

# Missed Opportunities: Preparing Aspiring School Leaders for Bold Social Justice School Leadership Needed for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools

This manuscript has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and endorsed by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a significant contribution to the scholarship and practice of school administration and K-12 education.



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*How and when are current and aspiring school leaders provided with opportunities to engage in sense making and reflection as it relates to race, oppression, and equal access to a quality education for all students while simultaneously making sense of the implications of their roles as school leaders in negotiating the sociopolitical and sociocultural challenges present in their schools? Given the diversity of the student population in the state of Texas and the importance that has been assigned to social justice leadership for diverse student populations, this research sought to explore the readiness of recent graduates of Principal Preparation Program in Texas to engage in bold social justice leadership required of 21<sup>st</sup> Century school leaders.*

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## Introduction

For the first time in US history, public school enrollment has reached a majority-minority milestone. The number of Hispanic, African American and Asian students currently exceeds the number of non-Hispanic White students enrolled in PK-12 schools throughout the US (Maxwell, 2014). Over five million public school students are English Language Learners (Uro & Barrio, 2013); 13 percent of the student population are classified as having one or more of fourteen disabling conditions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013) and 51 percent of public school students qualify for free or reduced lunch (Southern Education Foundation, 2015).

The dramatic shifting of the demographic makeup of public schools has far reaching implications for educators and school leaders in ensuring that all students have access to a quality education than ever before. As public school students are becoming increasingly more diverse and poor, the 21<sup>st</sup> century realities of the changing demographics of public schools in the US will demand school leaders who embrace and are committed to the tenets of school leadership for social justice to ensure that all students are provided with equal access to a high quality education.

Although public school students in the US have become more diverse and poor, the principalship has remained fairly homogeneous and middle class. Presently, 80 percent of Principals in the US are White, 10 percent are African American, 7 percent are Hispanic, and 3 percent are of another race/ethnicity (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013). More likely than not, a large percentage of Principals today have very little connection to the histories and cultures of the students that they interact with every day. It is this paradox of cultural incongruence that many researchers would argue has resulted in a disconnect in the leadership needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools that is a contributing factor exacerbating the achievement gaps, disproportionate student discipline and high school drop out rates in the US (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Ford & Moore III, 2013; Hanselman, Bruch, Gamoran, & Borman, 2014; Hernandez & Kose, 2012).

In 2014, the US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights reported that black students are suspended from school at a rate of three times that of white students; black girls are suspended six times the rate of white girls and black preschoolers comprise 16% of the preschool population however they represent 48% of the preschoolers suspended one or more times from school (US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). In a briefing session with reporters to discuss the disproportionate rate of black children being suspended in public schools across the nation, US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan stated “Education is the civil rights of our generation, the undeniable truth is that the everyday education experience for too many students of color violates the principle of equity at the heart of the American promise (Lewin, 2012).” These violations exist and persist because educators in many of the nation’s schools struggle to effectively and successfully support students who are members of cultures that are different than their own (Anderson, 2011; Byrd-Blake & Olivieri, 2009; Hollins, 2013; Quezada, Lindsey, & Lindsey, 2013; VanRoekel, 2008).

The suspension rates of children of color as reported by the US Department of Education should prompt educators and educational leaders to question why this phenomenon exists and further these data should ignite a commitment from school leaders to interrogate the policies and procedures that result in such inequities. An emerging research base on the intersectionality of black students and their experiences in public schools have presented compelling empirical evidence that black students are subject to disproportionate applications of exclusionary

discipline for behaviors that are associated with subjective, sometimes biased, decision-making by teachers and school leaders (Morris, 2012). For example, when black girls' behaviors are subjectively characterized by educators and school leaders as "unladylike" or "ghetto" their actions are viewed as a deviation from the socially accepted views of femininity in the US that are based on White Middle class values thus black girls are subject to more harsh disciplinary consequences than their white peers (Morris, 2012).

The cultural incongruity that results in unequal discipline experienced by many black students results from school leaders and school disciplinarians' lack of understanding of the cultural norms and mores of students who do not look or act like them. In fact, it is the school leaders own' background, history and group affiliations that facilitates their construction of meaning that frames the decisions that they have to make in school (Evans, 2007). School leadership is complex and quite often school leaders must negotiate and make sense of numerous sociopolitical and sociocultural issues within schools of which they have not been taught or trained to deal with.

Sixty years post the landmark 1954 Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* at Topeka, public schools are still struggling with the dismantling of institutionalized racist and oppressive public school structures that have historically, currently and systematically denied marginalized students with equal access to a high quality education (Mark A Gooden & Dantley, 2012). As the needs of school children have changed so too has the role of the Principal. The Principalship has evolved from that of disciplinarian and supervisor of teachers to instructional transformational leaders charged with closing achieving gaps for *all groups of students*, ensuring continuous growth in student achievement for *all students*, decreasing drop out rates for *all students* and increasing work place and college readiness for *all students*. (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Lynch, 2012). Concomitant to the changing role of the Principal is the expanding disconnect in the leadership needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools and the current school leadership that is being provided (Klotz, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2013).

School leaders for social justice recognize that there are situations, especially in institutions such as public schools where the application of the same rules to unequal groups or marginalized groups such as can be found in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools can generate unequal results as evidenced by the omnipresent achievement gap, disproportionate suspension rates, high school drop out rates and lack of work or college readiness (Place, Ballenger, Wasonga, Piveral, & Edmonds, 2010, p. 541).

Smith (2005) warned that the lack of respect or the acceptance of the cultural diversity of student populations may result in a disconnect of the leadership provided by Principals and the leadership needed by culturally diverse student populations to be successful. Bustamente et al. (2009), presents compelling evidence that far too often school leaders struggle with the identification of inclusive school practices that promote equitable access to education for all students within their schools.

Furthermore, convincing evidence from extant empirical research studies suggest that many school leaders have not been appropriately educated by either their Principal Preparation Programs or from professional development opportunities provided by their school districts to effectively address the challenges that are present in schools due to the increasingly more culturally and linguistically diverse school populations (Ballenger & Kemp-Graham, 2014; Evans, 2007; Mark A Gooden & O'Doherty, 2014; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). Schools throughout the nation are plentiful with well-intentioned school leaders that have

unsuccessfully attempted to close the achievement gap by having high expectations, being data driven, implementing policies and programs that were designed to support equity and equal access to a quality education for all students such as IDEA, NCLB, Race to The Top, Title I School Improvement Initiatives (SIG) and Common Core Standards. However, widespread replicable success has not been realized because many leaders do not grasp the immutable fact that legislation, programs, policies and data driven decision making alone will have *minimal* impact in schools that are populated with large numbers of poor failing students who have been historically and currently marginalized.

