Principal Decision-Making and Perception of Fine Arts Programing in Curricular Design

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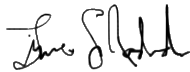
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

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by

Osvaldo Altamirano

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Dedication

Our vocation and work are a carbon copy of what our creator wants us to do. As stated in the Bible, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters" (*New International Version,* 2011/1978, Col 3:23). If we acknowledge that we exist as images of our living God and each of us understands that we represent a small aspect that is God, then we can, as workers for God, strive to accomplish anything we set out to do. The living God has an effective plan to use us as his ambassadors in any job we choose. Every human connection we make is simply a gift to realize the bigger picture, whether vocational or personal.

Rath (2007) expressed the simplicity of building on an existing foundation: "You cannot be anything you want to be, but you can be a lot more of who you already are" (p. 9). Who I am is defined first by God and by some of the most influential people I have known, my father and mother. Without their upbringing, love, and support, any accomplishments would be impossible. God's grace and life experiences drive my humanity's imperfection. This imperfection is a constant struggle; however, it has been made perfect by my best friend and wife, Linda. Through all the rough waves in our lives, this study is as much yours as it is mine. I am truly blessed to be by your side as your soul companion. A special thanks to my two boys and two girls. With this study, I aim to better their future and show them that everything is possible when we put God first in everything we do.

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I am also grateful to my coworkers and friends for their editing help, feedback sessions, and moral support. Thanks should also go to the research librarian at the Abilene Christian University library, who knew the exact journal I needed.

Lastly, I would be remiss in not mentioning my family, especially my spouse and children. Their belief in me has kept my spirits and motivation high during this process. I would also like to thank my mother for all the babysitting provided when I needed quiet time to study.

Abstract

This qualitative study included an exploration of the concept of perception affecting decision-making in curriculum design and the support of school administrators toward fine art programs in West Texas School Regions 18 and 19. Research shows that the fine arts provide students the social and creative skills to become productive citizens. However, research shows that in the current realm of urban and rural public school curricula, the fine arts exist at either a limited capacity or are nonexistent. This dissertation included an attempt to answer how a school leader's fine arts perception affects a principal's ability to support, build, and sustain fine arts programs through four research questions: (a) What experiences have West Texas public school principals had with the visual and performing arts? (b) How do West Texas public school principals perceive their role in fine arts education? (c) How do West Texas public school principals perceive the meaning of the phrase "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools? (d) What are the shared values among West Texas public school principals regarding the fine arts? This qualitative multiple case study included the use of semistructured interviews to collect data from principals. These participants were current principals in their schools in West Texas. Each participant received an email inviting them to complete a questionnaire for qualification and an email to schedule their interview; in vivo coding of transcripts made from video recording the interviews allowed for analysis. The results showed that principals' experiences with the fine arts as children subconsciously affected the importance and support of fine arts in their school curricula. The overall purpose of this study was to equip school principals with the knowledge

needed to support existing fine art programs and provide implementation methods to higher

education institutions regarding the inclusion of the arts in principal training programs.

Keywords: perception, fine arts, attribution theory, fine arts education, fine arts

management, principal leadership, school administration, rural education, urban education,

decision-making, curriculum design

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

The modern-day school administrator is a facilitator of inspiration, a team builder, a coach, and an advocate of change (Lee et al., 2015). School administrators mainly influence student education amidst other individuals, occasions, and organizational dynamics such as educators, classroom applications, and school atmosphere (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hollowell, 2019). The correlation of leadership and student learning emphasizes the dominant position education administrators have in creating the settings for efficient teaching and learning (Seiser, 2018; Townsend, 2007). Further, Hogan and Kaiser (2005) suggested that effective leadership creates the conditions in the school environment where staff and administrators agree on how to achieve educational success. This type of consensus impacts the overall performance of the school environment (Lee et al., 2015).

The study of leadership and its various approaches and theories such as transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1990), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), and leader-member exchange (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) are well studied and investigated. Each theory illustrates how leadership impacts employee behaviors and attitudes. According to Lee et al. (2015), there is an underlying common theme between the various leadership theories in that they all "draw upon the process of leadership perceptions as determinants of reactions to the leadership process" (p. 910). A leader's perception in decision-making is a combination of two separate entities, joining sensory impressions (Robbins & Judge, 2012) and creating organizational excellence (Christensen & Kohls, 2003; see also Jomah, 2017). Sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch are sensory impressions that are triggered in various ways by external stimuli. Drath (2017) stated that episodic memories, or engrams, "[consist] of a series of sensory impressions, which together with declarative content, an emotional appraisal of the situation,

somatic markers, a reference to other experiences and information" (Section 3.3.3.2) are such external stimuli that give meaning to a person's environment (Robbins & Judge, 2012). Using such engrams in leadership creates organizational excellence in what Christensen and Kohls (2003) described as a unification of all stakeholders. This combination allows decision-makers such as principals to make tough decisions and embrace change surrounding their educational environment.

Public school education of the fine arts in the United States exemplifies the most substantial investment by the nation's citizens in support of the world's artistic and aesthetic culture (Caust, 2015). The precise meaning and influence of the fine arts echoes within the nation's artistic economy, history, and community (Caust, 2015). According to Elpus (2015), the most current survey on public participation in the arts from the National Endowments for the Arts illustrates that a formal education in the fine arts in elementary school helps create adults who engage in creativity, are performers or art patrons, or who support the arts by being donors or financial sponsors. However, fine arts are still not available to some schools in the nation (Winsler et al., 2019).

Winsler et al. (2019) indicated the decreasing percentage of the availability of the fine arts in schools across the nation through a report presented by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2016). The National Assessment of Educational Progress researchers measured students' knowledge and skill in the art forms of music and visual arts; researchers focused on these art mediums because only a small fraction of educational institutions offered students dance and theater. Students were evaluated in two arts processes: responding and creating (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). The assessment results revealed that a student's geographical region matters when it comes to fine art education. The South and the

West of the United States were significantly different from the Northeast in terms of capital support, class availability, and teacher certification. Overall, the assessment showed that 63% of eighth graders took a music class, and 42% took a visual arts class. Nonetheless, learners located in the Northeast were twice as likely, 68%, to have taken a visual arts class than students in the South, 35%, and West, 33%. Students in the Northeast were also significantly more likely to attend a school with a full-time fine arts teacher (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

The importance of the fine arts at the elementary level positively affects student accomplishment in other subjects (Wan, et al., 2018; Winner et al., 2013). Further, the fine arts influence social and emotional interactions within a community, allowing for creative thinking (Wan et al., 2018; Winner & Hetland, 2008).

This study includes an exploration of the concept of perception affecting decision-making and the support of school administrators towards fine art programs in West Texas. I sought to understand how principals' perceptions of the fine arts make them decide whether to support existing programs, create new programs, or aid in preventing programs from being hewed. Chapter 1 provides a general idea of the study, including the problem, purpose, and research questions. The outline of the chapter connects federal mandates of school policy to school administrators' decision-making on the support of the fine arts in public schools, which provided the basis for the research questions. There is also a section on terms and definitions related to the focus of the research and a section describing the theoretical framework related to the literature review.

Background

Keeping fine arts in public education is of vital importance for civilizing societal traditions and improving educational growth. Studies confirm how arts education and its

assimilation in a school's curriculum attend to the improvement of civic engagement, corporeal existence, cognitive consonance, and emotional dependency in students (Braund & Reiss, 2019; Chessin & Zander, 2006; Dunstan, 2016; Gullatt, 2008; Hendricks, 2016; Upitis, 2003). Further, researchers affirmed an increase in creativity and innovation among performing art students (Braund & Reiss, 2019; Cohen, 2016). As a result, many educational institutions use the fine arts as a medium to establish social and cultural connections (Bennington et al., 2016; Garrison, 1986). Although this practice of using the performing arts as a nexus to civil discourse is not a new concept, Cohen (2016) indicated that many historical artists and composers have used their art to communicate with the public on current social concerns. This type of unrestrained power frightened the dictatorships of the twentieth century in that they informed the public and composers on the importance of keeping civil and political issues out of opera and any other form of art. Throughout educational history, social and cultural relationships produced by the education of the performing arts is a formative force that impacts students' perceptions in scholarly and social interactions (Bell & Desai, 2011; Bennington et al., 2016; Braund & Reiss, 2019; Clark, 2005; Dils & Albright, 2001; Dunstan, 2016; Garrison, 1986; Henderson, 2013; Medina, 2009; Suh, 2013; Verga et al., 2015).

In 2015, Mark Despotakis, the chair of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Advancement for Music Education, published a collection of letters from various people across Pennsylvania on how music education affected their lives. The author received over 1,400 stories from people of various backgrounds, education, professions, ethnicity, and impacts. This collection of letters became the driving force to change educational policy in Pennsylvania to deter school districts from cutting funding of fine art curriculums. One letter from Sandra Wilcox, a registered nurse, provided this answer:

Music education continues to prove to be a lifelong impact. During my school years over 30 years ago, participation in concert band, marching band & small ensembles taught me life skills of how to work with others, how to lead, how to follow, cooperation, concentration, confidence, pride, self-respect, loyalty, how to rise to challenges as well as how to deal with disappointments. (Despotakis, 2015, p.17)

The influence of the arts in education in students is evident (Despotakis, 2015). Guhn et al. (2019) stated that students who learned a musical instrument throughout their educational career not only achieved drastically better assessments but showed almost one academic year of school mastery ahead of their nonmusic peers with respect to their skills in English, math, and science. However, educational systems and their leaders' support for fine arts education has decreased throughout the decades. Branscome (2012) reported that after Sputnik and the space race of the 1960s, the American public and their political representatives feared falling behind the Soviet Union in the space race. This fear caused a political and educational reaction that forced schools to strengthen the instruction of the sciences, forcing educational institution leaders in the United States to allocate and redistribute more resources to the sciences and to mathematics (Hartman, 2008). Educational school leaders in school districts across the nation rebuilt their schools, adding new science labs, updating textbooks, and hiring newly qualified teachers (Branscome, 2012), causing a financial strain in support of fine art programs across the nation. Current educational policies such as No Child Left Behind (2002) and the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2012) also produced significant budget constraints, allowing for the waning of artistic programs (Dunstan, 2016; Wood, 2004). Current researchers have confirmed an increase in academic performance on math and science as an effect of visual and performing art participation (Branscome, 2012; Ward & Muller, 2006).

The reported influence of the fine arts on student achievement is known to lawmakers, and as a result, many state legislators across the United Stated declared the arts as a core subject (Rauduvaite & Lasauskiene, 2015; Yams, 2018). At the federal level, congress members conceived the Educate America Act in 2000; later, President Obama passed the Every Child Achieves Act of 2015. Together, both acts included the fine arts as part of the core academic subjects and declared the arts as a critical component of a well-rounded education (Klein & Ninio, 2018; Vargas, 2017; Zubrzycki, 2016). These acts of legislators caused the Education Commission of the States (2016) and National Association for Music Education (Klein & Ninio, 2018) to declare that every state in the republic would provide an art discipline for instruction at the elementary school levels. However, curriculum concentration shifts and the standard-based reform movement left the visual and performing arts out of the tested areas (Hamilton et al., 2007; Sabol 2012). With all the federal mandates and implementation of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs, the value of the arts in public schools diminished. With changes in curriculum importance, funding for school programs has become an unfair practice (Hamilton et al., 2007). Chapman (2015) attributed funding losses to the fine arts as due to the testing mandates established by the No Child Left Behind legislation and the demands of reaching the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals. Reaching AYP goals designated by the state diverted capital to those materials that are tested to achieve subject literacy. For example, Texas uses the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness as their AYP assessment.

Although researchers and legislators have identified and accepted the fine arts as a vital determinant for educational excellence, accessibility to fine art education programs is not available to numerous low-income students (Puryear & Kettler, 2017). Through a quantitative study, Kettler et al. (2016) analyzed and concluded that student academic difficulties are due to a

dearth of educational resources. Furthermore, Kincheloe (2004, 2010) suggested that lower state test scores and low student performance frequently appear in urban school districts. In comparison to suburban and rural districts, Kincheloe (2010) posited that urban systems of education included more students with a higher concentration of poverty, ethnic diversity, language barriers, and immigration populations (Ahram et al., 2011). To meet the requirements issued by state legislators in state test scores and the demands of budget cuts, many urban schools district principals tend to cut the fine arts from their curricula. Bollow-Tempel (2010) maintained that the accountability campaign of education is keeping students from benefiting from the skills offered through the fine arts.

The support of the fine arts now falls directly to the school administrator. A school administrator must make difficult decisions and compromises to allocate their limited resources while trying to provide students with the most educational opportunities that enhance academic performance. However, Parsons (2009) discovered that teachers of the fine arts believed that their principals viewed the arts as nonbeneficial to students and supported core subjects and athletics over the arts. Because school administrators have a direct influence on curricula implementation, Steinbach (2013) stated that supporters and researchers of art education should consider and understand how school administrators form, change, and support their perceptions of the fine arts. Multiple researchers supported Steinbach's suggestion for research on principals' perception of the fine arts (Efland, 1995; Gibbs, 2018; Ippolito & Adler, 2018; Luehrman, 2002; Urlik, 2017; Wilson, 1997).

A well-rounded education, as deemed by the Every Student Succeeds Act (Jones & Workman, 2016), includes the arts as a vital component to enhance a student's academic performance. Without support from educational administrators, many students, especially in

urban school districts, will have limited student access to the fine arts. A school administrator's perception of the fine arts determines the value of the arts in a school's curriculum. As Efland (1995) stated, "what people believe about art and its value is likely to affect whether it is taught or not" (p. 25).

Statement of the Problem

Economic challenges across the country have forced district and school stakeholders to eliminate the fine arts from the curriculum. A 2012 report published by the Department of Education affirmed that the great recession of the 2000s prompted a reduction of capital for public school fine art programs (Bowen & Kisida, 2019; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). Bowen and Kisida (2019) reported that arts education in the United States has been declining since the 1980s, and the recession of the 2000s decreased monetary support for the fine arts. Moreover, the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) and the later-created Common Core Standards Initiative (2010) appended more budget constraints, causing a shift in administrator focus to concentrate on state-tested core subjects (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Bowen & Kisida, 2019; Hayes et al., 2015; Reyes & Garcia, 2014; Steinbach, 2013). As a result, the nontested fine arts are now often seen as an unimportant elective, especially among the new generation of principals entering the field (Urlik, 2017).

However, researchers who explored the impact of a principal's views and perception of the fine arts indicated that despite budget restrictions or state test scores, a principal's emphatic support of the fine arts decreases the risk of the arts being cut from the school's curriculum (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Bowen & Kisida, 2019; Hayes et al., 2015; Latham, 2014; Reyes & Garcia, 2013; Urlik, 2017). Emphatic support is the physical presence of school leadership in program performances as a method to endorse the importance of the visual and performing arts. Sholl

(2016) described administrators' attendance as a form of social support and how their presence

shows stakeholders the importance of that program. However, the author did not expound on

whether social support prevented fine art programs from being cut; the research indicated that

social support in the arts gave purpose and function to a well-rounded education (Adams, 1993;

Law & Ho, 2004). Nevertheless, it is in rural and low-income schools that there is a decline in

participation or the elimination of the fine arts based on the decisions of the administrator

(Brush, 2014; Elpus, 2013; Shaw, 2018;).

