allows members to validate other cultures while embracing the cultural uniqueness of their identities.	Validation
17. Using language in documents and statements that validate the cultural characteristics and backgrounds of students and families.	Validation
18. Creating a climate that integrates equity into school wide expectations for students.	Cultivation
19. Allocating funding and human resources towards promoting ideas about diversity, equity, and inclusion	Cultivation
20. Creating academic and social programs that are responsive to the diverse needs of culturally diverse groups of students.	Inclusiveness
21. Developing schoolwide events that emphasize cross cultural collaboration and communication in cross cultural situations.	Cultivation
22. Evaluating faculty and staff members' ability to incorporate cultural responsiveness into their roles and positions.	Development

Inter Rater Reliability

The value for Cronbach's Alpha for the survey was $\alpha = 0.69$. The value for Cronbach's Alpha for the inclusiveness subscale was $\alpha = 0.89$. The inter-rater reliability percentages for subscale items ranged from 0.52 to 0.88. The value for Cronbach's Alpha for the development subscale was $\alpha = 0.80$. The inter-rater reliability percentages for subscale items ranged from 0.44 to 0.80.

The value for Cronbach's Alpha for the validation subscale was $\alpha = 0.49$. The inter-rater reliability percentages for subscale items ranged from 0.19 to 0.46. The value for Cronbach's Alpha for the cultivation subscale was $\alpha = 0.37$. The inter-rater reliability percentages for subscale items ranged from 0.17 to 0.40. Five of the 22 indicators had a good inter-rater reliability with percentages at or above 80%. One indicator had an acceptable inter-rater reliability with a percentage between 70% and 80%. The remaining 16 indicators' inter-reliability was unacceptable. Table 2 presents the inter-rater reliability for each subscale and item. The table also shows the number of principals who exhibited each indicator.

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Table 2 INTER-RATER RELIABILITY OF SUBSCALES AND ITEMS		
Inclusiveness-0.896		
Leadership Behaviors	Frequency	Reliability
6 Ensuring that curriculum and instruction materials and resources reflect the cultural makeup of the students in the school.	21 Principals (84 %)	0.886
19 Connecting students and faculty and staff to external organizations and resources that is responsive to their cultural backgrounds.	20 Principals (80%)	0.865
15 Ensuring that culturally diverse groups of faculty and staff members serve as interview panels for hiring new faculty/staff members.	18 Principals (72%)	0.807
11 Ensuring that extracurricular activities are inclusive of community members from different cultures.	7 Principals (28%)	0.522
3 Creating academic and social programs that is responsive to the diverse needs of culturally diverse groups of students.	6 Principals (24%)	0.597
Development-0.801		
21 Encouraging faculty and staff to become formally and informally educated on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	15 Principals (60 %)	0.802
18 Providing faculty and staff with ongoing support for addressing the needs of culturally diverse student populations.	13 Principals (52%)	0.809
2 Providing faculty and staff with information that enhances their awareness of the	12 Principals	0.781

relevance of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the school.	(48%)	
10 Making provisions for teachers to receive training on topics and issues about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students.	10 Principals (40%)	0.657
14 Ensuring that faculty, staff, and administrators are aware of how their own cultural norms and behaviors influence the culture and climate of the school.	10 Principals (40%)	0.603
5 Evaluating faculty and staff members' ability to incorporate cultural responsiveness into their roles and positions.	4 Principals (16%)	0.344
Validation-0.492		
Leadership Behaviors	Frequency of Display	Reliability
17 Creating school wide instructional practices that address the characteristics and lived experiences of culturally diverse students.	10 Principals (40%)	0.462
22 Ensuring that school policies and procedures are sensitive to the culturally diverse makeup and perspectives within the school.	8 Principals (32%)	0.241
13 Creating opportunities for families and communities to add their lived experiences to the development of specific policies and programs.	7 Principals (28%)	0.106
8 Cultivating a school environment that allows members to validate other cultures while embracing the cultural uniqueness of their identities.	7 Principals (28%)	0.192
1 Using language in documents and statements that validate the cultural characteristics and backgrounds of students and families.	6 Principals (24%)	0.277
Cultivation-0.371		
9 Creating policies and guidelines for addressing cross cultural conflict in sensitive ways.	8 Principals (32%)	0.314
16 Ensuring that school policies emphasize high expectations for cultural responsiveness throughout the school.	8 Principals (32%)	0.258
12 Enacting formalities and procedures for welcoming families and community members to the school in culturally responsive ways.	7 Principals (28%)	0.402
4 Creating a climate that integrates equity into school wide expectations for students.	6 Principals (24%)	0.289
7 Allocating funding and human resources towards promoting ideas about diversity, equity, and inclusion	6 Principals (24%)	0.302
20 Developing school wide events that emphasize cross cultural collaboration and communication in cross cultural situations.	5 Principals (20%)	0.171

Content Validity

The CRL instrument had a high level of content. The instrument's strength is centered on several factors. First, the indicators and categories were developed through an extensive review of literature on culturally responsive school leadership. Second, I sought and used feedback from experts to revise the instrument. Third, the skills were operationalized for observation.