School leaders have yet to realize that to make systemic change for marginalized students, they must first understand their own biases, acknowledge their own deficit thinking, engage in ongoing critical reflection of their beliefs of oppression and social justice, thus becoming aware of the cultural influences in school settings and their own biases that perpetuate the inequitable practices within schools (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Kemp-Graham, 2014; Miller & Martin, 2015). Embracing the tenets of social justice school leadership would allow for this type of reflection and introspection of oppression, racism and classism that negatively impact marginalized students both current and future. How and when are school leaders provided with opportunities to engage in sense making and reflection as it relates to race, oppression and equal access to a quality education for all students while simultaneously making sense of the implications of their roles as school leaders in negotiating the sociopolitical and sociocultural challenges present in their schools?

To prepare aspiring school leaders with the awareness, skills and confidence to address diversity and equity challenges currently that are plaguing public schools in the United States, scholars in the field of education leadership have recommended that leadership for social justice be included as a central component of Principal Preparation Programs (Mark A. Gooden, 2012; Mark A Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Hansuvadha & Slater, 2012; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; Kimmons, 2011; Miller & Martin, 2015; Pazey & Cole, 2013; Reed, 2012; Santamaría, 2014; Scanlan, 2013; Shoho, Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006).

Unfortunately, there is no one broadly accepted template that has been recommended in the research base on what a Principal Preparation Program focusing on Social Justice School Leadership must resemble. However a framework of the skills and knowledge required for the ***Bold Leadership*** needed by School Principals to effectively transform 21<sup>st</sup> century schools into institutions of learning that promote equity and access to a high quality education and the expectation of academic success for all students has been eloquently articulated in the most recent revision of the ISLCC standards. More directly the recommendations found in Standard 10 of the 2014 draft of the ISLCC Standards explicitly states that an educational leader promotes the success and well-being of *every* student by ensuring the development of an equitable and culturally responsive school (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014).

The framers of the draft version of the 2014 ISLCC standards recommend achieving the goals established in Standard 10 can be accomplished by school leaders leading from a social justice perspective, thus attacking issues of student marginalization; deficit-based schooling; and limiting assumptions about gender, race, class, and special status (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014).

Education researchers and critical race and social justice theorists have posited for over a decade that school leaders cannot be effective if they are not knowledgeable about their own biases of persons who look different from them as well as not knowledgeable about and

understand the impact of oppression and marginalization of peoples in the United States. Given the expanding diverse school population and the homogeneity of school leaders charged with providing all students with equal access to a high quality education, social justice school leaders are needed to serve as activists in schools with the primary goal of creating and sustaining schools that will support equal access to a quality education free from deficit thinking, lowered expectations and marginalization for all students (Turhan, 2010).

The need for ‘*school ready*’ **BOLD** school leaders who are committed to school leadership for social justice is irrefutable and supported by decades of research. Twenty-first century students needs school Principals who are willing to take **Bold** stands and engage in activism, leading for social justice igniting a heightened sense of awareness of issues related to oppression, exclusion and marginalization. The Council of Chief State School Officers proffered an inspiring description of an effective school leader that should be the vision held by all principal preparation programs for its aspiring school leaders:

“[School-ready principals are] ready on day one to blend their energy, knowledge, and professional skills to collaborate and motivate others to transform school learning environments in ways that ensure **ALL** students will graduate college and career ready.” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012)

Principal Preparation Programs have a moral and ethical responsibility to prepare school leaders for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools ensuring that their graduates understand *that all lives matter*. The intentional inclusion of coursework and opportunities for students to interrogate race through self reflection, engage in meaning conversations about race and oppression of marginalized groups in the US can be a starting point in the quest to eradicate the inequities that exist in public education. Aspiring school leaders need to be provided with the knowledge, skills and confidence to engage in social justice school leadership that should be initiated in their preparation for the Principalship (Mark A Gooden & Dantley, 2012).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework that guided this research was Social Justice School Leadership. The concept of social justice school leadership has emerged within the last two decades (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009) in response to the shifting demographics of society, increased achievement gaps of underserved populations and accountability pressures and high stakes testing. Social justice for school leadership has been defined in numerous ways in the research, however themes are easily evident and identifiable.

Theoharis (2007) defines social justice leadership to mean that the *principals make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other historically and currently marginalizes conditions in the US central to their advocacy, leadership practice and vision* (P. 223). Turhan (2010) argues that defining social justice is difficult because it is not a specific structure that can be defined, reduced, observed or replicated and one definition could not possibly relate to every situation forever. With that being said, Turhan did posit that social justice leadership is a process or manner in which you live in an ethical society. Further, Turhan proffered a broad interpretative definition, *social justice leadership is a social influence to ensure social justice in society or a certain organization that requires deliberate intervention*

*and use of force* (p. 1359). Marshall and Olivia (2010) *define social justice leadership as leadership that emphasizes “equity, ethical values, justice, care and respect in educating of all students regardless of race and class, with a high quality education; and therefore closing the achievement gap between White, middle class students and minority students.”* Rivera-McCutchen (2014) argued that *Social justice leadership is a mindset that requires action to right what is wrong; social justice leaders actively work to improve teaching and learning so that all students have equitable opportunities to learn and excel* (p. 149).

Despite the varying definitions of social justice education leadership, scholars committed to this research are in agreement that social justice leadership is demonstrated through ongoing actions, skills, habits of mind and competencies that are continually being created, questioned and refined and social justice school leaders embrace social justice leadership to ensure the academic success of school children, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, language, religion or socioeconomic status (Brown, 2004; Capper & Young, 2014; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Theoharis, 2007)..

For the purposes of this research, I used the definition postulated by Theoharis, 2007: principals make use of issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other historically and currently marginalized conditions in the US central to their advocacy, leadership, practice and vision to ensure the academic success of all students.

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore recent graduates of a university sponsored principal preparation program in Texas understanding of racism and oppression of marginalized groups in the US. Given the diversity of the student population in the state of Texas and the importance that has been assigned to school justice leadership for diverse student populations, this research sought out to explore the readiness of recent Principal Preparations graduates to engage in Social Justice Leadership

In the state of Texas there are over 5 million students enrolled in its public schools, coming in only second to California in terms public school student enrollment in the (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). The majority of students attending Texas schools are non-white and poor. The demographic makeup of the Texas public school student population is as follows: 51.8% Hispanic, 29.4% white, 12.7% African American, 3.7% Asian. Approximately 60.2% of the student population is economically disadvantaged, 17.5% are Limited English Proficient and 8.5% of the student population are Special Education. African American students in Texas have the highest school drop out rate of 9.9%, followed by American Indians at 8.5%, Hispanic at 8.2% and White at 3.5%. Similarly, African American students have the lowest graduation rate of 84.1%, followed by Hispanic 85.1%, American Indian 85.8%, Asian 93.8% and White 93% (The Texas Education Agency, 2015)

In 2013, over 25,000 aspiring Principals completed a state approved principal preparation program in Texas. Persons seeking to obtain a Principal Certification in the state of Texas have a wide variety of program options. There are 152 state approved Principal Preparation Programs in the state of Texas; 79 university based, 34 Private, 20 TEA Education Service Regions, 5 School District based and 13 community college base. (Texas Education Agency, 2015). Invited participants for this study, attend one of the top five producers of certifiable Principals in the state of Texas.