The function and purpose of the fine arts in public schools have been studied thoroughly.

Williams (2016) stated that despite a school's socioeconomic status, an active fine arts program

occurs when the administrators of a school understand the function and purpose of the arts.

Researchers (Adams, 1993; Bruenger, 2009; Chessin & Zander, 2006; Law & Ho, 2004;

Nevanen et al., 2014; Reynolds & Burton, 2017; Reynolds & Valerio, 2017; Upitis, 2003)

discussed how the fine arts are a vital component to increasing learning throughout all academic

areas, as they build the enrichment of neural systems that promote motor skills, creativity, and

enhanced emotional stability. Reynolds and Valerio (2017) and Nevanen et al. (2014) confirmed

that participating in the visual and performing arts increases and encourages social interactions

and self-sustainability, skills that are especially crucial for students of lower socioeconomic

status. Furthermore, arts education functions as a pretraining medium for future leaders.

According to the American Management Association (2019), the skills identified for leaders of

the 21st century are creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. These skills

are what Reynolds and Burton (2017) labeled as skills typical of arts learning pedagogy. Conrad

et al. (2015) further disclosed how arts education provides leadership opportunities for students.

The cancellation of fine art programs in the United States will prevent children from learning

vital innovative problem-solving, social, and leadership skills, as well as the value of group work (Nevanen et al., 2014; Reynolds & Burton, 2017; Shaw, 2018; Singsen, 2010; Williams, 2016).

Many state stakeholders have appointed arts education as a core subject; however, current leaders perceive the arts as a noncore elective, presenting the attitude and disposition that fine arts are a secondary subject to that of math, science, and reading (Ellis, 2018; Steinbach, 2013). As a result, 25% of principals cut arts education, and 33% anticipated future reductions through 2020 (Steinbach, 2013; Williams, 2016). Guindon et al. (2014) believed that reductions caused by dispositions towards the fine arts exist due to the lack of proper leadership training, meaning the inclusion of the performing arts in principal preparation programs. However, psychologists suggested that people develop core values and perceptions through experience by making human connections (Gibson, 1966; Gregory, 1980; Gregory, 1997; Kesberg & Keller, 2018; Marr & Vision, 1982). There is a paucity of information regarding the gradual acquisition of the characteristics and norms that shape a school leader's view of performing art education. By understanding the enculturation of certain norms regarding art education, proper principal leadership training in higher educational institutions may take place. Whether the deterioration of programs comes from budget constraints or not understanding the function of the fine arts, educational administrators and their perceptions are the critical component to support art education (Brush, 2014; Elpus, 2015; Shaw, 2018; Williams, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore how principals' perceptions affect their curricular decision-making regarding the support of fine arts education in rural and urban public schools in West Texas. This study had three aims: The intent is to equip school principals with the knowledge needed to provide various forms of support to existing fine

art programs, provide implementation methods to higher education institutions regarding the inclusion of the arts in principal training programs, and prevent existing programs from being hewed.

Research Questions

The research questions that directed the study are the following:

RQ1. What experiences have West Texas public school principals had with the visual and performing arts?

RQ2. How do West Texas public school principals perceive their role in fine arts education?

RQ3. How do West Texas public school principals perceive the meaning of the phrase "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools?

RQ4. What are the shared values among West Texas public school principals regarding the fine arts?

Definition of Key Terms

The following explanation of terms is to clarify why some expressions were considered critical terms for this study. Foremost, the terms *fine arts*, *arts education*, and *visual and performing arts* are terms used to identify the following: art, band, choir, theatre, dance, and orchestra.

Attribution. Attribution is the manner by which individuals perceive and make judgments (Heider, 1958)

Curriculum. Curriculum is a specific system of assembling content and objectives for meaningful instruction and learning in schools (Walker, 2002)

Curriculum design. Curriculum design is a process detailing all academic activities that influence child development (Chaudhary & Kalia, 2015).

Decision-making. Decision-making is the act of choosing between two or more courses of action (Zollo et al., 2018).

Fine arts education. A fine arts education includes instruction in art, music, and other arts areas that encompass visual, aural, performing, and creative modes of student learning (Law Insider, n.d.).

Perception. Perception is a manner by which people construct and decipher their sensory responses to give purpose to their surroundings (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Fine arts education has progressed since its inception into the public school system in 1821 (Cox, 2018; Whitford, 1923). Throughout the annals of education in the United States, its curriculum included one form of the fine arts (Cox, 2018; Whitford, 1923). Deciding on the school curriculum is based on state and local mandates, policies, and funding from federal, state, and local governments. Inside most public schools in the United States, funding decisions fall upon a district's board of education and their superintendent (Wan et al., 2018). However, the practice of autonomy in school decision-making and curriculum design still falls upon the principals and their school-based decision-making team (Chessin & Zander, 2006; Gullatt, 2008). As head director of the school, the principal's beliefs may affect decisions surrounding funding and curricular issues the school may have (Upitis, 2003).

This qualitative multiple case study includes an aim to identify and ascertain the development of perceptions towards the fine arts in rural and urban public school principals in West Texas. The fine arts provide students the skills for civic engagement, emotional dependency, leadership skills, innovation, and creative assimilation (Chessin & Zander, 2006; Cohen, 2016; Gullatt, 2008; Upitis, 2003). However, changes in federal and state educational policies, including budget restriction, have made the fine arts less accessible to all students (Puryear & Kettler, 2017). As a result, the support of the arts directly falls on the administrator of the institution.

Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature that is pertinent to the core sections of this study. The subsequent review of the literature includes a description of the theoretical framework of the study, containing significant research on attribution theory and Kelly's covariation model. The chapter also includes a discussion of related information on program efficacy in curriculum

design. The next section includes a brief historical summary of school-based decision-making. Following this section, the literature review provides information on school-based decision-making concerning curriculum design, design process, effects on fine arts, perception, and STEM.

I conducted an in-depth search using the Abilene Christian University online library, Academia.edu, and Google Scholar to find relevant literature for this chapter. The strategies applied to find research involved these key search words: *school-based decision-making*, *curriculum design*, *perception*, *attribution theory*, *administrator decision making*, *curriculum design process*, *data decision-making*, *educational decision-making*.

Additionally, within the references of many of these studies, I was able to recognize various related dissertations through ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses and obtain many books published on educational decision-making. The accrual of these resources yielded a solid base by which to conduct this study.

Theoretical Framework Discussion

Heider (1958) began theorizing about attribution and is referred to as the father of attribution theory. Heider (1958) believed that the essence of interpersonal relations revolves around people attributing others' behavior to their own perceptions. As the first to offer a psychological theory of attribution, Heider's colleagues, Weiner (1974, 1986) and Jones and Davis (1965) developed the theoretical framework of attribution theory. Heider (1958) created the theory with the belief that the attributions one makes every day influence people's feelings and how they relate to other people. Heider (1958) proposed that people view others, analyze their behavior, and emanate a common-sense explanation for such actions. For example, is the anger of one person the result of being ill-tempered or because something cruel occurred? So,

how does one attach meaning to personal or others' behavior? Fiske and Taylor's (1991) description of attribution theory indicates that "the social perceiver uses the information to arrive at a causal explanation for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a causal judgment" (p. 23). Zheng et al. (2020) suggested that causality is intrinsically associated with decision-making because it prompts the decision-maker to either predict the future or change the future by determining which variables can affect others.

How do individuals go about trying to explain the efficacy of a program during curriculum design decision-making? Efficacy refers to the beneficial results of a program under optimal delivery (Flay et al., 2005). To understand a program's efficacy, designers of the curriculum need to understand why a program will be effective content in their curriculum. How will the new program contribute to a new system for education that exemplifies reexamined standards rising from the changing social conditions and that articulates certain ambitions for the accomplishments of new learners (Boughton, 2015)?

I used attribution theory to analyze participants' perceptions of how they make decisions about fine arts curriculum. This framework clarifies and defines school leaders' decision-making processes to decide on curriculum content by explaining a program's efficacy through personal factors concerning an individual's self-perception, performance evaluations, and factors relating to the surrounding environments.

Because principals observe program outcomes within the spectrum of the humanities and academic performance, they perceive the causation of outcomes as either organic internal, dispositional attributions or external, circumstantial environmental attributions. The causation of a program's efficacy may very well be a combination of internal or external factors. The portions

of information used determined whether a school leader evaluated a program's efficacy as associated with internal or external factors.

Kelley (1967) described Heider's (1958) attribution approach inside the analysis of variance framework and created a separation among the attributional progression for two kinds of information: information from multiple observations over time and information from a single observation. Kelley's (1967) covariation model (KCM) of attribution theory is a logical model for deciding whether a particular action is an attribute to some dispositional characteristic or situational to the person or the environment. The term covariation indicates that a person has knowledge from varied observations at various points and circumstances and can perceive the covariation of an observed effect and its causes. Kelly (1967) allowed researchers to judge causation through three types of derived knowledge to observe the program's outcomes: distinctiveness, consensus, and consistency. Distinctiveness shows how a program exposes diversity in student attitudes or behaviors across school life; consensus shows if all students respond in the same way as a result of the program, and consistency demonstrates how the program holds the same principles as the school's vision. The KCM was created on the assumption that one uses multiple personal experiences to regulate what variables changed and what has stayed the same in decision-making.

The research of decision-making concerning curricula and program integration connects the evaluation of the program to a specific population of children that it will serve (Boughton, 2015; Frede & Ackerman, 2006). According to Frede and Ackerman (2006), curriculum model developers are concerned with how a curricular model defines teachers' roles and their children in learning and assessment performances. Many decisions for curriculum are made based on data-filled associations with state standards. To create excellence organizationally, the accuracy

of the decision-making must be on point. However, individual perception is an innate force in the decision-making process, which means that any sensory impressions developed over time will give meaning to their environment (Robbins & Judge, 2012). Using attribution theory helps to understand the process of decision-making and direct the literature review.

Literature Review

School-Based Decision-Making and Curriculum

The modern-day school principal is understandably a facilitator of creativity in establishing an educational curriculum and creating an environment of readiness. Regardless of the leadership style of a school administrator, the investment in fine arts in today's modern schools aids students in the skills needed for today's workforce (Braund & Reiss, 2019; Winner & Hetland, 2008). The fine arts provide students the skills for civic engagement, emotional dependency, leadership, innovation, and creative assimilation (Chessin & Zander, 2006; Cohen, 2016; Gullatt, 2008; Upitis, 2003). However, changes in federal and state educational policies, including budget restriction, have made the fine arts less accessible to all students (Puryear & Kettler, 2017).

School-based decision-making is a form of decentralization of decision-making in school systems. Many scholars and practitioners use a variety of terms to represent the concept of localized decisions, including site-based management, shared decision-making, collaborative decision-making, and teacher empowerment. However, decentralization is shared decision-making between the school administrator, teachers, parents, and the community (Lai & Lo, 2006; Robertson & Kwong, 1994).

Lai and Lo (2006) identified decentralization as a variation of deconcentration, delegatory, and devolution processes, suggesting that the participating group makes decisions

that directly impact the school culture and environment. Research indicates that decentralizing allows schools to be responsible for their academic performance, thereby allowing for the development of school culture and stimulating collaborative production (Robertson & Kwong, 1994).

Collaborative academic production, as characterized by Doyle et al. (1991), emphasized that school-based decision-making and its participants, especially the educators, know the students best and are better experts of their needs. Therefore, academic production creates higher teacher job satisfaction and increases educational productivity (Cotton et al., 1988).

There is an extensive body of scholarly works that relates to the function and purpose of the fine arts, and as core subjects in the educational system, they increase student comprehension throughout all academic areas (Adams, 1993; Bruenger, 2009; Law & Ho, 2004; Nevanen et al., 2014; Reynolds & Burton, 2017; Reynolds & Valerio, 2017). However, the future of fine arts programs in schools is in the hands of school officials and administrators (Reynolds & Burton, 2017). Across the United States, many state education department stakeholders have declared the fine arts as an academic core component in a school's curriculum. Nevertheless, stakeholders still view and designate the arts as elective subjects in most public schools (Nevanen et al., 2014; Reynolds & Burton, 2017; Reynolds & Valerio, 2017). Decision-making in curriculum design is a collaboration in which the success of the process occurs when a school offers all aspects of educational subjects, including the fine arts (Carey et al, 2002; Sivan et al., 2019; Uzbekova et al., 2016; Voogt et al., 2016).

Curriculum Decisions That Affect the Arts

A curriculum plan illustrates the purposeful, planned, and systematic organization of educational delivery within a class or course (Lai & Lo, 2006). Its developmental process is a

series of expert discussions surrounding diverse subject matters. These experts consist of

stakeholders within the educational community. Curriculum planning as a progressive force

encompasses continuous change or effective action between people, objects, and events

(Gehlbach, 1990; Rasinski, et al., 2020). This type of community engagement assists in fulfilling

the demands created by the development of a full and all-sided student (Boughton, 2015;

Froebel, 1974). In a survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (2012),

both private school and public school principals acknowledged that curriculum design should be

a collective effort. The results of the survey further indicated that teachers have a significant

influence on curriculum decision-making; nevertheless, the principal still has control over

curriculum planning. Administrators and their curriculum design team face certain obstacles

when making decisions on the integration of fine arts curriculum programs.

Researchers concluded that these obstacles explain the integration of the fine arts with

not enough monetary support (Diaz & McKenna, 2017), existing teacher or administrator

preparation (Huser & Scot Hockman, 2017), and the instructional time to include art education at

a level comparable to STEM subjects (Conley et al., 2014; Rasinski et al., 2020). Therefore,

administrators categorize and see the arts as subjects placed in the "lower rung of the educational

ladder" (Efland, 2002, p. 22). Curriculum experts and administrators with this perception

disregard the needs of fine art students and are more concerned with content than those whom

the content is serving (Boughton, 2015).

STEM Domination

The push for advancing science and technology and the creation of what Grubbs (2014)

called the new space race has led to the rise of the cognitive sciences. The new space race is a

result of National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Commercial Orbital Transportation

Services program. The program leaders subsidized the development and testing for space

exploration from diverse private sector companies, including SpaceX, the Orbital Sciences

Corporation, and XCOR. As a result of the subsidization, Grubbs (2014) stated that these

changes in space exploration are a great opportunity for STEM education across public schools.

The idea of commercialization of space travel and the possibility of building communities on

Mars has sparked a new interest in young students, making way for a new space race (Grubbs,

2014). Like Sputnik and the space race of the 1960s, education has now shifted to a variety of

disciplines focusing on the computer sciences and artificial intelligence. With this new space

race, administrators have the challenge of integrating fine arts education with existing high-

priority curricula disciplines (Dalton, 2016; Gehlbach, 1990).

Curriculum Design and Development

School-based decision-making committees or councils create curriculums through a

series of structured processes to determine changes or new educational offerings. These

committees require organizational structures and governance as a strategy used by managerial

groups to support group-based thinking (Herepath, 2014). Such a strategy unites one of the most

critical aspects of school-based decision-making, its philosophy. The school's goals, objectives,

learning experiences, instructional resources, and assessments will frame the educational

program the committee will offer its students through the establishment of the school's

philosophy (Eisner, 2005; Gurley et al., 2015). Most importantly, the committee represents and

articulates what a student who attends their school will know and can do and will give insight

into how teachers will be supported to achieve educational prowess (Blanchard, 2007).