Operationalization is consistent with research on developing content validity within instruments (Carmines & Zeller, 1979; Kerlinger, 1986; Kerlinger & Lee, 1999) work on content validity. This research suggests that instruments have content validity if their indicators are representative of content or universality of the property.

Construct Validity

Construct validity consists of the following steps:

1. The identification of theoretical concepts that relate to the instrument
2. Measurement of the constructs that relate to the theory
3. Evaluating the relationships among the constructs and their manifestations (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955).

For the CRL instrument, the concepts and their interrelations were conveyed through the use of widely accepted concepts about culturally responsive school leadership. Procedures for measuring the concepts of CRL was guided by the literature on this topic. In addition, there were 5 items that had a high degree of inter-rater reliability.

However, the inter-rater reliability for 16 items was significantly lower than the universal standard of 0.80 (Haynes, 2003). Therefore, this instrument does not have construct validity. In other words, construct validity is achieved when all or majority of the items have a high rate of inter-rater reliability. Given this outcome, the prevailing and pressing question is “*Does this instrument assess culturally responsive leadership?*” The answer: The findings suggest that some parts of the instrument did measure CRL. Other parts of the instrument may have assessed other characteristics of school leaders.

DISCUSSION

This study revealed two significant findings. First, the CRL instrument had high content validity. However, this instrument did not consist of a high level of construct validity.

Five items had an inter-rater reliability score of at or above 0.80. Those items were as follows:

1. Ensuring that curriculum and instruction materials and resources reflect the cultural makeup of the students in the school.
2. Connecting students and faculty and staff to external organizations and resources that are responsive to their cultural backgrounds.
3. Ensuring that culturally diverse groups of faculty and staff members serve as interview panels for hiring new faculty/staff members.
4. Encouraging faculty and staff to become formally and informally educated on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
5. Providing faculty and staff with ongoing support for addressing the needs of culturally diverse student populations.

The high inter-rater reliability could be attributed to visibility. In other words, I observed the principals’ display of these culturally responsive leadership traits. Because of being physically based, they are not open to interpretation among observers. Observers can see or not see them in action.

This objectivity did not apply to the items that had low inter-rater reliability. One reason is that the other observer and I were not able to see the principals’ display of many of the traits that had low inter-rater reliability. In most instances, we were able to only denote the evidence that emanated from the principal’s use of cultural responsiveness.

In my case, I reviewed policies, manuals, and other information that related to cultural responsiveness. After that, I made an inference about the extent to which the information related to the leadership of the principal. To reach a valid conclusion, I asked the principal to provide insight on his/her role in the creation of this information.

The other rater may not have used the same approach to evaluate some of the same items. Unlike me, he may have made and used inferences to determine the role of culturally responsive leadership to the creation of the information. These inferences may or may not have determined if the information was indicative of items in the instrument.

Another explanation of this study’s findings could be the overlapping nature of types of leadership. Specifically, there is the possibility of overlapping between the principles of culturally responsive leadership and fundamentals of school leadership. In this regard, some subscale items may reflect leadership practices that don’t necessarily correlate with culturally responsive leadership.

Therefore, future iterations of this instrument should establish better inter-rater reliability. The iterations should also attempt to establish criterion-related validity and higher levels of concurrent validity. After that, this instrument can then be considered to have a high level of

validity.

LIMITATIONS

This study consisted of several limitations. First, I was unable to compare this instrument to other similar instruments. Therefore, I was unable to establish criterion related validity for the instrument.

I observed only 25 principals. Each principal was observed only one time. Therefore, the results can't be generalized to other principals and settings.

Finally, I had no control over the day of the observations. That is, I was not able to determine the type of settings that would shape my observations. In spite of these limitations, I can use these findings to develop future research with this instrument.

Future Research

The findings from this study warrant the need for future research directions.

In future research studies, I plan to refine the development of this instrument. Refinement would include the achievement of high levels of reliability and validity for the instrument. In addition, items would need to be re-operationalized in accordance to more observations.

Once I achieve this goal, the instrument can then be better positioned to measure culturally responsive leadership. I could then use the findings from the measurement to pose valuable questions about this type of leadership. Inquiries would include but not be limited to:

1. What does it mean to display culturally responsive leadership in schools?
2. What are the key attributes of culturally responsive school leaders?
3. In what areas of culturally responsive leadership are principals least skilled?
4. In what areas of culturally responsive leadership are principals most skilled?

These questions could inspire conversations that sustain the need for school leadership that addresses students' lived experiences.

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