Participants in this study completed a 100% online 7 course, 21 credit hour State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) approved university based Principal Preparation Program located in the state of Texas. The Principal Preparation Program referenced for this study, offered one course on diversity. The purpose of the course as indicated on the course syllabi was to prepare students to administer programs for special pupil populations. Student Learning Outcomes as indicated on the course syllabi were as follows:

1. Respond appropriately to the diverse needs of individuals within the school and the community;
2. Implement special programs to ensure that all students' individual needs are met through quality, flexible instructional programs and services;
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the components and legal requirements of the various special programs available in public schools
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the assessment, referral and legal guidelines that direct the delivery of special programs; and
5. Provide effective leadership for staff and parents in the administration of special programs.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study.

1. To what extent are recent graduates of a university based Principal Preparation Program in Texas prepared to engage in social justice education leadership vis a vis their understanding of
  - a. Critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language of historically and current marginalized peoples and minorities in the United States.
  - b. Patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with marginalized groups in the United States.
2. To what extent does age, gender **or** ethnicity of recent graduates of a university based Principal Preparation Program in Texas vary in their ability to engage in social justice education leadership vis a vis their understanding of
  - a. Critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language of historically and current marginalized peoples and minorities in the United States.
  - b. Patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with marginalized groups in the United States.
3. To what extent does the intersectionality of race, gender **and** age of recent graduates of a university based Principal Preparation Program in Texas impact their understanding of
  - a. Patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with marginalized groups in the United States.
  - b. Critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language.

## Research Design

The purpose of this non-experimental quantitative survey research was to gather information via the use of the Diversity & Oppression survey to describe the extent to which a diverse population of recent graduates of a Principal Preparation Program in Texas were prepared to engage in social justice school leadership as evidenced by their understanding and beliefs of oppression and racism in the United States. The use of survey research is a useful methodological research approach which allows a researcher to collect information to describe a group via the use of a survey (Gravetter & Forzano, 2015). Furthermore, a major advantage in the use an online web based survey as a method to collect respondents' perceptions or own beliefs of sensitive issues such as race and oppression is that the participants submit their responses via the internet and no face to face contact with the researcher is required (Rea & Parker, 2012).

## Research Methods

The Diversity & Oppression Scale (DOS) survey developed by researchers at UT Austin and Rutgers University was used to explore aspiring and novice school principals understanding of critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, and language and understandings of the patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with individual groups

The DOS is a 25-item self-report survey that includes four subscales:

- Cultural diversity, self-confidence, and awareness (11 items)
- Diversity and oppression (8 items)
- Educator/client congruence (3 items)
- Educator responsibilities in cultural diversity (3 items)

Two subscales from the DOS were used to answer the research questions for this study. The first subscale, the *Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness Scale*, measured respondent levels of agreement with statements demonstrating their understanding of critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, and language. Survey items for this subscale are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

*Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness Scale Survey Subscale*

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1. I am able to develop instructional program support services that reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures.
2. I have knowledge to critique and apply culturally competent and social justice approaches to influence assessment, planning, access of resources, intervention and research.
3. I am aware about ways in which institutional oppression and the misuse of power constrain human and legal rights of individuals and groups within American Society

4. I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of people with disabilities needs, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.
  5. I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of African American and African history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.
  6. I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of Middle Eastern history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.
  7. I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of women's history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.
  8. I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.
  9. I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of Native American history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.
  10. I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of Jewish history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.
  11. I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of Asian and Asian American history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.
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The second subscale, *Diversity and Oppression Scale*, measured respondents' understanding of the patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with individual groups. Survey items for this subscale are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

*Diversity and Oppression Subscale*

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1. Because we live in the US everyone should speak or at least try to learn English.
  2. In the US some people are often verbally attacked because of their minority status.
  3. Illegal immigrants should be deported to their home countries.
  4. Membership in a minority group significantly increases risk factors for exposure to discrimination, economic deprivation and oppression.
  5. In the US some people are often physically attacked because of their minority status.
  6. Being lesbian, bisexual or gay is a choice.
  7. The American Dream is real for anyone willing to work hard to achieve it.
  8. All people have equal opportunities in the US.
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## **Participants**

Purposeful sampling was used for this research. This investigation specifically targeted participants from a large regional university located in Northeast Texas who completed the university's Principal Certification Program during 2011, 2012 and 2013. Three hundred and forty graduates were invited to participate in this research of which 106 surveys were returned. The demographic data of the respondents are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

*Demographics of Respondents*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
Male	28%
Female	72%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	59.2
Black	31.2
Hispanic	6.5
American	2.2
Indian	
Hawaiian	1.1
<b>Age</b>	
≤34	32.1%
35-49	51.6%
≥50	17.2%

**Data Collection**

After securing IRB approval, invitations were emailed to all graduates from the Principal Preparation Program offered by a Northeast Texas Regional University for the years of 2011-2013. Guidelines recommended by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) were used to administer this online web based survey used for this research. Dillman et al. (2014) recommends the use of multiple contacts be used when sending out the survey to maximize the survey return rate. Email invitations were sent to the last known work and home email addresses of the graduates provided by the respondents to this regional university. Dillman et al. (2014) recommends strategic scheduling of the emailing of the survey to ensure that possible respondent are available at their computers to receive the email to participate in the online survey. Given that the great majority of graduates who participated who were invited to participate in this study worked in various capacities in public schools, requests to participate in this research were emailed before the traditional school day and early in the evening after the school day ended. The authors also recommend that all contacts are personalized and that follow up email messages are brief and to the point (Dillman et al., 2014). Each email invitation to participate in this research was personalized with the students first name, included in the body of the email was information about the purpose of the study, time commitment and link to the online survey hosted by Qualtrics.

Three hundred and forty graduates were invited to participate in this study. The survey remained active online for twenty days. During this time, four reminder emails were sent out to respondents urging them to complete the survey. Thirty-two emails were bounced back due to incorrect email addresses; 106 surveys were submitted which resulted in a return rate of 34%. To encourage participants to respond to the survey, the opportunity to win a Mini IPAD was offered as an incentive.