Most school-based decision-making committees follow curriculum guides to provide the

committee with quality instructions to assist in planning and implementing a proposed

curriculum (Dodd, 2020). These guides are associated with a shared vision and goal, decided upon as a collective unit (Herepath, 2014). It is to say that the school's philosophy is the framework that will affect every aspect of every program presented in the school's educational curricula (Dodd, 2020).

The curriculum guide provides the appropriate relationships or structures to the ongoing development and implementation of a proposed curriculum. The school-based decision-making committee must realize that a curriculum is never concrete. Changes in community, politics, culture, and administration all pose possible changes in a school's educational climate (Kim & Huh, 2015). Dodd (2020) described the process of curriculum design as planning towards a defined performance outcome. Most importantly, it creates a "holistic plan for the environments where learning happens" (Dodd, 2020, p. 2). Kim and Huh (2015) inquired about the effects of the environment, specifically the external environment, impacting decision-making. Further, internal human interactions also create changes within group dynamics (Kim & Huh, 2015). The committee members must then accept all the possibilities of changes and the causes of these changes (Bai & Chang, 2015; George et al., 2016).

A school's curriculum design and primary goal must align content with consistency based on child growth and development and educational philosophy, must include a professional development link, and must be results-focused (Dodd, 2020). Thus, the design process must start with the end in mind (Dodd, 2020; Eisner, 2005). Figure 1 shows the elements of curricular design with the end in mind (Dodd, 2020, p. 2).

Figure 1

Curriculum Design Versus Instructional Design
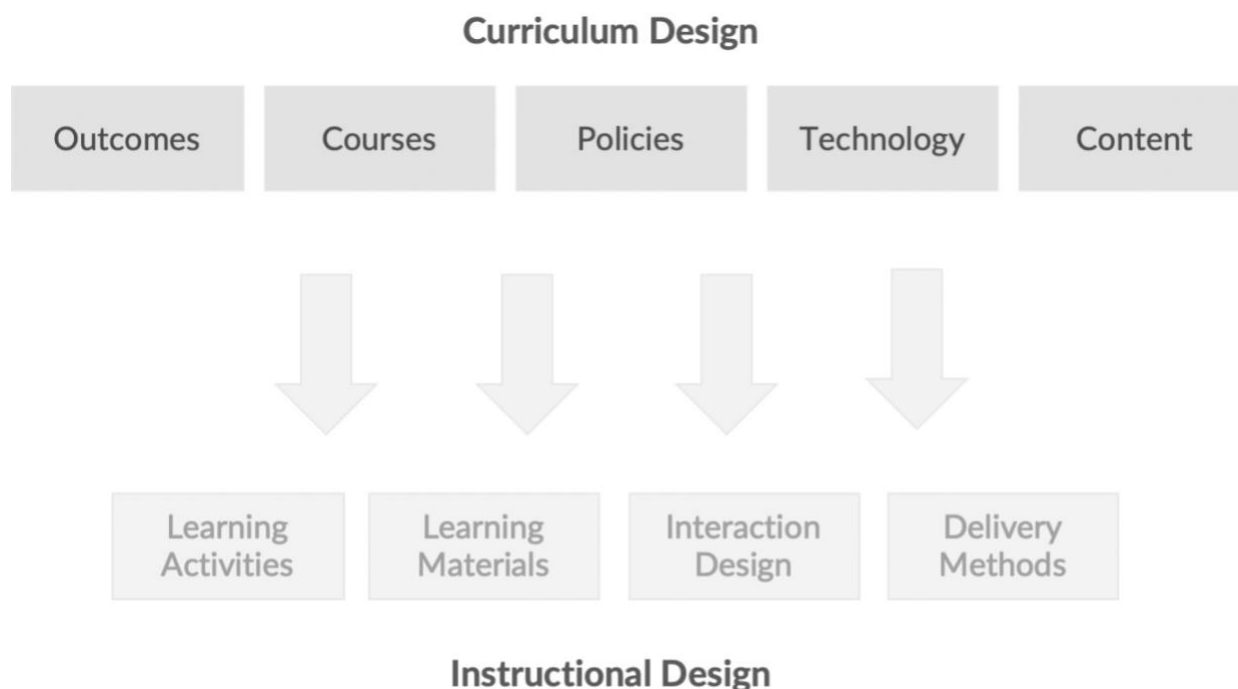
Note. From "Curriculum design processes," by B. J. Dodd, in J. K. McDonald and R. E. West (Eds). *Design for Learning: Principles, Processes, and Praxis*, 2020, EdTech Books (https://edtechbooks.org/id/curriculum_design_process). CC-BY-NC

The development of a curriculum guide is a multistep ongoing and recurring process (Jacobs & Johnson, 2004). This process works in evaluating an existing program, improving programs, or implementing any new program. Many school districts across the United States that do not implement a backward design use the traditional curriculum development process model. Figure 2 shows the traditional process of curriculum design (Mooney & Mausbach, 2008).

Figure 2

Components of an Effective Curriculum Development Process
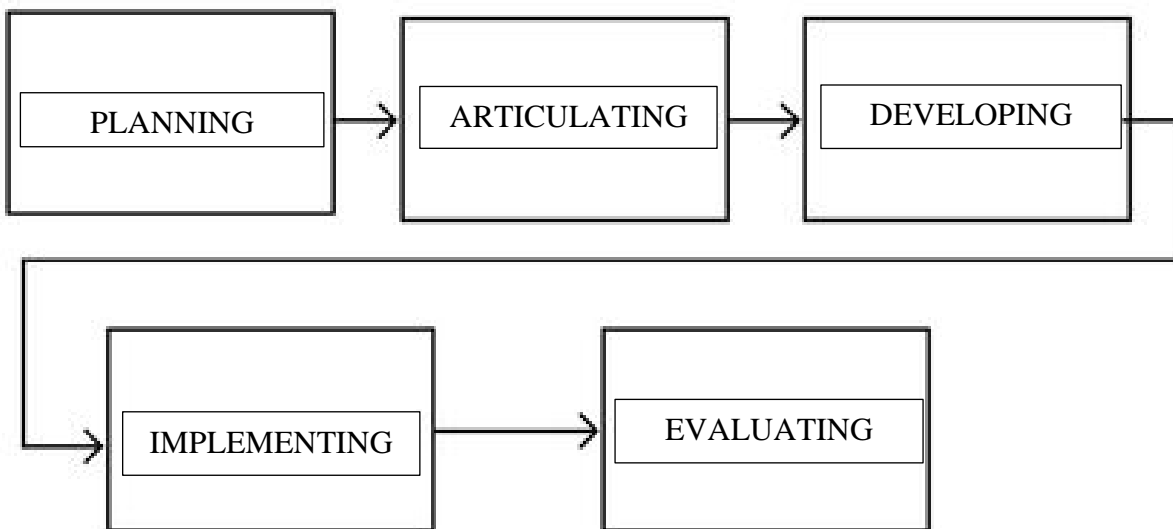
Note. This figure demonstrates the components of an effective curriculum development process. The data are from "Align the Design: A Blueprint for School Improvement," by N. J. Mooney and A. T. Mausbach, 2008, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Copyright 2008 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Backward Design

Wiggins and McTighe (2012) developed the backward design method in course curriculum design. The authors first identified the desired outcomes and then the goals or objectives to achieve an outcome. According to Reynolds and Kearns (2017), Wiggins and McTighe (2012) created the appropriate assessments and activities that promote and are based on the desired outcomes. This curriculum design method promotes learning environments that empower teachers and students (Reynolds & Kearns, 2017). Kelting-Gibson (2005) compared the traditional curriculum design model to that of Wiggins and McTighe's (2012) backward design model and found that the students instructed in the backward design curriculum scored

higher than the traditional group. However, Cho and Trent (2005) stated that "the field of the curriculum has paid little attention to this backward concept and its accompanying theoretical assumptions" (p. 106). Estrada et al. (2018) stated that backward design creates the idea of teaching to the test. Most importantly, Estrada et al. (2018) showed that teachers' planning approach in a backward curriculum design did not match their lesson plans.

Decision-Making in K–12 Education

Alvino and Franco (2017) in a study of decision-making processes argued that decision-making in general is a rational procedure. The authors explained that the art of decision-making is constructed when there is a balance between a person's behavior and rational decisions' outcomes. Alvino and Franco (2017) addressed both the physiological and physiognomic aspects of individual decision-making processes by addressing the emotional aspect of individuality. In their study, they provided an analysis of current models that have established decision-making parameters. Alvino and Franco (2017) suggested that these existing models only examine the exogenous and endogenous variables, and as a result, are based on rationality. The exclusion of emotional components and the inability to integrate and explain the concept of emotions in decision-making may have erroneous consequences in decision-making. Making decisions based on emotional, cognitive realities causes cognitive distortions, as proposed by Cristofaro (2017).

Academic interest in the process of decision-making focuses on the development of quality control tools to mitigate the effects of emotional distortions in decision-making. Like Alvino and Franco (2017), Cristofaro (2017) noted that many scholars had dismissed the value of psychological instruments for explaining the role of decision-makers' personality and emotionality in the decision-making process. Fields (2015) proposed that certification programs, like principalships for education, are mostly concerned with leadership concepts and not on

management. Principal training in certification programs directs candidates to the actions and behaviors that inspire employees and provide vision and direction; according to Fields (2015), this training is results-oriented behaviors.

These certification programs may focus on the awareness of innate constructs that affect the management of existing biases. Principal preparation programs must include development of the management of racial, cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity of the student body and educational staff to develop school leaders that meet the needs of today's social concerns (Jones & Ringler, 2017). According to Jones and Ringler (2017), teaching self-management and learning how to control decision-making with emotional constructs create environments of bias awareness. Bazerman and Tenbrunsel (2011) addressed the field of behavioral ethics, a field that includes analysis of the behavior of people in ethical quandaries. Studying the psychological processes during events that require ethical decision-making, moral biases, and emotionality comes into play. The push for the advancement of STEM subjects, as reported by Grubbs (2014), creates a decision-making conundrum for curriculum designers in the way of controlling emotional constructs. Boughton (2015) stated that the curriculum's virtue is a decision made about each of the components. The most significant one is to bond features of the curriculum and the general vision fashioned by the collection of decisions in the present-day social and educational context.

What researchers such as Cristofaro (2017) and Alvin and Franco (2017) indicated is the existence of cognitive bias among all stakeholders (Azeska et al., 2017; Conway & Calzi, 1996; Lindle, 1996;). Cognitive bias (CB) distorts how people see the world. In decision-making, CB clouds the decision-maker with prior experiences and knowledge that may complicate the decision-making process. It represents established patterns of thinking that restrain new or

creative thinking by provoking the decision-maker to disregard the subtleties that make a situation for a decision unique. Streeb et al. (2018) stated that CB does not let one see the world as it is; instead, one sees the prior experiences, knowledge, and beliefs. When one compounds and adds biases together, both individually and collectively, it creates various effects (Brainard, 2016). Conway and Calzi (1996) confirmed the concept of self-serving when people make decisions as inherently innate. Azeska et al. (2017) asserted that leadership decision-making is a projection of one's personality, and within a group, individuals build connections based on the inherent expectations of mutually beneficial exchanges based on support and responsibility.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Increased accountability created by the No Child Left Behind Act (2010) has augmented the use of data-driven decision-making (DDDM) to pinpoint areas of improvement and assess the effectiveness of programs and practices (Wholstetter, et al., 2008). DDDM is the progression of constructing organizational judgements grounded on actual data rather than intuition or observation alone (Schifter, et al., 2014). According to Schildkamp (2019), DDDM-practicing schools have experienced an increase in student learning and achievement. Schifter et al. (2014) indicated that without the use of data, partiality and untruthful postulations may cloud judgment and lead to poor decision-making. However, Schifter et al. (2014) found that 58% of their respondents admitted to not using data in their decision-making but that they relied on gut feel or intuition."

Decision-making in schools today collects different types of data, giving a school leader the ability to implement improvement based on needs. Pak and Desimone (2019) asserted that DDDM may transform educational leadership and sequentially change instruction and learning. The ability to use data for decision-making in the curriculum allows the calibration and

identification of necessary elements of curricula to increase the full and all-sided student (Boughton, 2015; Froebel, 1974). However, Pak and Desimone (2019) reported that the use of DDDM is an intimidating practice, especially for those without data analysis experience. Most importantly, the intimidating feedback it provides reveals leaders' vulnerabilities. However, Wholstetter et al. (2008) posited that training in the analysis of data for use in improvement and creation of new programs, including fine art programs and various goals in curriculum design, may be evaluated to determine a program's worth.

Decision-Making and Perception

Psychologists have stated that fundamental convictions and dogmas mature before a person reaches the age of five (Otara, 2011). Without any great deal of change, every experience forward remains in the subconscious. Otara (2011) explained that the process of perception starts with a sensory experience of a surrounding and how the acknowledgment of the surrounding stimuli creates actions in response to that stimulus. Moreover, Otara (2011) asserted, "Perception creates our experience of the world around us; it allows us to act within our environment" (p. 22). According to Morris and Stuckhard (1977), perceptions created by lived experiences causes development of attitudes towards that experience. In turn, these attitudes cast the effectiveness of the working atmosphere (Otara, 2011). Leaders are, in any organization, trusted to perform the organizational objectives without making careless decisions. Truong et al. (2020) showed how personal values are shaped by cultural, environmental, and ideological forces, such as religion, political ideology, and worldly constructs, which serve as cognitive guides for social and leadership behavior (Truong et al., 2017). Otara (2011) stated that a leader must be able to manage their preconceived perceptions before the influence of external factors creates long term judgments.

One significant factor in managing perceptions is that no two people will perceive the world in the same way or experience an event similarly (Burnkrant & Page, 1984; Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Oliverio-Oliveri, 2016; Otara, 2011). According to Buchanan and Huczynski (2017), leaders must desist from executing opinions about events or people by collecting enough information to avoid speculations about specific experiences (Ellis, 2018). Buchanan and Huczynski (2017) stated that if negative perceptions develop, leaders can quickly divide others by confounding the impact of actions. Therefore, leaders must develop self-awareness by comprehending personal biases (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2017; Ellis, 2018). A study done by the Cornell University of Industrial and Labor Relations (2010) indicated that leaders who possess self-awareness, meaning they are aware of weaknesses and biases, were the most influential and had the most success. Further, Ashley and Reiter-Palmon (2012) stated that changes may be made by the development of self-awareness in thought and interpretation of the mind. According to the authors, change in interpretations in one's mind allows a change in emotion.