## Data Analysis

All survey responses were exported from the Qualtrics website and imported into SPSS v.22 for statistical analysis. Responses for the DOS were given in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). In order to provide for consistency within all of the items for scale measurement, scoring of five survey items that were negatively worded in the two subscales used for this research were recoded in SPSS. New values of the recoded survey items are found in Table 4 and the recoded survey items are listed in Table 5.

Table 4

*New Values of Negatively Recoded Survey Items*

Likert Response	Old Value	New Value
Strongly Agree	5	1
Agree	4	2
Neutral	3	3
Disagree	2	4
Strongly Disagree	1	5

Table 5

*DOS Survey Items That Were Recoded*

1. Because we live in the US everyone should speak or at least try to learn English.
2. Illegal immigrants should be deported to their home countries.
3. All people have equal opportunities in the US.
4. Being lesbian, bisexual or gay is a choice.
5. The American Dream is real for anyone willing to work hard to achieve it.

Responses to survey data were analyzed in two phases. The first phase consisted of performing and analyzing descriptive statistics for all participants responses on the two subscales of the SOS survey. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were calculated to identify themes and to provide a descriptive summary of the participants' overall responses to the survey questions indicating their understanding and beliefs about racism and oppression in the United States.

The second phase consisted of performing and analyzing inferential statistics to determine if survey responses differed based on respondent age, ethnicity or gender. Independent t-tests, one way ANOVA and Factorial ANOVAs were performed. Prior to performing inferential statistical analysis assumptions of variances were assessed and addressed when necessary with the use of alternative statistical tests. When the possibility of uneven sample sizes, as is the case with this study, violations of the homogeneity of variance assumption may be of concern. When performing the one-way ANOVA, homogeneity of variance was tested using the Levene's statistic resulting in a violation of variances being reported for the ethnicity factor therefore the homogeneity of this factor could not be assumed. Therefore, the Welch's F test for equality of mean was used as an alternative when performing an ANOVA for this factor. The Welch's F test is reported instead of the standard F Test. Respondents agreement and disagreement with survey items are presented in combined form in descriptive data charts.

“Agreement” represents respondents’ selection of Agree and Strongly Agree on survey items and “Disagreement” represents respondents selection of Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

## Findings

### Research Question #1

1. To what extent are recent graduates of a university based Principal Preparation Program in Texas prepared to engage in social justice education leadership vis a vis their understanding of
  - a. Critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language of historically and current marginalized peoples and minorities in the United States.
  - b. Patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with marginalized groups in the United States.

Descriptive and Inferential statistical analysis of responses to the *Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness* and *Diversity and Oppression* subscales were used to answer Research Question #1. The mean scale score on the first scale reviewed, *Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness*, was  $M= 4.0$  with a  $SD = .47$ . Descriptive statistics of this subscale can be found in Table 6.

Table 6

#### *Descriptive Statistics of the Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness Subscales*

Survey Items	Agree	Neutra l	Disagre e	Mea n	SD
I am able to develop instructional program support services that reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures.	43.00 %	11.8%	45.10%	2.95	1.34
I have knowledge to critique and apply culturally competent and social justice approaches to influence assessment, planning, access of resources, intervention and research.	74.20 %	15.1%	10.80%	3.79	.915
I am aware about ways in which institutional oppression and the misuse of power constrain human and legal rights of individuals and groups within American Society	54.90 %	19.4%	25.90%	3.32	1.09
I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of people with disabilities needs, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.	93.50 %	2.2%	4.30%	4.11	.77

I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of African American and African history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.	89.20 %	5.4%	5.40%	4.17	.76
I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of Middle Eastern history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.	74.20 %	7.5%	18.30%	3.88	1.15
I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of women's history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.	40.80 %	12.9%	46.20%	2.9	1.31
I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.	48.40 %	12.9%	38.80%	3.15	1.18
I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of Native American history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.	76.40 %	8.6%	15.10%	3.92	1.03
I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of Jewish history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.	93.40 %	17.2%	24.80%	3.37	1.07
I feel confident about my knowledge and understanding of Asian and Asian American history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions.	76.40 %	6.5%	17.20%	3.94	1.08

Overall, the responses from this subscale suggest that respondents had minimal understanding of critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, and language as evidenced by their low agreement on survey subscale items. There were only two survey items on this scale where the respondents rated themselves high as evidenced by a mean score of 4 or higher. Respondents had strong agreement that they understood the needs, traditions, values, family systems and artistic expressions for persons who are *disabled* and those who *African Americans*. At the other end of the spectrum, respondents rated themselves low as evidenced by mean scale scores of less than  $M=3.5$  in understanding the needs, traditions, values, family systems and artistic expressions of persons who are Women, Jewish, gay/lesbian/bisexual or transgender. Additionally respondents rated themselves very low in terms of being able to

develop instructional program supports and services that reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures. An interesting finding on this subscale was that although women represent 72% of the respondents for this survey only 40% of the respondents indicated that they felt confident about their knowledge and understanding of women’s history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions. Perhaps this could be attributed to lack of understanding of women from different ethnic groups than their own.

To answer the second part of Research Question #1, descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of the *Diversity and Oppression* subscale were performed to determine respondents’ understanding of patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with marginalized groups in the United States. Descriptive statistics for this subscale are found in Table 7. The mean scale score on the second scale reviewed for this research the *Diversity and Oppression*, subscale, was  $M=3.11$ ,  $SD=.36$ .

Table 7  
*Descriptive Statistics of the Diversity and Oppression Subscale*

Survey Items	Agree	N	Disagree	Mean	SD
Because we live in the US everyone should speak or at least try to learn English.*	76.4%	16.1%	7.5%	2.0	.88
In the US some people are often verbally attacked because of their minority status.	56.0%	12.9%	20.5%	3.54	.983
Illegal immigrants should be deported to their home countries.*	24.7%	16.1%	59.1%	3.38	1.13
Membership in a minority group significantly increases risk factors for exposure to discrimination, economic deprivation and oppression.	50.5%	26.9%	22.6%	3.31	.999
In the US some people are often physically attacked because of their minority status.	81.7%	11.8%	6.2%	4.02	.920
Being lesbian, bisexual or gay is a choice.*	57.0%	26.9%	15.0%	2.51	1.07
The American Dream is real for anyone willing to work hard to achieve it.*	64.6%	12.9%	21.5%	2.38	1.05
All people have equal opportunities in the US.*	9.7%	25.8%	63.5%	3.75	.967

Note: Items that were recoded/scoring was reversed are denoted by an \*.

Survey responses from the second subscale, *Diversity and Oppression* reviewed for this research indicate respondents’ lack of understanding of patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustices and the benefits and liabilities associated with individual cultural groups. Respondents

did not overwhelmingly agree to statements that would demonstrate their understanding of their own personal biases about non-English speakers, racism, classism, LGBT community, oppression and institutional racism. For example, almost 65% of respondents believed that the American Dream is real for anyone willing to work hard to achieve it but 51.5% of respondents agreed that membership in a minority group significantly increases risk factors for exposure to discrimination. In understanding the history of discrimination experienced by marginalized people and minority groups in the US, one would understand that working hard alone will not minimize marginalized peoples and minorities from being discriminated against which would negatively impact their achievement of the American Dream.

Another interesting finding from this research was that there were three survey items where approximately one quarter of the respondents were neutral, thus they did not agree or disagree with the survey item: *all people have equal opportunities in the US* (25.8%); *being lesbian, bisexual or gay is a choice* (26.9%) and *membership in a minority group significantly increases risk factors for discrimination* (26.9%). Failure to agree or disagree with these statements may indicate a lack of knowledge of diversity and oppression for certain marginalized groups, especially for the gay and lesbian community. The data reviewed for research question #1 indicate that the respondents do not have the knowledge or the skills necessary to engage in **bold** social justice leadership for diverse school populations.

### *Research Question #2*

1. To what extent does age, gender **or** ethnicity of recent graduates of a university based Principal Preparation Program in Texas vary in their ability to engage in social justice education leadership vis a vis their understanding of
  - a. Critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language of historically and current marginalized peoples and minorities in the United States.
  - b. Patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with marginalized groups in the *United States*.

To answer Research Question #2 independent-samples t-tests and ANOVAs were performed to determine if the level of respondents' understanding of patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustices and the benefits and liabilities associated with individual cultural groups and critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language of historically and current marginalized peoples and minorities in the United States differed based on *gender, age or ethnicity*. Descriptive statistics of mean scores according to gender, age and ethnicity for both subscales are listed in Table 8. Findings are reported by subscale.

Table 8

*Descriptive statistics for the Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness and Diversity and Oppression Subscales by Age, Ethnicity And Gender.*

		Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness			Diversity and Oppression		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Age							
	≤34	3.94	.418	29	3.14	.356	28
	35-49	3.96	.495	48	3.09	.400	46
	≥50	4.25	.428	16	3.15	.313	16
Ethnicity							
	White	4.03	.455	56	3.15	.341	55
	Black	3.98	.462	29	3.06	.309	27
	Hispanic	3.83	.643	6	2.97	.609	6
	American Indian	4.18	.771	2	3.3	1.06	2
Gender							
	Male	4.13	.490	26	3.04	.404	26
	Female	3.95	.455	67	3.14	.353	64

### Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness Subscale

#### Gender

An independent t-test was used to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between male and female respondents on the *Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness* subscale. Findings indicated that there was not a significant difference in respondents' responses on this subscale due to gender, Male ( $M=4.13$ ,  $SD=.490$ ) and Female ( $M=3.95$ ,  $SD=.455$ );  $t(91)=1.714$ ,  $p=0.090$ . Responses on this subscale did not significantly differ based on gender. Descriptive statistics of the t-test are reported in Table 9.

Table 9

*Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Survey Responses on the Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness Subscale*

	Sex						95% CI for Mean Difference	T	df
	Male			Female					
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N			
Diversity and Oppression Scale	4.13	.490	26	3.95	.455	67	0.029, 0.397	1.714	91

## Ethnicity

To assess the influence of the independent variable of ethnicity on survey responses on the *Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness scale*, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted. Descriptive statistics for the survey respondents according to ethnicity on this subscale are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

*Descriptive Statistics for Survey Respondents on the Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness Subscale by Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	M	SD	n	95% CI for Mean		
				Difference	Min	Max
White	4.03	.455	56	3.90,4.15	2.83	4.91
Black	3.98	.462	29	3.80,4.16	3.18	4.82
Hispanic	3.83	.643	6	3.15,4.50	2.82	4.73
American Indian	4.81	.771	2	-2.74,11.11	3.64	4.73
Total	4.0	.470	93	3.91,4.10		

Findings from the ANOVA suggest that there was not a significant effect of respondents' **ethnicity** on scale scores *the Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness* subscale at the  $p < .05$  level for four groups,  $F(3,89) = .428$ ,  $p = .733$ . The results indicate that respondents' awareness and understanding of critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language of historically and current marginalized peoples and minorities in the United States differed did not differ based on respondents ethnicity.

## Age

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of age on respondents score on the *Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness subscale*. Descriptive statistics for survey respondents based on age for this subscale are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics for Survey Respondents on the Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness Subscale by Age*

Age	M	SD	n	95% CI for Mean		
				Difference	Min	Max
$\leq 34$	3.94	.418	29	3.78,4.10	3.36	4.82
35-49	3.96	.495	48	3.18,4.10	2.82	4.82
$\geq 50$	4.25	.428	16	4.02,4.47	3.27	4.91
Total	4.00	.470	93	3.91,4.10	2.82	4.91

Findings from the ANOVA indicate that there was not a significant effect of respondents' **age** on scale scores this subscale at the  $p < .05$  level for three groups,  $F(2,90) = 2.69$ ,  $p = 0.073$ . Respondents' awareness and understanding of critical theories related to culture, disability,

ethnicity, gender and language of historically and current marginalized peoples and minorities in the United States differed did not differ based on respondents age.

Although no statistical significance in scale scores were determined an interesting theme emerged. Respondents aged 50 and older (M=4.25, SD=.428) had higher mean scores on the *Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness* than respondents aged 35-49 (M=3.96, SD=.495) and respondents 34 and under (M=3.94, SD=.418). These results indicate that respondents 50 and older were more informed about and aware of issues of critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, and language and patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with individual groups.

### Diversity and Oppression SubScale

#### Gender

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare survey respondents scores on the *Diversity and Oppression Scale Survey Subscale* to determine if responses differed based on respondents' **gender**. Results of the t-test are reported in Table 12.

Table 12  
*Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Survey Responses on the Diversity and Oppressions SubScale*

	Sex						95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
	Male			Female					
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N			
Diversity and Oppression Scale	3.04	.404	26	3.14	3.53	64	0.276, 0.064	1.234	88

Findings from the t-test indicate that there was not a significant difference in respondents' responses on the *Diversity and Oppression* due to gender, Male (M=3.04, SD=.404) and Female (M=3.14, SD=.353);  $t(88)=1.234, p=0.221$ .

#### Age

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of **age** on respondents' score on the *Diversity and Oppression* subscale. Descriptive statistics for survey responses on this subscale according to age are reported in Table 13.