Summary

The future of fine arts programs in schools is in the hands of school officials and administrators (Reynolds & Burton, 2017). Decision-making in curriculum design is a collaboration in which the success of the processes occurs when a school offers all aspects of educational subjects, including the fine arts (Carey et al., 2002; Kadyjrova et al., 2020; Uzbekova et al., 2016; Voogt et al., 2016). Administrators and stakeholders view the fine arts' importance in the curriculum as secondary nonintellectual subjects (Brouillette, 2009; Efland, 2002). From the space race of the 1960s to the new space race described by Grubbs (2014), principals and school-based decision-making groups have been forced to place support in STEM education. In school organizations, STEM education is integral to the academic planning for

education, and DDDM is a rational process directed by numbers, something that fine arts programs have difficulty producing. However, much literature is available on the importance of fine arts and the collaboration of decision-making on its inclusion. From a perceptive view, fundamental convictions and dogmas create peoples' experience of the world and allow people to act within their environments. The push for STEM education is a deterrent for supporting fine art programs. DDDM, as pushed by the No Child Left Behind Act, creates nonorganic management of comprehensive education, meaning that STEM is the centerpiece of community learning.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The study included a qualitative multiple case study design to explore how principals'

perceptions affect their curricular decision-making regarding the support of fine arts education in

rural and urban public schools in West Texas. McMillan (2013) stated that the qualitative

method provides knowledge concerning the human side of an issue: the often-conflicting

behaviors, beliefs, ideas, sentiments, and associations of individuals. The research questions that

directed the study are the following:

RQ1. What experiences have West Texas public school principals had with the visual and

performing arts?

RQ2. How do West Texas public school principals perceive their role in fine arts

education?

RQ3. How do West Texas public school principals perceive the meaning of the phrase

"supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools?

RQ4. What are the shared values among West Texas public school principals regarding

the fine arts?

The overall purpose of this study is to equip school principals with the knowledge needed

to provide various forms of support to existing fine art programs and to provide implementation

methods to higher education institutions regarding the inclusion of the arts in principal training

programs.

Chapter 3 includes the methodological procedures used for this study. The procedures

include the research design and methodology, approaches to data collection, the population and

setting, data collection, and data analysis. The chapter also provides the assumptions, limitations,

and delimitations. A succinct summary concludes the chapter.

Research Design and Method

I chose the multiple case study approach because of the nature of the investigation within this study. The goal of the qualitative multiple case study is to understand the similarities and differences between each case (Stake, 2006). Since the multiple case study is a collection of individual case studies, Stake (2006) proposed that the field researcher should employ one's mental energy on each case as if it is the only one, then see it as a collective whole. Within each case, an individual is the locus of the study, or as Yin (2015) called it, the primary unit of analysis. Because of the units' individuality, meaning the diverseness of thoughts and feelings, the information collected embodies the uniqueness of each unit's perception (Gerring, 2006). All relevant participants selected for the study brought an unprecedented array of data based on the personal idiosyncrasy bounded together by the primary goal of finding the reason for a phenomenon (Hayes et al., 2015). These idiosyncrasies are based on habitual behaviors and predispositions established by basic emotions since birth (Goodwin, 2018). Yin (2015) stated that in-depth semistructured interviews in the case study method are best suited for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences.

This study involved the responses of public school principals in West Texas. McMillan (2013) stated that the interview would ensure and attain the "deepest possible understanding of the problem, a greater depth, and richness of information" (p. 167). According to Merriam (2009) Multiple case study methodology includes interviews because they are adjustable, enabling an in-depth examination of small sample sizes and putting the center of research on the beliefs and viewpoints of the shareholders. Further, it provides abundant, descriptive findings from video-recorded interviews (McMillan, 2013). The unification of the data, triangulation, provided a more comprehensive picture of the results (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Stake (1995) stated that case study is an inquiry of a collective case, designed to ascertain the complexity of the object of study. In this study, I examined the gradual acquisition of the characteristics and norms that shape perceptions among public school principals, using a qualitative multiple case study method bridged together and maintaining deep connections to core values (Merriam, 2009). Using in-depth semistructured interviews, I acquired information regarding the person or persons involved in the study. Speaking to people on a one-on-one basis allowed the participants to elaborate on ideas and provide both expected and unexpected information. Seeking to understand the effect of perception towards the fine arts in school-based decision-making in public school principals served as the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis.

There is a paucity of information regarding the gradual acquisition of the characteristics and norms that shape a school leader's view of performing arts education. It is essential to understand the acquisitions of perception and certain norms regarding the fine arts to properly understand principal leadership through school-based decision-making and curriculum design. The underpinning drive to each case study is bounded within the concepts of time and activity (Stake, 2006). What made this study a multiple case study is grounded in the concept of how time and activity (Stake, 2006) differed between each school principal. According to Elpus (2015), budget reductions for many public school programs occur at specific times throughout the year, mainly at the beginning of the year or at the end of the school year. Whether the deterioration of programs comes from budget constraints or not understanding the function and purpose (Brush, 2014; Elpus, 2015; Shaw, 2018; Williams, 2016) of the fine arts, educational administrators' actions, forced or by choice, determine leadership decision-making.

Population

An initial investigation started with exploring the curriculum of West Texas public school districts to identify the specific population for this study. The population for this study included elementary, middle, and high school public school principals in West Texas. For this study, I identified West Texas based on the Texas Education Agency website school regions. Upon further review of Texas Education Agency's map, Regions 18 and 19 provided a well-defined group of public school principals.

According to the Texas Comptroller, West Texas covers about 39,800 square miles, and it is home to seven healthy communities: Abilene, Amarillo, El Paso, Lubbock, Midland, Odessa, and San Angelo. However, this study was open to 16 counties in Region 18 and 19, of which Lubbock, Amarillo, San Angelo, and Abilene are not a part. Of the many essential characteristics of West Texas, the El Paso, Midland, and Odessa area is a gateway to Mexico and beyond. The Texas Economic Development Corporation listed this region of Texas as the home to one of the largest bilingual workforces affecting the region's commerce, education, and lifestyle.

Study Sample

This study included purposeful sampling to select the participants for the study. According to McMillan (2013), in purposeful sampling, individuals are selected based on the characteristics of a population and the study's objective. The Texas Education Agency's (2020) AskTED directory provided a list of Region 18 and Region 19 school principals. I obtained the email addresses for these potential participants through the AskTED directory website, and they are publicly available (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

I contacted all Region 18 and 19 principal databases using my ACU student email account. The email included a brief introduction, explained the purpose of the study, approximated how long the interview would last, and included a brief demographics questionnaire as an attachment (please see Appendix A). The questionnaire data determined the principal's eligibility of meeting the inclusion criteria. The criteria were that principals determined as possible participants must lead in schools with one or fewer courses in fine arts in their course offerings and participate in leading curriculum decisions in a school-based decision-making environment. These inclusion criteria helped ensure that the individuals who participated could provide the study with the information necessary to address the research questions (Keung et al., 2020). I recruited 10 participants to increase the probability of data saturation (Seidman, 2013).

Study Procedures

After choosing 10 participants meeting the criteria, I sent a second email with an informed consent form and possible dates to schedule the video conferences (please see Appendix B). When scheduling occurred and the participant signed the informed consent form, on the day of the interview I reminded the participants that I recorded the interview and that their identities were kept confidential, both in the video and during the results (please see Appendix C). Further, I told them that they may quit at any time during the interview. I gave a copy of the interview questions to the participants before the interviews. Upon completing the interviews, I reviewed the responses, transcribed them, and then analyzed them. I safely stored all recorded interviews on my computer where they would only be accessible via a secure server.

Materials and Instruments

The instrumentation was conceptualized and measured through an online questionnaire, an online interview, and field notes. I generated the five-question demographic questionnaire online using the Survey Monkey website. According to McMillan (2013) and Neville et al. (2016), the online approach to gathering data is becoming the standard approach for gathering information. I used the questionnaire as the medium to determine which participants met the inclusion criteria. Patton (2015) illustrated that the questionnaire captures a moment in time, a specific individual trait that will give information related to the demography. Please see Appendix D for the demographics questionnaire.

After selecting participants through the online questionnaire, I utilized the interview approach as a direct verbal interaction to gather data (McMillan, 2013). I created the interview questions to respond to the research questions that drove the study. The alignment between the interview questions and the research questions ensured the line of questioning confirmed the study's purpose. Creating questions with this type of connection helped capture the complexity of people's experiences. Castillo-Montoya (2016) stated that the purpose of interviewing originates with the notion of comprehending other individuals' lived experiences and the meaning of those experiences. The questions I chose to direct to participants unraveled the complex judgments with sensitivity and aided participants in telling their stories one level at a time.

With each question, I intended to capture whether the participants viewed aspects of their experiences from a structural perspective, which means a contemplative answer based on a sociological view (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). While the research questions guided my study's purpose, the interview questions' tone and language (please see Appendix E) made them accessible to the participants (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The interview questions are

semistructured and open ended to ensure that the participant gave long, detailed personal responses (Leavy, 2017; McMillan, 2013). The content of the questions allowed me to determine the effects of perceiving the fine arts in curricular design. I designed each question to determine a participant's knowledge, collegiate training, and experience relative to the subject in the study. I selected the open-ended question approach to probe and ask additional inquiries for further information and clarification. I conducted all interviews online using Zoom, Google Meets, or Facetime. These online tools allowed me to conduct the interviews in a virtual face-to-face environment.

The systematic use of field notes served as a model to describe and observe the online interviews in my written mechanics (Leavy, 2017; McMillan, 2013; Patton, 2015); field notes are one method of shorthand. According to Patton (2015), there is no correct way of making field notes because each setting for the study determines the organization of individual work habits. I used the field notes to record direct participant quotations, reactions to the described experiences, and "reflections about the personal meaning and significance" of what was observed (Patton, 2015, p. 388). Further, I used field notes to jot down words or phrases that struck me as significant (Leavy, 2017).

Field Testing

A field test is a strategy used to determine the accuracy of and to provide a run-through of the data collection instrument (Leavy, 2017). According to Leavy (2017), researchers use field tests to check for the data collection tool's validity and to check whether the tool gathers the information queried. A qualitative researcher would identify any problems experienced by respondents during the actual study (Simon & Goes, 2011). The field test was necessary for this

study because I used a demographic questionnaire and semistructured open-ended interview questions.

A field test panel chosen consisted of three school principals who participated in the field test, and all met the study protocols. Simon and Goes (2011) noted that a field test or pilot study is useful when the "sample size of 10-20% of the sample size for the actual study" is a feasible number of participants to enroll in the field test (p. 183). The field test's main focus was to determine any ambiguities or if the respondents had any difficulty in responding, both to the demographic survey and to the interview questions. As Simon and Goes (2011) suggested, consistency in obtaining the study's information is vital to ensure the research instrument's validity.

All three principals provided consent and agreed to participate in the field test. I contacted the principals through email using the primary study protocols for sampling. I administered the field test virtually through Google Meet. All three principals took the demographic survey and scheduled a Google Meet interview programmed the same day. Before the interview began, I informed the participants that none of their personal information would be used in the study and that their participation in the field test was to determine whether the demographic survey and interview questions are well designed. As suggested by Simon and Goes (2011), the researcher should invite the participants to comment on each question's perceived relevance to the research's stated intent.

Of the three principals that participated in the field test, Principal 3 had the most impact on developing and shaping the interview questions and their direction. It is imperative to state that the interview questions created lacked inquiries regarding a person's upbringing. The course of this particular field test led to a discussion of the principal's childhood experience, including

the experience he believed helped shape him. Coming from a small town outside of Mexico City, he recalled how his community regarded farm work as an acceptable, respectful way to help his community sustain a humble living. However, growing up during new technology innovation with its influence in society, his ambition to become something more drove his desire to go to college.

Growing up, he recollected no organized sports or community teams in his town, no mandatory city schools, no private schools, no buses, just farmland, a couple of stores, and a one-hour drive to Mexico City if one wanted to have any of the prior items. For entertainment, he remembered running as his main form of play. His friends in some neighboring towns would get together after farm work to have sprint races and see "which town had the fastest kids." He was good at it; he was too good. Eventually, track and cross country was how he became the University of Texas at El Paso's all-American track star.

When I asked him about music in his youth, he said some interesting things. The small town did have musicians, as that was a form of entertainment for the farm town. However, the principal mentioned that community members looked down upon most musicians as the town's lowest occupation and only respected them for the town's nightlife. So, in his reflections, he did not see the arts as an essential aspect of his upbringing.

Further, he alleged that his focus on sports and academics was paramount during the first several years of his assistant principalship. However, his mentor gave him some advice saying that neither sports nor academics keep students coming to their schools. The mentor suggested that the fine arts and the arts' availability in the curriculum kept students coming and engaged in schools. According to the mentor, a principal supporting the arts is paramount for the success of

the school. This talk of the participant's past and influences made me realize the importance of asking questions regarding a person's upbringing.

After all the interviews, the principals provided suggestions to wording in some of the questions to allow for follow-up inquiries. All three principals advised that Questions 4, 5, 6, 9, and 13 needed revisions to allow the participant to expound on the answer. To their suggestions, the rewording of these questions would improve the responses by encouraging deep interconnected thoughts regarding past experiences. Principal 3 encouraged me to ask about a participant's upbringing and add more questions concerning that topic.

The field test showed that only changes to interview questions were needed to achieve data collection instrument validity. Some participants had difficulty answering the questions with an open-ended response, which as Simon and Goes (2011) suggested, a field test would reveal. As a result of the field test and the panel's advice, Questions 4, 5, 6, 9, and 13 are reworded and modified as open-ended inquiries.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

As Creswell (2013) noted, diverse qualitative approaches focus on a particular type of data. Given the progress of today's technology, video-based remote observations are viable instruments to utilize (Terrel, 2016).

Interviews Via Video

Gill et al. (2008) stated that qualitative interview sessions "should be conducted in areas free from distractions and suitable for participants" (p. 293). Kvale (1996) concluded that a participant's home is the best environment to give interviews because the participant has control in familiar surroundings. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, open-ended interviewing via internet video recording conference was the preferred method for conducting

one-on-one interviews. Using such platforms as Zoom, Google Meet, and FaceTime served as the primary data collection for this study. Interviewing via the internet allowed for what Kvale (1996) described as the participant's comfortability to express thoughts and experiences between researcher and interviewee.

The interviewing process lasted between 45–60 minutes to ensure meaningful dialogue and participant responses. However, due to the field test changes and restructuring of the interview questions, a possible second interview might have been needed to achieve information saturation. I notified participants of the possible scheduling for the second interview before starting the first interview. Using a semistructured interview approach, I adhered to the use of an interview protocol to guide the interview with the ability to probe answers for more detail. Semistructured interviews are a rigid style of conversation that helped target the specific phenomenon or experience I investigated; however, they incorporate the quality of daily conversations (Smith & Osborn, 2015). The use of a semistructured interview gave a great deal of flexibility to probe the interviewee for more details within the scope of internal thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

I documented each interview session using the Zoom, Google Meet, or FaceTime recording option. This feature ensured that I captured all the dialogue from the interview.

Video Transcription

According to Bailey (2008), data collection for a qualitative case study may include audible and visual data. The data "are transcribed into written form so that they can be studied in detail, linked with analytic notes and/or coded" (Bailey, 2008, p. 127). I used Scribie, a professional video player transcription service, to transcribe any video or audio files. Scribie is an online transcription service that meets all security compliance requirements as mandated by

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and General Data Protection Regulation. Upon receiving the transcriptions, I reviewed them for accuracy to prepare for the identification of themes and codes. The process for Scribie included the use of field notes taken during the interview process. According to McMillan (2013), written field notes are observations, descriptions, and interpretations of the study's interviews. The use of field notes allowed me to analyze the raw data to address the research problem.