Table 13

*Descriptive Statistics for Survey Respondents on the Diversity and Oppression SubScale by Age*

Age	M	SD	n	95% CI for Mean		
				Difference	Min	Max
≤34	3.14	.356	28	3.00,3.28	2.50	4.13
35-49	3.09	.400	46	2.97,3.21	2.00	3.75
≥50	3.15	.313	16	2.98,3.31	2.50	3.75
Total	3.11	.369	90	3.04,3.19	2.00	4.13

Findings from the ANOVA indicate that there was not a significant effect of respondents' **age** on scale scores the Diversity and Oppression subscale at the  $p < .05$  level for three groups,  $F(2,87) = .233$ ,  $p = .793$

**Ethnicity**

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of **ethnicity** on respondents score on the *Diversity and Oppression* subscale. Descriptive statistics for survey respondents subscale scores by ethnicity are reported in Table 14.

Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics for Survey Respondents on the Diversity and Oppression SubScale by Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	M	SD	n	95% CI for Mean		
				Difference	Min	Max
White	4.03	.455	56	3.90,4.15	2.83	4.91
Black	3.98	.462	29	3.80,4.16	3.18	4.82
Hispanic	3.83	.643	6	3.15,4.50	2.82	4.73
American Indian	4.81	.771	2	-2.74,11.11	3.64	4.73
Total	4.0	.470	93	3.91,4.10	2.82	4.91

Findings from the ANOVA indicate that there was not a significant effect of respondents' **ethnicity** on scale scores the Diversity and Oppression subscale at the  $p < .05$  level for four groups,  $F(3,86) = .969$ ,  $p = .717$

The data from the independent-samples t-tests and ANOVAs that were performed to determine if the level of respondents' understanding of patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustices and the benefits and liabilities associated with individual cultural groups and critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language of historically and current marginalized peoples and minorities in the United States differed based on gender, age or ethnicity indicate that neither independent factor had an effect on survey respondents scale scores.

Research Question #3

To what extent does the intersectionality of race, gender **and** age of recent graduates of a university based Principal Preparation Program in Texas impact their understanding of

- a. Critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language.
- b. Patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with marginalized groups in the United States.

To answer Research Question #3, a 2 (sex of respondent) X 3 ( age of respondent) X 4 (ethnicity of respondent) factor analysis of variances was conducted to evaluate the main effects and interaction effects of independent variables, gender, age and ethnicity on respondent scores on the *Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness* and the *Diversity and Oppression* subscales. The three independent variables are gender (male, female), age ( $\leq 34$ , 35-49,  $\geq 50$ ) and ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian). The dependent variable are the scores on the *Cultural Awareness, Self Confidence and Awareness* and *Diversity and Oppression* subscale. A high score on the *Cultural Awareness, Self Confidence and Awareness* subscale indicate respondents had levels of understanding of critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender and language of historically marginalized peoples and minorities in the US. A low score on the *Diversity and Oppression* subscale indicate respondents had high levels of understanding of patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with marginalized groups in the United States.

The results of the factorial ANOVA for the *Culture Awareness, Self Confidence and Awareness* subscale indicated non-significant main effects of **ethnicity** on respondents' scores  $F(3,75)=.963$ ,  $p=.415$ ; non-significant main effects of **age** on respondents scores,  $F(2,75)=1.934$ ,  $p=.152$  and non-significant main effects of **gender** on respondents scores,  $F(1,75)=.139$ ,  $p=.711$ . Findings suggest that the age, gender and ethnicity of responding did not result in different respondents on the *Cultural Awareness, Self Confidence and Awareness* subscale. Results of the Factorial ANOVA for the scale are reported in Table15.

Table 15

*Factorial ANOVA Results for Respondents Scale Scores on Cultural Awareness, Self Confidence and Awareness Subscale by Independent Variable*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P	Partial $\eta^2$
Ethnicity	.641	3	.214	.963	.415	.037
Age	.858	2	.429	1.934	.152	.049
Gender	.031	1	.031	.139	.711	.002
Ethnicity*Age	.492	4	.123	.555	.696	.029
Ethnicity*Gender	.183	2	.092	.413	.663	.011
Age*Gender	.281	2	.141	.634	.533	.017

Ethnicity*Age*Gender	.000	2	5.976	.000	1.0	.000
Error	16.639	75	.222		0	
Total	20.350	92				

The results of the ANOVA for the *Diversity and Oppression* subscale indicated non-significant main effects of ethnicity  $F(3,72)=1.172$ ,  $p=.326$ ; non-significant main effects of age,  $F(2,72)=2.83$ ,  $p=.065$  and non-significant main effects of gender on,  $F(1,72)=1.049$ ,  $p=.309$ . Findings indicate that the *age, gender and ethnicity* of respondents did not result in different subscale scores. Results of the Factorial ANOVA for scale scores on the Diversity and Oppression are reported in Table 16.

Table 16

*Factorial ANOVA Results for Respondents Scale Scores on the Diversity and Oppression*

*SubScale by Independent Variable*

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P	Partial $\eta^2$
Ethnicity	.389	3	.130	1.172	.326	.047
Age	.626	2	.313	2.835	.065	.073
Gender	.166	1	.116	1.049	.309	.014
Ethnicity*Age	1.604	4	.401	3.628	.009	.168
Ethnicity*Gender	1.125	2	.563	5.090	.009	.124
Age*Gender	.076	2	.038	.344	.710	.009
Ethnicity*Age*Gender	.463	2	.232	2.096	.130	.055
Error	7.956	72	.111			
Total	887.420	90				

As can be seen in Figure 1, there was significant interaction between *gender and ethnicity* on survey responses on the *Diversity and Oppression* subscale,  $F(2,72)=5.090$ ,  $p=.009$ , indicating any differences in scale score were dependent upon the gender and race of the respondents.