Analyzing qualitative data relies on the researcher's analytic and integrative talents and a personal understanding of the social circumstances related to the data provided (Schilling, 2006). Through the process of coding or categorizing, a reduction of information is necessary to identify significant patterns to make meaning, followed by a logical chain of evidence from the vast amounts of data (Wong, 2008). According to Wong (2008), coding and categorizing is the most crucial stage in the analysis process. Saldaña (2013) recognized three coding types: in vivo, pattern, and process coding. Both Saldaña (2013) and Leavy (2017) stated that the in vivo coding approach relies on using the participants' exact language to generate codes. This type of coding is essential to the study because I interviewed principals to gather information vital to establishing authenticity.

Traditionally, qualitative researchers manually coded themes with colored pens and subsequently cut and sorted data. Given the progress of software technology, electronic methods of coding data are popular among qualitative researchers. This study incorporated the NVivo software to assist in data analysis. The developer of NVivo is QSR International from Melbourne, Australia, one of the largest qualitative research software developers. According to Wong (2008), this software not only codes, sorts, and retrieves data; it also "integrates coding with qualitative linking, shaping, and modeling" (p. 16).

Trustworthiness

Rubin and Babbie (2005) stated that quantitative methodology provides concepts and procedures to researchers on how to deal with objectivity. Guidelines such as reliability, validity, and strategy are concepts by which researchers in quantitative methods conduct their research. Social science researchers under the quantitative umbrella view validity and reliability as the primary means of ascertaining rigidity. However, Morgan and Drury (2003) asserted that validity and reliability are not applicable standards for establishing rigor in qualitative studies. To ensure the quality of a study, Connelly (2016) asserted that confidence, interpretation, and methods used in qualitative research are the validity and reliability equivalences of the qualitative world. Trustworthiness in a qualitative study comprises procedures to establish and better understand the rigidity of the study. Amin et al. (2020) suggested establishing quality in a qualitative study; the study must conform to each criterion of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

This study showed trustworthiness by establishing credibility and confirmability. I established the truth of the research findings through triangulation to show the credibility of the conclusions. Denzin (1978) insisted that by using multiple triangulation forms in a study, social scientists might reveal propositions that allow for innovation and affirmation (pp. 32–33). According to Patton (2015), data triangulation encompasses the gathering of data through different sampling approaches such as collecting data at distinctive times, in special contexts, or from diverse people.

Researcher's Role

I have worked as an educator for 10 years of my life, and I am very aware of the background of supporting the fine arts. However, my role in this study was strategic—from an

outside view, more of an objective viewer. I did not know any of the study participants, which created a greater degree of objectivity.

Ethical Considerations

I followed all Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines and requirements after obtaining approval from Abilene Christian University's IRB before collecting data (see Appendix F). Informed consent in this study covered the following: the purpose of data collection, who the information is for, the handling of responses, and confidentiality (Patton, 2015).

Responses from participants were confidential, as well as the participants' identities and their respective institutions. I assigned pseudonyms to maintain that confidentiality. I deleted all collected and reviewed data, including electronic data such as interview recordings, after the study was published.

According to the IRB's obligation for informed consent, I informed participants through email of the purpose of this research and the benefits this research may contribute. Because I used human subjects for my study, the use of confidentiality ensured reliability and validity. Qualitative researchers are more concerned with truth than action; thus, it was more manageable to protect the identity of informants or study settings when doing research (Patton, 2015).

Assumptions

Assumptions in a qualitative study are not within the control of the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2011). For this multiple case study, I identified the assumptions of principal perceptions of the fine arts and their effect on curriculum decision-making through the validity of the data collection methods, interview integrity, and interpretation of data. I assumed that the data collection method used in this study adhered to the validity, reliability, and the triangulation of the data to provide a credible study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I assumed that the interviews

administered created accurate and impartial responses from the participants. I assumed that the coding of data and themes formally set up trustworthiness with readers.

Limitations

I acknowledge several limitations. The study was limited to public school principals in the western region of Texas who currently led a school with no or one fine arts program in their respective schools. According to Bryant (n.d.) and Denscombe (2007), the interview process has certain limitations. There is an invariable risk that the researcher may influence the interviewee's responses consciously or unconsciously towards preferred answers. Bryant (n.d.) further stated that the examiner's personal beliefs might modify the interview's integrity. Riley (2010) asserted that both verbal and nonverbal cues from the interviewer have enough influence to introduce biases in the participant's answers. As a result, Newton (2010) declared that participants might answer with the notion of "what they think the interviewer wants to hear" (p. 5). While interviews are a standard method, several evaluations and questions regarding their application, including the lack of transparency in sampling procedures, selection of questions, and mode of analysis, have been reported.

Delimitations

The delimitations are those features in the study that limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study (Simon & Goes, 2011). They are the controlled factors selected by the researcher (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). Placing boundaries on a study assures that the study remains moderate in scope and prevents the study from having too many objectives (Simon & Goes, 2011; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). This study is bounded geographically and by sample population. Initially, this study confined itself to questioning public school principals within the Texas Educators Association's educational territory of Region 18 and Region 19.

Geographically, in the study I focused on rural and urban areas within the regions stated. The common characteristics of rural areas include small communities or scattered settlements with limited shopping markets and social services that are miles from a metropolitan area and that include an economy that relies on agriculture, natural resources, or tourism (Off, 2017). According to Off (2017), students of schools in rural areas tend to have less access to the arts as a formal part of the school's curriculum. Similarly, schools within the urban limits with a high population of low socioeconomic students also have less chance of offering the arts within their curriculums (Puerto, 2018).

The study sample population, a delimitation due to the geographical area chosen, required me to select principals bound by the rural and urban definitions listed above and the school curriculum and the number of art programs their schools offered. The number of art programs was limited to either zero art programs or one program offered.

Summary

Using a qualitative multiple case study design was not only appropriate for this study, but it was also the best choice for answering the research questions. The purpose of the study was to explore how a principal's perception affects their curricular decision-making regarding the support of fine arts education in rural and urban public schools in West Texas. This chapter included a description of the design and method employed to answer the research questions. A review of the procedures, participants, and data collection methods defined the specifics of how the study was directed. I applied a qualitative multiple case study methodology to develop an understanding of how a principal's perception of the fine arts affects curriculum decision-making in West Texas public schools. Chapter 4 includes a discussion of my findings.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore how principals' perceptions affect their curricular decision-making regarding the support of fine arts education in rural and urban public schools in West Texas. This chapter includes findings utilizing document review and individual interviews to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What experiences have West Texas public school principals had with the visual and performing arts?

RQ2. How do West Texas public school principals perceive their role in fine arts education?

RQ3. How do West Texas public school principals perceive the meaning of the phrase "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools?

RQ4. What are the shared values among West Texas public school principals regarding the fine arts?

The organization of this chapter has three segments. The first segment provides an overview of the participants and the use of the instruments for data analysis. Research questions organize the second segment, and the findings are presented to answer each question. I cyclically revisited the data multiple times and triangulated to identify recurring and emerging themes that are articulated in the final segment of the chapter.

Overview of Participants and Data Analysis

This study included the use of a qualitative multiple case study. The multiple case study design enabled each case to be examined and analyzed as integrated systems and then triangulated to collect in-depth information (Stake, 2006). Each case was studied and understood in depth to discover each participant's "self-centering, complexity, and situational uniqueness, giving little immediate attention" to the target phenomenon of the study (Stake, 2006, p. 6). The

individuality of each participant brings the motives, attitudes, beliefs, and values as the human

conditioning that categorically bounds each participant. For the study, I examined 10 principals'

perceptions throughout West Texas school Region 18 and Region 19.

I emailed 235 candidates across Region 18 and 19 that invited them to fill out a survey

via SurveyMonkey to ascertain eligibility and study prerequisites. The survey collected school

demographics, participant demographics, and curriculum demographics. Of the 235 emails sent,

98 principals filled out the survey, and 10 participants qualified and were inclined to participate

in the case study. I acquired consent through an electronic signature consent form transmitted

through email. I then conducted each interview using Zoom's virtual forum with each participant.

I recorded each interview for transcription purposes and transcribed it using Scribie. After the

verbatim transcription, I used NVivo coding software for data analysis to find emerging themes

from all data collected.

Table 1 shows an overview of the participants' school demographics, number of years

teaching at their schools, current fine arts curriculum offered, and their schools' locations.

Table 1

Participant Profiles

Participant	Current type of school and number of years leading	Fine art available	School location
Participant 1	Elementary 2 years	Choir	Rural
Participant 2	Combined 1 year	Band (7–12 grade)	Rural
Participant 3	Combined 2 years	General music	Rural
Participant 4	Elementary 3 years	Art	Rural
Participant 5	Elementary 1 year	After school art	Urban
Participant 6	Elementary 2 years	General music	Rural
Participant 7	Combined 3 years	Band	Rural
Participant 8	Middle 3 years	Band	Rural
Participant 9	Elementary 3 years	General music	Rural
Participant 10	Middle 1 year	General music	Rural

The method of coding data is an essential element of the analytical process in qualitative

research (Gibbs, 2018). Coding allows one to interpret, organize, and structure observations and

interpretations into meaningful theories. After inputting all transcriptions in the NVivo coding

software, the process of reading through the data was straightforward. The initial coding stage

began with the interview transcript, research questions, and interview questions at hand. The first

reading of each interview enabled me to identify the nature of each participant response. NVivo

allowed me to assemble initial code words to specific quotes in each transcript. All the initial

codes that emerged were broad, rough codes utilizing the participants' terms, as shown in Table

2.

Table 2

Initial Codes Example

Research question	Initial codes
RQ1: What experiences have West Texas public school principals had with the visual and performing arts?	Single parent
	Raised by grandparents
	Both parents working
	Family entertainment
	Weekly gatherings
	Patio parties
	Family culture
	Performed at church
	Social pressures
	Money issues with instrument rentals
	School experience
	No fine arts in school
	Memorable performance
	Basic needs not met
	Social status
	Sports selection

After understanding the overall ideas in the initial coding process, my second round of

coding resulted in rereading each transcript and uncovering deeper connotations that created new

codes and helped categorize the initial codes (Saldaña, 2013). I repeated this process multiple

times. As I conducted various rounds of coding, each round added more detail to help analyze

and categorize the data. After the second and third rounds, I categorized data using various

codes, and through my interpretive lens, I saw a consistent group of words that linked each code

to the research questions. Categorizing of the codes is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3

Categorizing of the Codes

Research question	Initial codes	Thematic codes
RQ1: What experiences have West Texas public school principals had with the visual and performing arts?	Single parent Raised by grandparents Both parents working Family entertainment Weekly gatherings Patio parties Family culture Performed at church Social pressures Money issues with instrument rentals School experience No fine arts in school Memorable performance Basic needs not met Social status Sports selection	Family culture Cultural relativism School experience with the fine arts

Stenner (2014) stated that "patterns suggest a multiplicity of elements gathered into the

unity of a particular arrangement" (p. 136). Each audible trace of coded words has a unique

intent that comes together to form a visual representation of the data collected. This unique intent

or pattern represents all participants' diverse experiences. Further, NVivo software amassed each

code and category to understand the data into matrix coding queries. This matrix coding query

simplified analyzation of participant responses and provoked internal questions about the

patterns in the categories, giving me further insight into the data.

Results

  The findings are discussed in relation to each of the four research questions that guided

the study.

Research Question 1

  I designed Research Question 1 to have a practical understanding of the participants'

experiences with the visual and performing arts as students: What experiences have West Texas

public school principals had with the visual and performing arts? To capture these experiences, I

asked probing questions regarding the participant's early childhood life. It was necessary to

extract the physical conditions that formed the participants' upbringing and that they absorbed

through those cultural settings. As a result, each participant's experiences with the fine arts

varied according to the theme presented: participants' early family life, socioeconomic status, and

varied experiences with the arts. Two subthemes broke up this central theme, family culture

relativism and school experience in the fine arts.

  Participants' Cultural Relativism and Socioeconomic Status. Cultural relativism

allows understanding of how culture defines who individuals are, what they believe, and how

they handle specific group problems (Parekh, 2000). Each participant expressed the importance

of how family culture shaped their current values, beliefs, and expectations as members of

society. Of the 10 participants, eight identified their upbringing as "growing up Mexican."

Participant 4 and Participant 8 grew up working on the farms and viewed themselves as having a

"relatively white" culture. However, Participant 4 grew up around the Hispanic community and

learned many of the traditions surrounding such a culture.

  The eight Mexican participants stated that their parents defined an excellent education as

having familiar traditions, not textbooks. To have an education in a Hispanic family means

respecting family and community, as stated by Participant 1. Participants 4 and 8 stated that their parents instilled the importance of agriculture and taking care of the land. Both Participant 4 and Participant 8 had fewer recollections concerning family gatherings.

All eight participants mentioned how the Mexican household encapsulates different family structures that involve gender roles, etiquette, survival instincts, and a closely connected family cluster. Participant 6 described their upbringing as a "very tight family" who is "very tied to our roots." All eight participants identified at least one family member outside of the nuclear family that lived in the same street, neighborhood, or in the same house. This finding is significant because the influence of immediate family in their upbringing consisted of weekly family gatherings, family church services, and, as in the case of Participants 1, 5, and 10, they grew up with grandparent family values. Participant 5 explained that the gender role of the Mexican father is always as the breadwinner, and the mother was responsible for the home. However, because of the drive to climb the social ladder to better their families, both mother and father of Participants 1, 5, and 10 would work.

Participants' School Experience in the Fine Arts. All participants attended public schools throughout their early education careers. Participants who tried fine arts all reported a positive experience. Participant 8 was the only participant that did not sign up for a fine art in elementary, middle, or high school. Participant 8 stated that he grew up in a small school that did not offer any fine arts classes; however, he remembered singing country folk songs during school events—an event he thoroughly enjoyed. Participants 3, 6, 7, and 8 tried fine arts in fifth grade and never pursued them after that. Both Participant 3 and Participant 7 decided to do sports after fifth grade, and Participants 6 and 8 were "not musically inclined to learn an instrument." Participant 8, however, detailed an experience concerning a teacher that was very "cold hearted"

and discouraged some kids from learning the new folk song. After that experience, Participant 8 did not want to sing again.

Participant 5 had the most experience in a fine art. She had been in choir throughout her elementary, middle, and high school career. After high school, she intended to become a music major; however, she went a different route. Participant 4 grew up in a small town like Participant 8. However, her school did offer band in fifth grade.

Nevertheless, Participant 4 credited her experiences in the arts to the parents. Participant 4 stated that her mother would make her listen to opera, specifically *Madame Butterfly* and various theatrical works as a child. She remembered sitting in front of the record player following every word on the insert. Every weekend they would listen to something new.

Research Question 2

The second research question addressed how participants perceived their roles in fine arts education: How do West Texas public school principals perceive their role in fine arts education? Two themes emerged from the data: quality education philosophy and issues in fine arts management.

Participants' Issues in Fine Arts Management. One of the requirements for participant eligibility in this study was to lead in a school that offered only one or no fine arts program. As a result of the interview questions, all participants had similar issues managing their fine arts programs. The most challenging aspect that all participants faced is finding qualified teachers. Because each participant's school is diverse in student populations and because of the similar responses, I focused on the smallest populated school of Participant 7 to the inner-city school of Participant 5. Participant 7 leads a school that serves K–12 in one educational building. With fewer than 100 students in K–12, Participant 7 has had his band program for two years. The

current band director is not a college graduate and not a certified teacher either: "We're lucky

enough to make it work. Our band director is in a local band and has the passion to teach

students." Participant 7's difficulty is not including fine arts in the curriculum; it is finding a

qualified music educator to move to the small town. The other participants have the same issue

in their schools. Participant 4, having the same issue as Participant 7, stated, "There is no person

who wants to live in a small town; there is nothing to do here, and there is no glory."

Participant 5 leads a small school located in a big metropolitan city. Her afterschool art

program had been successful in its first year of creation: "It was the first thing I did in my first

year of leading this school last school year, and it took off!" The instructor for the art program is

also a volunteer teacher who likes to draw. They are not certified in art but enjoy painting as a

hobby and love kids. Participant 5's district stakeholders allowed her to create this "enrichment

program" with the intent of adding it to their curriculum if a certain percentage of kids

maintained enrollment. Participant 5 was looking for a full-time certified art teacher but had not

found any applicants. She stated that no one wants to take the job when applicants find out it is a

school: "We are in the inner city, in Downtown. We service kids from the Segundo Barrio. Very

disadvantaged kids. People are afraid to join us." The Segundo Barrio, literally translated, means

the "Second Hood," or the "Mexican Ghetto," as stated by Participant 5.

Research Question 3

I designed the third research question to gather participants' input on what it means to

show support of the fine arts: How do West Texas public school principals perceive the meaning

of the phrase "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools? Two themes emerged from

the data: Principal certification programs were not helpful in understanding "supporting the fine

arts" as it applies to their schools, and budget constraints have pushed participants to support the fine arts as active observers.

Principal Certification Programs. Principal certification programs were not helpful in understanding "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools. All participants noted that the master's and certification programs did not show them how to sustain any performing arts in their future schools. They also reported that they received no training in fine arts management or fine arts teacher classroom expectations. All participants acquired their principal certification through either a master's program or an alternative certification program. For Participants 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10, certification was included in their master's programs in various colleges across Texas. Participant 6 recalled that the fine arts were not included in his education regarding content budgeting. Participant 9 stated, "They do not really talk about the fine arts as being part of instruction." Participants 1, 2, 7, and 10 had the same responses concerning organizational leadership classes and the fine arts. However, Participant 1 and Participant 5 remembered a question in their practice certification exam that dealt with fine arts. According to Participant 1, the question dealt with a noncompliant band teacher and what type of action the principal should take on insubordination. For Participants 3, 4, and 8, their alternative certification programs did not mention the fine arts as part of a school's instructional curriculum.

Training in Real-Time. The difficulty in starting a fine arts program in school was a challenge for those participants who wanted to implement a fine art into their curriculum or as an enrichment class. Those participants who inherited a school with an established program were not trained to manage such a program. However, those participants who did not pursue or did not have fine arts as children did not know the impact of fine arts education on students. Participant 5 was the only participant who considered fine arts education a career choice in college and

therefore knew how to handle a fine arts program. Participant 5 stated, "My experience as an active musician throughout my life made it easier to start and manage my enrichment program."

Further, since their certifications did not teach them how to begin or sustain performing arts programs, participants learned through in-moment experiences. Participant 1 learned the "rigor of fine arts" when he participated in a teacher-student dance competition akin to *Dancing with the Stars*. Participant 1 recalled the following:

> I want to do this because this is something that's out of my comfort zone. And I have never worked harder. I just had and got more of a respect for the fine arts, and in the sense of the dancing, realized how difficult it was and how I thought as an athlete, I could just transfer over to any type of fine arts, whether it was dance or play an instrument or seeing that it would just be an easy transfer and I could just do it on a dime, you know. But it was extremely hard. I couldn't.

Other participants had similar experiences when participating in fine arts in their professional careers. Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 10 learned about the "rigors of fine arts" through their children signing up for a fine arts class and seeing how those schools managed that particular fine arts program.

Budget Constraints. Budget constraints have pushed participants to support the fine arts as active observers. According to Participant 1, active observing is participating as a guest when asked or when the opportunity presents itself. Participant 5 explained that if one does not understand a subject or a teacher sees that a leader does not understand what goes on in the fine arts, leaders must participate to see and share in the students' experience surrounding that class. Further, Participant 5 stated how participation develops awareness. Through this awareness, there are "expectations realized. It helped me." Participant 6 recalled the importance of "being

present" at her school's Mexican *folklórico* dance class. She stated that her presence at the performances was a reminder to the fine arts program participants: "I care about what they are doing." Participant 6 further stated that she learned to appreciate what she couldn't understand as a child, and when she observed her students performing, she felt inclined to be their best supporter. Both Participant 1 and Participant 5 stated the importance of participation and that budget constraints should not limit any kind of support.

      Property Tax and the Shrinking Family Unit. All participants discussed rural issues regarding their school budgets. Of the many issues, participants in small towns frequently talked about how property taxes affected their school budgets. Many of the participants' rural communities faced particular challenges, including rapid growth at metropolitan edges (Participants 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10), declining rural populations (Participants 2, 4, 7), and loss of farms and working lands (Participants 7, 8, 9, 10).

      All participants experiencing slow-growing and shrinking rural areas caused by fewer people having children, the cost of skyrocketing property taxes, and children leaving their hometowns after graduating. Participant 4 had a unique situation. Her rural town had become a famous town among the art community. Most of the citizens of this town had lived there from generation to generation. However, there was a current exodus of people in California and New York moving to towns like that of Participant 4's, buying houses and empty lots, paying cash, and building bigger homes. According to Participant 4, these houses were significantly more prominent than the existing homes in the town. Property taxes had skyrocketed, which was suitable for the only school in the town. However, these new residents did not have or were not planning to have any children. Participant 4's district had a significant drop in children's enrollment in the last 3 years of being principal. Participant 2 and Participant 7 had similar issues

with the decline in people having no children, so their enrollment numbers at the elementary level had declined. Participant 2 stated, "What's going to happen to us is the fact that we have a low enrollment, whereas to an administrator, enrollment means money. Money means more teachers; more teachers mean, you know, more programs." Participants who lived in fast-growing rural areas at the fringe of metropolitan areas encountered metropolitan growth pressures. Farmlands were being purchased to make way for new housing or shopping centers. Participants 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 10 had seen an increase in population without increasing student enrollment and a loss of farmland. At times, Participant 10 stated that the families in these farmlands moved to a different town, and they "lose those children without gaining any others."

Budget Concerns. Forcing principals to act on budget concerns leads them to other support means. All participants commented on low enrollment's effect on school budgets, an everyday occurrence for small-town districts. Participant 5 is the only participant who taught in a downtown urban school. While her enrollment was now steady, her school had similar issues. While her school specifically catered to low-socioeconomic citizens and noncitizen students, enrollment numbers had fluctuated because of the pandemic, parents sent back to their countries, parent deaths, causing children to go back to Mexico to live with relatives, or moving to escape federal agencies, such as U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or Border Patrol. During the COVID-19 pandemic, half of her enrollment was lost due to students who lived in Mexico. These kids would cross the border every day, legally, to attend school. However, the pandemic caused the U. S. government to forbid bridge crossings to Mexican travelers, preventing some students from going to school. Participant 5 mentioned that online learning was almost impossible for those students living in Mexico; some could not afford internet services, or their

internet speed was too slow for video conferences. She was now having difficulty reenrolling those students who did not enroll in the 2021 school year.

Other Support Means. Each participant had different definitions of what support looked like to them. Since enrollment affects most budgets, some participants believed that no matter the size of the school or the program, there must be a way to fund all programs if district administrators will not invest in more fine arts programs or support the ones that are in existence. Participant 1 and Participant 2 believed in "getting whatever they need" to move the program and become successful. Participants 3, 5, 6, and 9 believed that getting what fine art teachers need would be "well-rounded administration" and should match their belief of a well-rounded student. Moreover, support should be shown through social media plugs done by the administrators and not the teacher, as mentioned by Participant 3, 5, 6, and 10. Participant 3 stated that attending concerts and art shows are a priority to show support, especially when involving social media. Participant 10 stated that public relations through social media of all programs encourages enrollment, encouraging district administrators to support such programs.

However, Participant 6 had not had success with district administration concerning awards and public recognition of some of her fine arts students through social media or school news. As a result, Participant 6 agreed to all fundraisers her fine arts teacher requested throughout the year. Participant 7 was big on fundraisers and donations, which seemed to be enough to support his program monetarily. Participant 8 believed that his program is small, so parents should be able to support it. In his first year of principalship, Participant 8 decided to ask a local art supply store owner to create an after-school program to teach students how to draw. Participant 8 would supply all the materials needed to interested students. The art store owner agreed to develop a curriculum for one semester for about 10 students where they would get paid

per student that signed up. Participant 8 believed that was an average number of students that would sign up. As the program grew by word of mouth, to Participant 8's surprise, more than 30 students signed up. Participant 8 was forced to find more capital to support the kids that signed up. The following year, he decided to bring back the program, paid for by the parents. As a result, only five students signed up, and the art store owner decided not to continue with the program after that semester. Participant 8 fully supported family-funded enrichment programs.

Participant 9 stated that the budget for fine art programs is a must for all students and teachers alike. Her second year as principal came with many changes in her fine arts class. All students would meet for their fine arts class once a week. After seeing great success with implementing the fine arts in the curriculum, Participant 9's support was to cut "everyday library day" to once a month and move the fine arts class from one day a week to three times a week.

Research Question 4

I designed the fourth research question to gather information regarding the state of the importance of fine arts in the participants' schools or any past experiences: What are the shared values among West Texas public school principals regarding the fine arts? Three themes emerged from the data: promotion of synergistic qualities in students, student engagement in the fine arts, and communal pride.

Synergistic Qualities. The fine arts promote synergistic qualities in students. All participants described a unique experience concerning specific students in fine arts. Each participant described these students with a specific value that they witnessed in these students. Participants 1, 3, and 4 all talked about their special education students and the change they saw in them. Participant 1 recalled his special education student learning how to play the drums: "At first, he was embarrassed and had difficulty being in the same room with the other students."

However, the band became the student's favorite class: "We had to threaten him that he wasn't going to play his drums if he started to act up in other classes." According to Participant 1, the band class created a new world for this student; it created a "structure and something good to look forward to."

Participant 3 recalled a resource student that was "pretty, pretty low" and needed much help in all aspects of her life. They put this student in art, specifically an art ceramic class. As a teacher, Participant 3 was not sure about the success she would have in this class. This art class gave this student the challenge she needed for success. Participant 3 stated, "So this was a special ed kid who if she wasn't exposed to challenge herself in art, she … who knows? But, right now, she is majoring in arts and going overseas with internships and all kinds of stuff. They are not limited, you know, because sometimes the special ed kids, you feel that they're limited on what they can do, but they, they still have talent in other areas."

Participant 4's student "had a pretty rough family life" and was usually disengaged in her classes. With behavioral issues at the top of the student's modifications, teachers had difficulty getting her to participate. Participant 4 decided to put her student in art class. Participant 4 did not know how this student would react to the newly hired art teacher. As the semester went by, the student flourished in the art class and all her classes: " … With this new art teacher; she seems more engaged in her classes. She smiles more." Participant 4 stated that her work was featured on social media regularly, and she could tell that the art class brought her "self-worth, that this is something" she can do and have control over. Participant 4 had a unique fine arts situation. She inherited an art and band class when she became principal 3 years ago. However, the band director left for a more prestigious program during her first year as principal and could not find a replacement. The band program was not big in the first place; it only had 10 members.

As a result of the band director leaving, Participant 4 cut the program. Some of the band students were disappointed. Before the end of the school year, three band students asked Participant 4 if the school still had band instruments for them to check out over the summer, "just in case they get a new band director the following year, they want to be ready."

Participant 4 stated that the student's initiative to ask for and continue their fine arts education on their own made her realize the self-responsibility each student had and the love they had for music. Participant 5 and Participant 6 stated how much passion fine arts students exhibit when issues in other classes or behavior problems come up. Participant 5 remembered how angry the student was for not making the top orchestra as a sixth grader. He was so livid that it started affecting his other classes.

Participant 5 recalled how the student's father would tell all the teachers to call the fine arts teacher first if there were any issues. Participant 6's student had attendance issues before joining the dance class, and she further stated that the student had become an outstanding student. Her attendance went up, she turned her homework in on time, and she maintained her grades. Participant 6 recalled many students who gave "a thousand percent" in all their classes to maintain the ability to perform in dance class.

Participant 7 remembered as a teacher several bilingual students who developed their language and communication skills while attending a band class. These students were struggling in Participant 7's language class, and they had difficulty conveying information in English. As "quiet, reserved kids," the students struggled to read literary works and plays. Participant 7 remarked, "I was surprised to see that they signed up for eighth-grade band! I was surprised to see that he had signed up for the band because it was just part of his personality that I would not have thought of." Participant 7 noticed increased confidence in the students after taking middle

school band class after a few months. The student's reading improved, but Participant 7 is unsure if their progress was due to the band or confidence. However, the most surprising thing was how the students communicated musically with expression during their performances.

Participant 8 and Participant 10 described students in the fine arts as learning the qualities of teamwork and commitment. During observations of their fine arts teachers, specifically during the pandemic, they witnessed students' interactions online during breakout sessions. Participant 8 observed a group of first-grade students learning musical rhythm for the first time. The teacher had all the students use different materials and follow specific rhythmic patterns in a call and response lesson. Participant 8 explained, "I was listening to them, and the kids were following her, having fun, and they were quiet; they were sitting down!" Participant 10 observed middle school general music class. These students were listening to each other in breakout rooms, critiquing each other's work, and helping each other improve on the recorder. Participants 1, 7, and 9 described the stigma between athletic students and students in fine arts. Participant 1 was one of those students who picked sports over fine arts in middle school. However, Participant 1, Participant 7, and Participant 9 had seen students that do both.

They connected athletic students learning teamwork and commitment on the field or court and fine art students or nonathletic students learning the same set of values on the stage. Participants also mentioned that the students with both athleticism and artistry or talent in a fine art were "a double threat" to future endeavors. All participants mentioned the culmination of student collaboration in fine arts and the merging of various skills to create an artistic interaction that promotes social and individual proficiencies that benefit student well-being and societal challenges. Participant 9 stated that aside from teaching citizenship skills, he had seen how the fine arts "gives kids a different place to belong." He believed that school stakeholders focus so

much on the athletic side of schools and their athletes that the nonathletic kids get tossed aside. Participant 9 described the importance of making the nonathletic student feel like they belong by making the arts accessible to all students.