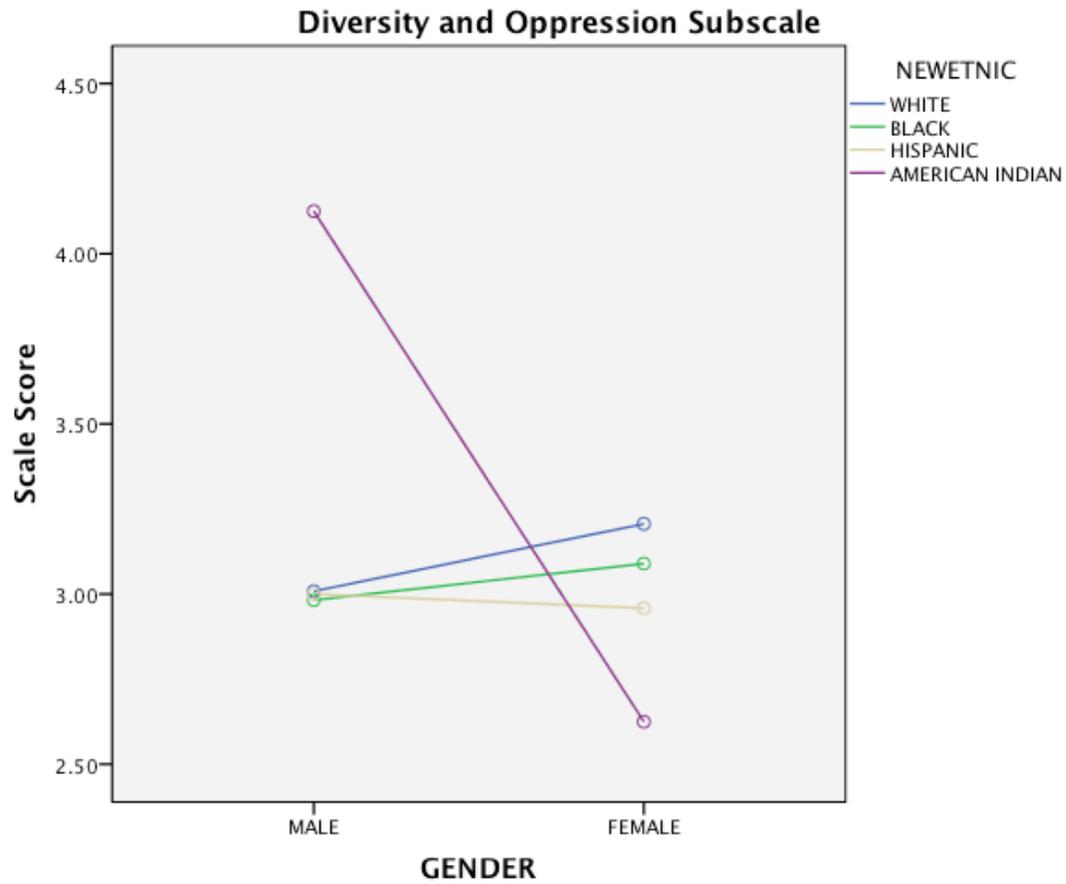


Figure 1. Plot of Means for the Interaction of Gender and Ethnicity on the Diversity and Oppression Subscale

Descriptive statistics for interaction for age and ethnicity are reported in Table 17.

Table 17  
*Descriptive Statistics for Responses on the Diversity  
 and Oppression Subscale; Age X Gender*

		Diversity and Oppression		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
White				
	<i>Male</i>	3.00	.328	15
	<i>Female</i>	3.20	.334	40
	<i>Total</i>	3.15	.341	55
Black				
	<i>Male</i>	2.98	.423	7
	<i>Female</i>	3.08	.266	20
	<i>Total</i>	3.09	.400	46
Hispanic				
	<i>Male</i>	3.00	.423	3
	<i>Female</i>	2.95	.886	3
	<i>Total</i>	2.97	.609	6
<i>American Indian</i>				
	<i>Male</i>	4.12		1
	<i>Female</i>	2.62		1
	<i>Total</i>	3.37	1.06	2
<i>TOTAL</i>				
	<i>Male</i>	3.04	.404	26
	<i>Female</i>	3.14	.353	64
	<i>Total</i>	3.11	.369	90

As can be seen in Figure 2, there was also a significant interaction was between ethnicity and age of respondents on the Diversity and Oppression subscale,  $F(4,72)=3.62$ ,  $p=.009$  indicating any differences in scale score were dependent upon the ethnicity of the respondents and the differences among the age groups: 34 and under ( $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=.356$ ); 35-49 ( $M=3.09$ ,  $SD=.400$ ) and 50 and over ( $M=3.15$ ,  $SD=.313$ ) of the respondents. Descriptive interactions for age and ethnicity are reported in Table 18.

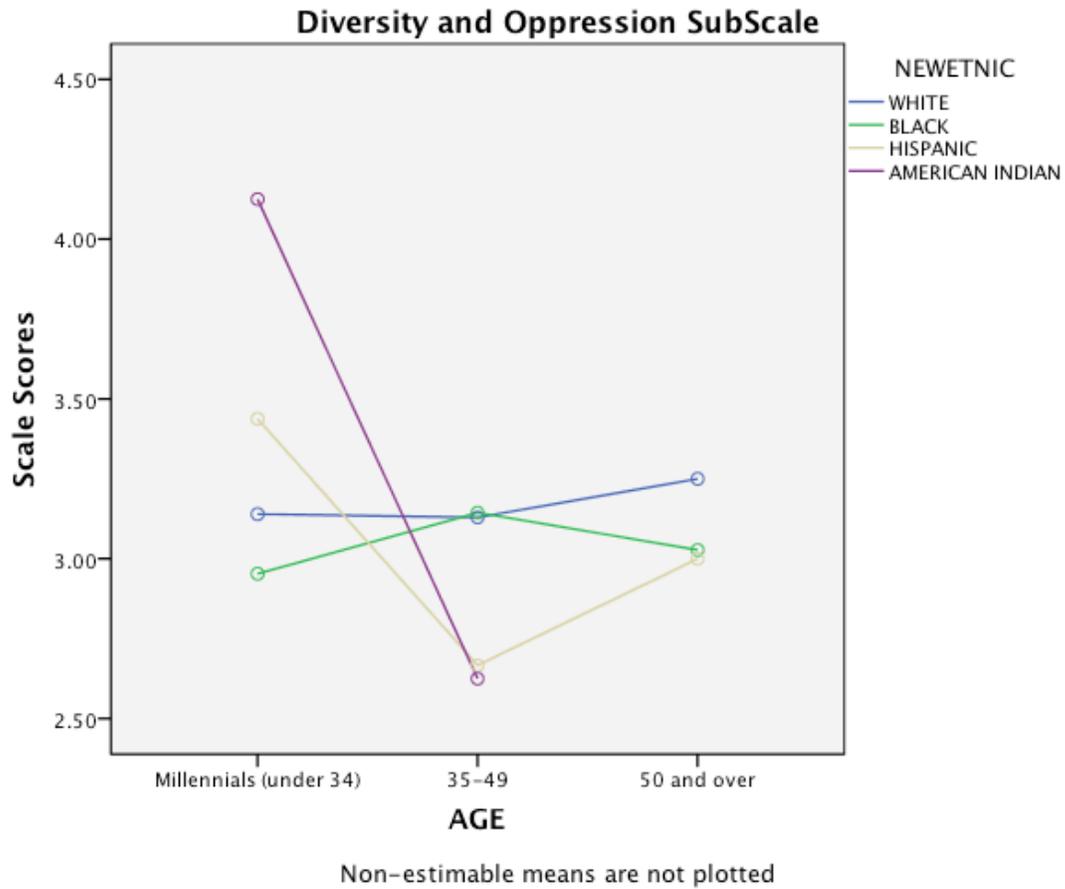


Figure 2. Plot of Means for the Interaction of Age and Ethnicity on the Diversity and Oppression Subscale

Table 18

*Descriptive Statistics of Interaction of Age and Race on Diversity and Oppression Subscale*