      Student Engagement in the Fine Arts and Communal Pride. Participants reported participation of students in athletic games or town events as extremely important. Participant 6 recalled her time as a child and participating in her high school's homecoming parade. A self-declared "nonartsy person," all her friends were in either the *mariachi* band or the marching band at school. As a child, Participant 6 reflected on how it was the talk of the neighborhood and how everyone would support the high school and the students involved: "So everybody would stop doing what they were doing, and everybody would go outside to see the cars and the cheerleaders, and the bands." Specifically, her neighborhood members and she would support the high school's local mariachi. According to Participant 6, this group was the talk of the city. "You know the … the thing that I love the best was our mariachi, and boy, you know, I never … I was never musically inclined like to play an instrument or, you know, or, God forbid, sing. But, you know, I really loved the pride of seeing the … the group playing and being highlighted." As a principal, Participant 6 stated how her fine art students were proud to perform for the town's events. Her fine arts teacher and students had promoted themselves and had taken the initiative to get noticed around their town.

      All participants mentioned the importance of music in athletic events such as football games. In communal pride, Participant 1 and Participant 10 stated that the band in a football game creates an atmosphere that highlights the team, the city, and the school. The band helped the team by spotlighting critical moments of the game "besides the halftime entertainment." Participant 7 had a band in his curriculum made up of 12 students. His small school did not at

times have enough students to have a football team or any sports team, for that matter. However, when they could create a team, their band, made up of a diverse set of instruments, supported the team. Participant 7 found it essential to include those kids, not only because of tradition but because it created "noise" that helped encourage the small school community.

Participant 5 reflected on how fine arts and its students can create a link between social events and communal pride at a national level. As a choir student, Participant 5 recalled a particular choir trip to New York City "not that long after" September 11th, 2001. Her choir teacher at the time found it essential to compete in a choir competition and visit ground zero. Participant 5 reflected, "And we were going to have; obviously, we're going to go do like a choir competition. It was the whole thing. And one of our tourist stops was at ground zero. And we actually sang at ground zero. We just kind of stood there, all of us. And it was just like the most beautiful *a cappella* performance. And I remember like looking out and seeing just people, tourists at that point and just so many, like there was like not a dry eye. And in the area, it was just the most beautiful experience. But it was just like the air there."

Summary

This chapter included an overview of each theme that emerged from the findings and the study results. The themes that arose from the data included participants' early family life, socioeconomic status, and varied experiences with the arts; participants' philosophy of quality education; participant issues in fine arts management; participants' principal certification program content regarding the fine arts; budget constraints pushing participants to support the fine arts as active observers; fine arts promoting synergistic qualities in students; participants observing communal pride; and participants' hardships in creating more artistic opportunities for students. Participants completed a private semistructured interview via the Zoom meeting

platform, where I recorded each of their responses and transcribed it in preparation for data analysis. When examining the study's findings, I summarized or quoted specific participant excerpts to provide evidence in support of the theme discussed under each research question.

Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the study's findings connecting to the literature, the theoretical framework, and the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the study's implications and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this qualitative multiple case study, I aimed to explore how principals' perceptions affect their curricular decision-making regarding the support of fine arts education in rural and urban public schools in West Texas. I gathered data from 10 participants who participated in semistructured interviews, where each participant answered the same open-ended questions via the Zoom platform. After recording and transcribing the interviews, I completed an analysis and found different themes that emerged from the transcripts. The themes that emerged from the data included the following:

- participants' culture relativism and socioeconomic status

- participants' school experience in the fine arts

- participants' issues in fine arts management

- principal certification programs not being helpful in understanding "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools

- budget constraints pushing participants to support the fine arts as active observers

- promoting synergistic qualities in students

- student engagement in the fine arts and communal pride

This chapter concludes the dissertation and includes a discussion of my findings relative to previous literature and in proportion to the theoretical framework that guided this study. The chapter will also include a discussion of the study's limitations experienced throughout the research process. The chapter then concludes with recommendations for future studies and recommendations for practice.

Interpretation of the Findings

Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was the following: What experiences have West Texas public school principals had with the visual and performing arts? Zarate (2007) gauged the involvement of Hispanic parents in their children's education. Zarate (2007) stated that "participation in their children's lives ensures that their formal schooling is complemented with education taught in the home" (p. 9). The author implied that home education and formal education are two separate entities that must create a symbiotic relationship in the upbringing of students. However, Zarate (2007) also reported that parental involvement in homework and school communication was shallow. The most noted reason for low participation in the study was lack of time caused by work hours and the language barrier. When participants were asked about what their parents thought of when they, as students, came home with interest in the fine arts, most participants said that their parents supported them. Some participants' parents saw the enrollment in fine arts as an assimilation tool, as in the case of Participant 1 and Participant 5. Nevertheless, socioeconomic status was an issue. Participant 3 recalled being denied participation in the orchestra because his parents could not afford the instrument rental. As a result, Participant 3 joined soccer instead, a sport seen as an acceptable medium for culture preservation (Zarate, 2007).

As children, all participants had the opportunity to take a fine arts course during their elementary years or had some instruction relating to the arts. Some participants recalled their first experiences with the fine arts during family gatherings. Valenzuela and Dornbusch (1994) emphasized the importance of the Hispanic family gatherings as a social measurement of defined fidelity, mutuality, and solidarity among the family members. Some participants recalled an uncle or family member who would take out the guitar and start playing "oldies," or where

cousins would "break out the radio and start dancing." Participant 4 had a slightly different experience in that her family gatherings were reading time, "quiet reading time." Participants 1, 5, and 9 all got their first singing experience in their community church children's choir.

These experiences, whether subtle in some cases or ample in others, are considered critical building blocks in early childhood development (Barton, 2015; Edwards, 2002; Wright, 2012). However, at a later age, the participants in the current study de-emphasized the perceived value and role of the arts in their education. Barton (2015) stated that minor influences in a child, such as peer pressure or academic pressure, de-engaged the student in pursuing the arts. Ewing (2010) articulated the hazards in children who do not partake in whole fine arts instruction to be relevant in learning. On the whole, Eisner (2005) and Gardner (1980) identified these learning behaviors and attitudes such as cognitive development, expressive qualities, and social interactions as being beneficial to the child. However, the participant's social structure dictated their particular culture's ideals and values and created a specific ideology (Geiger, 2016), resulting in the withdrawal of fine arts in various stages of a participant's schooling career.

Cultural Relativism and Socioeconomic Status. Cultural relativism is the concept that the values and norms of a specific culture emanate meaning through a distinct social context (Osterman, 2021). According to Burke et al. (2009), social context includes the surroundings that influence a culture's belief system. However, socioeconomic status and surroundings in a Mexican American household encourage behavioral processes to increase status but keep cultural values untouched (Gallo et al., 2013).

Padilla and Villalobos (2007) defined the Mexican American cultural values as facets of familism, respect and congeniality, folk healing, religiosity or spirituality, and the importance of keeping the language alive. Familism refers to the individualistic identification and attachment to

family (Zeiders et al., 2016). These values embody a dynamic conceptualization of a typical Mexican household (White et al., 2009). In each case, external circumstances and diverse family situations provided expectations concerning curriculum choices as the participants grew up. Of the 10 participants, eight grew up in typical Mexican households, meaning that these participants would stay with other family members at some point in their upbringing. There were various reasons why, as young children, they would grow up with their grandparents. The most common explanation was that both parents would work to alleviate the bills around the house caused by living under the poverty line. Both Participant 3 and Participant 8 grew up on farms that were not Hispanic households.

The eight participants mentioned how their households were the most important social institution growing up. At times, the various generations living together was standard, as this would help the family with challenging life experiences. Landale et al. (2006) noted that Hispanic households were larger than nonHispanic whites' households because of the acceptance of extended family members living under one roof. Further, participants mentioned how most, if not all, of their families settled geographically close together (Clutter & Nieto, 2000; Galanti, 2003). All participants had weekly family get-togethers at grandma's house, especially Sundays after church. Through these gatherings, the eight participants spoke about the customs and traditions they were taught, as these conversations included the idea of career choices. Except for Participant 3 and Participant 8, the participants credited their success to these close-knit family nuclei. Clutter and Nieto (2000) stated that the family unit in Hispanic families revolves around preserving cultural integrity, and its only achieved by keeping the family as close together as possible.

Some of the participants spoke about the traditional gender roles in their households. Galanti (2003) examined the roles of Hispanic male and female couples. Galanti (2003) described Hispanic male roles as having two key features: machismo and patriarchal authority, where both machismo and patriarchal authority have both negative and positive connections. Galanti (2003) defined machismo in a Hispanic male role as protecting the family unit with a strong work ethic as a provider and a responsible husband. Patriarchal authority is the idea that a man is the boss and head of the family (Galanti, 2003). The female role is to take care of the family by cooking, cleaning, and overseeing the children. Participant 1 and Participant 5 specifically recalled how the father was the family's breadwinner, while the mother cared for the household.

However, the impact of socioeconomic disadvantages has emphasized the importance of family growth by assimilating new cultural paradigms in which both mother and father are equally the breadwinners (King, 2011; Lopez-Acevedo et al., 2020; Steidel et al., 2003; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 2004). All the participants mentioned a progressive change in their households, where the housewives would start to work and contribute to the household's financial gain. The idea of the working wife was a turning point for Participant 4. As a child, Participant 4 believed that she would grow up to become a housewife, just like her mother. However, with the change in times, Participant 4's father encouraged her to "not need a man to get the things you want in life." The other eight participants believed that the encouragement for success in life was through education and going to college.

Most of the participants' parents were artisans, blue-collar workers, farmers, or mechanics. As a result, their parents believed in becoming better people financially, and they pushed for college and the idea of good grades in hopes that education would give their children

a better chance in life. According to Auerbach (2004), Hispanic parents are very supportive of getting good grades but lack knowledge about college eligibility and planning. The knowledge barrier is particularly true among low socioeconomic immigrant parents who do not speak English. However, bilingual outreach programs have given parents an understanding of the accessibility of college for their children (Auerbach, 2004). This push in education is significant because out of the 10 participants, only one, Participant 5, considered fine arts in college as a career choice with parent support. However, Participant 5 later changed it after reviewing the sustainability of a classical performer per her mother's sudden disability:

> I think it was not a mistake; it was a great experience, but like and then coming back and like my mom being disabled now and like having to, like, process like the financial impact of that, it was like, well, you are not that good. You know, we can't do this forever. And I mean, because there was a period there. Right. I toyed with the idea of like being a choir teacher.

Those participants who took a fine arts course in middle school never considered the arts a career choice. Some of the parents deterred the participants from pursuing the fine arts further other than just elementary or middle school. Participant 1 stated, "And that's another thing. Yeah. Whenever you brought up anything with fine arts, like it's a great beauty, but you can't make any money off of that is like a native ding." Participant 2 and Participant 3 had the same family beliefs about the fine arts as a career choice.

Family dynamics, especially cultural relativism, are a method of accomplishing daily activities to unravel shared family tribulations (Osterman, 2021). Whether the tribulations are minor or significant, the cultural expectations in the participants' lives set ideals and plans to accomplish their ability to survive in a new environment. The participants' parents set conscious

family decisions to elevate the status of their culture through education for their children as a form of career and cultural authority.

Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was the following: How do West Texas public school principals perceive their role in fine arts education?

Participants' Philosophy of Quality Education. All participants cited the term *support* in their philosophies in the following forms: support of teachers, support of children, or a combination of both. Literature in school improvement research indicates school leaders as influential agents of change (Scheer, 2021; Thapa et al., 2013). Through philosophical means, these leaders can implement their beliefs in education to transform their educational environment (Ralte, 2021). Scheer (2021) noted that leadership practices in education must focus on the evolution of shared visions and values amongst all shareholders. These shared visions and values include the development of an inclusive curriculum that will allow all students to participate via personalized interests (Ainscow, 2016).

Through philosophical ideals in education, principals can bring meaning and direction to collaborative thinking based on concepts and beliefs concerning education (Chand, 2017; Scheer, 2021). The various responses of the participants concerning the practice of their educational philosophy determined the emphasis of their visions and values (Scheer, 2021). When asked about their philosophy of quality education, the responses were either teacher centered, student centered, or both. According to Chand (2017), a school leader's philosophy is a lens to the answer of " … the purpose of schooling, teacher's role, and what should be taught and by what methods" (p. 3). Chand (2017) stated that philosophies centered around the support of teachers tend to lead to more authoritative and traditionalistic leaders, whereas in student-centered

philosophies, leaders focus on the individual needs and the current relevance of education. The epicenter of understanding the nature of leadership is subjective, according to the rationalization of leadership preconceptions and prejudices. However, leaders must adapt to the diversity of teaching styles. The adaptability of leadership is not a change in philosophy. It is a reminder that leadership style must be modifiable to allow administrators to think critically and reflectively without prejudiced emotions or personal interests (Chand, 2017). Without prejudiced emotions or personal interests, administrators strive to improve students, teachers, and programs as suitable social mediums that unlock creativity and individuality. Because I focused more on leaders' perception of the fine arts, I submit further study regarding the significant philosophies and their effect on fine arts education in the recommendation section of this chapter.

All participants believed that the purpose of school is to educate the whole child. Fine arts education is a vital component of the curriculum to foster curiosity and inquisitiveness and enlarge the imagination (Siege et al., 2018). Each participant viewed the arts as integral to a child's educative career. However, the results show that some principals and district administrations have issues including or excluding particular subjects in their formal curriculums. Thomas (2012) showed that superintendents, board of directors, and principals alike all supported the fine arts as essential and fully supported such programs that are "highly visible" in performance, and the less visible fine arts, such as art and photography, are not fully supported (p. 83). Nevertheless, whether highly or less visible, Thomas's study revealed that funding and student population dictated the curriculum design. Much like Thomas's (2012) study, the results of this current study are that the lack of overall population growth, funding, and teacher shortage have given rural school administrators no choice but to exclude specific programs from their curricula.

The lack of a growing population in rural and urban schools has aided in funding woes (Gultig & Stielau, 2002; Mokoena, 2011; Thomas, 2012). Participant 7 and Participant 10 stated that in their rural school and community, parents are focused on the survival of their families. In their farm towns, the population is limited, and with the current political climate, survival is more important than a "PTA meeting." Plessis (2014) stated that remote rural schools are disadvantaged by the community's socioeconomic status, causing district stakeholders to address the lack of essential resources to facilitate effective instruction. Further, school stakeholders create opportunities to assist the community in handing out basic needs, fundraising, and allocating money for those needs (Azaola, 2010). Participant 7 had such a school that required community help, and although most basic needs were donated, Participant 7 allocated a small number of funds to help students and families. Almost all participants shared the lack of basic essential supplies in their respected schools for suitable instruction and their students' basic needs.

Participant 5 used community outreach and student art gallery presentations to bring out parents and reach them with necessary information regarding school or student issues. Rural and urban school district stakeholders with socioeconomic disadvantages find it challenging to attract parental participation (Mohanasundaram, 2018). Participant 5 shared that her parents' involvement in her school was critical to her success and felt that her students' parents needed to be present at all school functions so that their kids would be successful. Participant 5 said of their annual outreach: "It is the only time I see parents." Parental involvement plays a vital role in the learning process. According to Valdés and Urías (2010), parents can be support agents to a school who can aid in educational outcomes. Although participants stated various reasons

concerning the inclusion of fine arts or adding more fine arts classes, all participants viewed the fine arts as a necessary educational curriculum component.