		<i>Diversity and Oppression</i>		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Age				
	<34			
	<i>White</i>	3.13	.249	17
	<i>Black</i>	2.95	.340	8
	<i>Hispanic</i>	3.43	.441	2
	<i>American Indian</i>	4.12	*	1
	Total	3.14	.356	28
	35-49			
	<i>White</i>	3.12	.387	29
	<i>Black</i>	3.14	.318	13
	<i>Hispanic</i>	2.66	.688	3
	<i>American Indian</i>	2.62	*	1
	Total	3.09	.400	46
	50 and Over			
	<i>White</i>	3.25	.353	9
	<i>Black</i>	3.02	.233	6
	<i>Hispanic</i>	3.0	*	1
	Total	3.15	.313	16
<i>TOTAL</i>				
	<i>White</i>	3.15	.341	55
	<i>Black</i>	3.06	.309	27
	<i>Hispanic</i>	2.97	.609	6
	<i>American Indian</i>	3.37	1.06	2
	Total	3.11	.369	90

**Discussion**

Findings from the data obtained from the two subscales reviewed for this research suggest that respondents did not have a firm understanding of diversity and oppression of various groups, particularly groups that have been traditionally marginalized in the United States.

There are clear conflicts with survey responses provided in the *Cultural Diversity, Self Confidence and Awareness* subscale compared to the responses in the *Diversity and Oppression* subscale. For example, respondents subscale scores indicate that they do not have a firm understanding of institutional oppression and the misuse of power that constrain human and legal rights of individuals and groups in society but they strongly agreed that the American Dream is real for anyone willing to work hard to achieve it, totally disregarding institutional and societal racism and oppression. Additionally, respondents had strong opinions about several historically marginalized groups in the US. They believed that being lesbian, bisexual or gay is a choice and that everyone who lives in the US should speak or try to learn English. Further respondents did not overwhelmingly believe that membership in a minority group significantly increases risk factors for exposure to discrimination, economic deprivation and oppression and that in the US

some people are not often physically attacked because of their minority status however respondents rated themselves very highly on their knowledge of African American history. African Americans have been subjected to discrimination, oppression and economic deprivation in the US for over 200 years and these atrocities still exist. Additionally, African Americans continue to experience extreme levels of violence in the United States.

The data from this research are very telling. Racism is socially constructed. All ethnicities and age group of respondents participating in this research differed slightly in their understanding of racism and oppression in the United State. Although beyond the scope of this research, it is conceivable to believe that the differences can be attributed to respondents own life experiences and interactions.

Given the low levels of understanding of race and oppression evidenced by the data analysis in this research, the need for Principal Preparation Programs to include Leadership for Social Justice as an essential component for the preparation of aspiring school leader and is clear and urgent. In order for school leaders to begin to interrogate policies and school structures that support inequities that exists in public schools, they first must recognize what those inequities look like. Aspiring school leaders must be presented with the opportunities to engage in ongoing dialog and reflection of these issues throughout their training and not in one course as was the experience of graduates that participated in this study.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

Clearly, the data from this research is in alignment with similar research findings that informs us that students graduating from the Principal Preparation Programs are not exiting with the requisite skills required to lead diverse schools. This lack of preparation impacts the nation as a whole and not just poor and minority communities. School leader preparation programs must do a better job in preparing aspiring school leaders with the skills needed to successfully address challenges that may be present in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools.

The demand and expectations for school leaders have shifted greatly but principal preparation programs continue to prepare school leaders for traditional roles in traditional school settings thus creating a void of skilled Principals who can lead 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. The changing demographics of American schools will demand that principal leadership preparation programs revise their curriculum to reflect the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs of students attending public schools, more specifically, aspiring school leaders will need a deeper understanding of social justice, democracy and equity (Brown, 2004; Cambron-McCabe, 2005; Hernandez & Fraynd, 2014; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Miller & Martin, 2015; Theoharis, 2010; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008).

Curriculum and program goals of Principal Preparations programs are often dictated by state or national standards and the most recent revision of ISLLC standards currently in draft form have been revised to provide a social justice framework to support the development of Principal standards that are current and relevant to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools, school leaders and children. Standard 10 of the revised ISLLC standards specifically addresses the issues of equity and cultural responsiveness. This standard states that an educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring the development of an equitable and culturally responsive school. *The principal can reach this goal by*

- Ensuring equity+ access to social capital and institutional support
- Fostering schools as affirming and inclusive places
- Advocating for children, families, and caregivers
- Attacking issues of student marginalization; deficit-based schooling; and limiting assumptions about gender, race, class, and special status
- Promoting the ability of students to participate in multiple cultural environments
- Promoting understanding, appreciation, and use of diverse cultural, ecological, social, political, and intellectual resources (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014, p. 20).

In order to prepare aspiring school leaders to be school ready Principals leading 21<sup>st</sup> century schools advocating for the success of all students, Principal Preparation Programs will need to do a better job in revising current curriculum with a foci of students gaining understanding and achieving mastery of critical theories related to culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, and language and understanding of the patterns of discrimination and inequities, injustice and the benefits and liabilities associated with individual groups.

To effectively prepare 21<sup>st</sup> century schools leaders to lead 21<sup>st</sup> century schools, Principal Preparation Programs must include in their curriculum on going opportunities for students to connect the important aspect of school leadership revolving around issues of diversity self awareness and reflection, facilitating discussions on privilege, inequities, racism and the important of raising expectation for all students and advocating for and understanding the backgrounds of traditionally marginalized students (Hernandez & Kose, 2012; Miller & Martin, 2015). This should not be offered in one or two courses but dispersed throughout the entire program including the internship (Ballenger & Kemp-Graham, 2014). Students need numerous opportunities to engage in candid discussions of oppression and discrimination in a safe environment which can support critical reflection and their own understanding of critical theories of oppression and marginalization (Miller & Martin, 2015). An excellent instructional strategy to assist students with understanding and the application of social justice school leadership would be the use of the case studies to stimulate awareness of inequities in schools and how to address these issues effectively and successfully (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014).

Principal preparation programs can serve as a springboard, immersing students into unfamiliar cultures, engaging in difficult conversations, propelling and inspiring students into social justice activism that support equality of education and the expectation of success for all students. We can longer wait for change to occur, it is time for action.

### **Limitations of this Research**

The results of this study may only be generalizable to the populations that mirror the survey respondents in this quantitative research. Additionally, the use of a closed survey did not provide in depth specific information as to possible reasons respondents appeared to have limited understanding of racism and oppression in the US beyond the scope of the research questions posed. This research was not experimental and therefore claims of causation and effects of the independent variables identified in this research on the dependent variable included in this study cannot be offered, despite the identification of statistically signification interactions of independent variables on the dependent variables included in this study.

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