   Participants' Issues in Fine Arts Management. One of the most significant issues uttered by the participants concerning their rural schools was the attraction of new or seasoned teachers to move to their rural schools. Several researchers have reported the battle of recruiting educators to rural districts (Azano et al., 2019; Biddle & Azano, 2016; Brenner et al., 2021). Brenner et al. (2021) asserted that suburban or urban city-born teachers negatively perceive rural communities due to pop culture representations and stereotypes such as backward or out-of-touch residents. Although the participants in the current study did not mention the influence of modern media as a catalyst for their hiring woes, as Brenner et al. (2021) mentioned, they did speak about competitive salaries as a difficulty in attracting new teachers. Some participants mentioned the difficulty of new teachers wanting to start a new program in a small town. Participant 4 stated that there is no glory or fame in a small city band program as in the big city band programs. Her band director left his position and took up an assistant band director position at a bigger high school. Ingersoll et al. (2018) explained the issue of teacher retention in rural schools as one of the biggest challenges. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) explained that rural school districts had higher teacher attrition rates and the highest teacher turnover rates. Inversely, Participant 5 led an inner-city elementary school and equally had a problem finding qualified fine art teachers. Garcia and Weiss (2019) reported that teacher shortages are more acute in high-poverty schools like Participant 5's schools. The authors suggested that well-qualified teachers have more options when choosing at which school they want to teach and that higher-paying school districts provide them with better support and working conditions.

In the current study, the overall reflection of all participants was the importance of a well-rounded education. To achieve the idea of the whole child is to ensure the systems of visions and values are in place and communicated thoroughly to all shareholders. These visions and values must resolve to bettering the community and must be achieved by any means necessary, as stated by Participant 1. A whole child education approach is a system that exposes children to subjects that achieve creativity. Fine arts are such subjects and can unite the community regardless of socioeconomic needs. Rural education problems must be addressed to achieve the whole child. Principals must change the influence of pop culture stereotypes of rural education to attract well-prepared educators and paint the rural educational landscape with positive marketing.

Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was the following: How do West Texas public school principals perceive the meaning of the phrase "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools?

Principal Certification Programs. Principal certification programs were not helpful in understanding "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools. One of the participants' most significant issues with supporting the fine arts was their lack of knowledge on managing a fine arts department. While some of the participants admittedly learned as they went and some had fine arts as children, their certification training lacked the instruction to support such programs. Because the school leader is the person that establishes the school's tone, culture, and direction, it is through training that a leader can learn to embody the structuring or restructuring of school programs that reflect the new academic literature (Hernandez et al., 2012; Rincones-Delgado & Feig, 2013). Participant 1 cited that if he had better training and literature study during his principal certification, he would better understand how to budget, start, support, and push for more fine arts programs.

Since the early 2000s, researchers have described principal preparation programs as fragmented, impractical courses that lack rigor (Cox, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Reeves, 2002). Most participants stated that the program curriculum only focused on instructional leadership and budget management and, as Participant 5 stated, focused on passing the exam. Hess and Kelly (2007) studied the content of a principal education program to answer the question if principal preparation programs are giving new principals the tools needed to lead. The overall findings were that content in these programs across the United States lacked management training in program sustainability. Grissom et al. (2017) closely examined the effectiveness of current training programs by focusing on the programs' outcomes. Their results indicate that the outcomes of principal leadership performance posttraining were not a result of the training programs but a result of school and community demographics influencing leadership outcomes. Both studies illustrate how principal experiences and adaptation influence leadership outcomes and that training in curriculum sustainability is neglected. Some participants in this current study had to adapt and rely on past experiences like Participant 1 or sustain a band program by hiring a noncertified teacher like Participant 8.

As reported by the participants in my study, they learned about fine arts management by experiencing the fine arts firsthand. Some participants did not learn about the importance of fine arts until they either participated in fine arts production, saw a significant change in a student participating in fine arts, or had children in fine arts. McCall (2010) suggested that on-the-job experiences are powerful training resources that establish leadership development. These experiences shed new light on something unknown, as in Participant 1's and Participant 5's participation in fine arts, making for a much better training impact (McCall 2010). The current study results are that principal training programs do not always support the fine arts.

Budget Constraints. Schaefer et al. (2016) stated that 64% of rural communities have high child poverty rates. Further, Farrigan (2017) explained that there are concentrated groupings of rural poverty within notable areas of the United States, one of which is the Southwest. The Southwest primarily has highly concentrated pockets of Hispanic minorities that make up their communities' historical landscape and heritage (Showalter et al., 2017). Additionally, Johnson et al. (2014) revealed that areas like the Southwest are growing at an alarming rate. This increase in population was particularly true for some of the participants experiencing farmlands closing for new housing developments. School budgets in rural schools come from a statewide education fund, pooled revenues from local education-related property, and income taxes (Kolbe et al., 2021). Kolbe et al. (2021) stated that rural education stakeholders spend less per pupil and therefore have less to offer than their urban counterparts. Kolbe et al. (2021) stated that there is little scholarly work comparing the cost differences between rural and urban schools. The authors stated that the funding formula for each state differs significantly, making it difficult to examine as a whole. However, Showalter et al. (2019) reported that Texas invests $5,386 in instructing rural students, while the Census Bureau reported that Texas spends on average $9,606 per student. Tieken and Montgomery (2021) analyzed rural school challenges and found that with the recession in 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic, stakeholders in rural economic structures have a tough time recovering and accommodating their communities.

Principal certification programs are designed to give future principals the tools to impact school relations, climate, academic success, and emotional stability among the school population and to ensure budget structure throughout school departments (Rincones-Delgado & Feig, 2013). However, participants in the current study unanimously agreed that there needs to be training on managing the fine arts and the effects a fine arts program may have on student progress. Both

researchers and participants in this study recognize the lack of knowledge on managing and having school program sustainability. It is not enough to manage from experience. However, the involvement in fine arts as a leader may shed new light on the importance of fine arts and push leaders to sustain fine arts programs. Socioeconomic status in a community directly affects a school budget, and rural education system stakeholders must do everything to market their districts.

Findings for Research Question 4

Research Question 4 was the following: What are the shared values among West Texas public school principals regarding the fine arts? Every child deserves an education that helps them discover, engage in creative thinking and that assists students in realizing their calling (Khan & Ali, 2016). According to Khan and Ali (2016), the arts are vital for improving understanding throughout all academic areas. Further, Khan and Ali (2016) examined fine arts' effectiveness at "reducing student dropout, raising student attendance, developing better team players, fostering learning, improving student dignity, enhancing creativity, and producing well-rounded citizens" (p. 67). All participants in the current study experienced a change in students that fostered the students' needs. The participants revealed how students with learning disabilities, students with low self-esteem, special education students, and athletic students benefited positively from engaging in the fine arts. One of the most significant takeaways from the results is how fine art students embrace and connect with special education students, as with Participants 1, 3, and 4.

Synergistic Qualities. Fine arts promote synergistic qualities in students and engagement. Stangor et al. (2014) explained how a collection of people interested in the same things creates a shared value system under the group's goal. This shared value system is an

essential value that a school administrator holds as essential to obtain. Participants in the current study showed they valued the fine arts by expressing how their students interacted with their specific fine arts classes. Within a fine arts class such as orchestra, each member in the group is mutually dependent on the others to reach their musical goal. Each member must do their part and therefore act upon their peers' values and the roles each person plays (Stangor et al., 2014). The participants witnessed perseverance, courage, self-confidence, self-efficacy, humility, problem-solving, patience, acceptance, and communication.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences considers the values listed above as values needed to create well-rounded citizens. The term *well-rounded* was a term repeated in the results frequently. According to Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018), a well-rounded education is effective when students have hands-on learning experiences, secure attachments, positive relationships, and direct integration of social, emotional, and academic skills.

Further, the authors stated that students will experience healthy growth and development in a positive school climate (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). Each child is just one part of the whole community and, as such, brings a different aspect of holistic thinking to societal issues (Bublitz et al., 2019; Khan & Ali, 2016; Morris, 2019; Nichols, 2015; Tyler & Likova, 2012). When participants see students, especially students with learning disabilities, excited about attending school due to fine arts, the ability to see fine arts as a value of education in student development demonstrates cultural values as a way of advancement past societal stigmas (Atmojo, 2021). Fine arts are just one component that can compensate the whole and reach students who are not athletically motivated.

Communal Pride. The arts encourage the awareness and spreading of culture (Khan & Ali, 2016). From football, community parades, art showcases, and cultural concerts, fine arts are

an effective remedy to bring societal differences together (Aldaihani, 2017). From the responses in the results, the fine arts expose cultural values and belief systems through practical performance activities that highlight specific communication needs of the community. Kirkcaldy (2018) stated that the arts as a whole in a cultural setting allow the communicators to convey their own emotions through an artistic lens in their language. Some participants, especially those with tiny student populations, expressed that their sports teams do not have the positive impact that a band brings to the community. Bublitz et al. (2019) stated the importance of collaborative art programs to bring residents of a community school together. It is an identity that is possible through sports or the arts and vital for embracing a collective identity (Bublitz et al., 2019).

Liu (2017) documented that parental involvement of minority parents only increased when the children of those parents were involved in the school mariachi programs. Liu (2017) explained how culture comes together when culture is preserved in a collective community. Mariachi classes and groups tend to foster the preservation of culture, pushing community involvement. Further, parents who typically do not participate in school functions learn about school culture through these performances. Within the community, Liu (2017) stated that many of the mariachi students were not Spanish speakers and brought their families closer together as they translated the lyrics during their family time.

Participants in the current study experienced students from diverse backgrounds being positively affected by a fine arts class. Further, some participants experienced the rigor of fine arts by participating in a school program. These experiences provide evidence of the importance of fine arts in school curriculums. Williams (2016) suggested that students in the fine arts have a unique connection with their instruments that allows them to connect to their perception of the world. Further, the unity of the community and the student's ability to translate the arts to core

subjects represents the type of comprehension fine arts can contribute to all facets of learning ability (Williams, 2016).

Implications to the Theoretical Framework

Heider's attribution theory guided this study. The findings in this study aligned with the theory, validating the research and supplying additional reinforcement to the principles associated with attribution theory (Snead et al., 2014). The underlying premise of attribution theory is that individuals are motivated to comprehend their circumstances and the causes of particular events (Weiner, 2015). Certain events in individuals' lives cause people to develop attributions about the circumstances and those involved. Some of the participants in the study had negative experiences with the fine arts as children. In particular, Participant 7 had a negative experience with his fine arts teacher in elementary, and he never wanted to retake fine arts courses because his teacher was mean and yelled at him. As a principal, the importance of the arts as a core subject does not exist. When events have a negative connotation, the developed attributions are subconsciously impactful (Coombs, 2007; Snead et al., 2014). McDermott (2009) indicated that Heider's theory may help in understanding how people make sense of their and others' behaviors and how they could be in a better situation to influence or control future events. This understanding of behaviors is evident in the responses of Participant 1 and Participant 5. Participant 1 experienced fine arts as a participant when he was a teacher and attributed the difficulty of learning and performing to be more brutal than athletics. As a result, his new understanding of the rigor of the fine arts has led him to support the fine arts. Participant 5 had positive elementary experiences with her fine arts teacher and principal. She attributed her leadership style to her former principal and teacher. Through these internal interpretations, people engage in specific behaviors (Weiner, 2015). All participants who experienced the fine

arts early or even later in life attributed the difficulty, the fun of performing, the challenges, and the comradery of playing together.

The interaction of individuals determines whether internal or external factors cause specific behaviors (Snead et al., 2014). According to Hewett et al. (2018), internal factors materialize when a person sees another's behavior as caused by another person. Other districts and their accomplishments influenced participants in the study. Participant 6 was highly motivated to create a mariachi band to bring his school and community together culturally. Malle (2011) gave examples of behavior caused by others to include "personality, upbringing, and culture" (p. 84). Participants in a Mexican household were brought up with cultural stigmas related to adapting to culture while not forgetting where the family originated. Parental involvement and parental behavior or influence determined the path of educational achievement. External factors materialize when a person witnesses causality of behavior arising from an external event. To distinguish whether a behavior presented is attributed to internal or external causes, Kelley (1973) presented three factors that influence people's attributions: consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus (Malle, 2011; Snead et al., 2014). Consistency is when a repeated behavior is the same over time in the same situation; distinctiveness is a variation of behavior across situations, and consensus is considered normal behavior given the situation across all people (Kelley, 1973; Malle, 2011; Snead et al., 2014).

While most principals had positive experiences with the fine arts as children, several developed a proper understanding of the fine arts late in life. One of the biggest influences and attributions towards the arts was fine arts participation through the participants' children. Some participants saw the arts ' value in education by experiencing their children's journey, excitement, and progress.

Limitations

Limitations existed in this case study. The first limitation of the study was that only individuals in schools in Regions 18 and 19 of the entire state of Texas were asked to participate. As such, the responses of participants from these two regions may not necessarily represent the experiences and perceptions of other rural school leaders in Texas or the nation. Another limitation was the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Face-to-face interviews have long been the standard when conducting a semistructured interview in qualitative research (Novick, 2008). According to Seitz (2016), face-to-face interviews are more naturalistic because they can create a personal connection with participants due to bodily closeness.

Further, proximity interviews can create rapport, and the researcher may analyze a participant's nonverbal cues and body language (Lechuga, 2012). The ongoing pandemic forced me to conduct interviews via Zoom or Facetime. These modes of interview processes took away the analysis of body language because all I could see from the screen was the participant's upper body.

Implications

All participants had diverse experiences with the fine arts. While one of them had a negative experience and two were not talented or prone to athletics, they all had one thing in common. These participants lacked formal training in fine arts management in their principal certification programs and therefore were required to develop their own through trial and error or to rely on skills acquired from experiences in life. Therefore, principals would benefit from a deliberate apprenticeship in fine arts management to aid them in sustaining fine arts programs. Participant responses were essential to how the fine arts affect student performance.

The findings indicate that attributions changed when principals became participant-observers in both school and their children's lives. Fine arts teachers should consider including administrators in specific productions as participants. Shorner-Johnson (2013) recommended that fine arts teachers be active in advocating for their programs. Further, principals must experience how artistic creativity in fine arts courses opens intelligent thinking (Shorner-Johnson, 2013).

The dialogue with participants concerning fine arts management training was deemed an essential factor in understanding the essence of fine arts education. The results indicate that participants agree that principal certification programs must include program sustainability and fine arts management instruction. Leadership is effective when principal certification programs cover the management and sustainability of nonstate-tested subjects like the fine arts. A well-written curriculum addressing fine arts management may be essential to help create, sustain, and implement fine arts programs throughout urban and rural schools. Dufour and Marzano (2015) stated that the improvement of scholastic triumph is achieved when school leaders and their training include all aspects of the whole education.

Recommendations

This study's results indicate several recommendations relating to principals' perceptions affecting their curriculum decision-making regarding the support of fine arts education in rural and urban public schools. The recommendations introduced in this chapter are intended for school leaders, fine arts teachers, and future researchers to improve fine arts education awareness and the ability to support and sustain fine arts programs. Based on attribution theory as a framework for the perception of fine arts in curriculum design, more emphasis is needed on changing the attributed perception of leaders towards the fine arts.

Recommendations for School Leadership

As a result, school leaders and administrators need new ways of thinking to deliver a complete curriculum to students and the community. Studies support fine arts education as a medium to improve student growth, both creatively and academically (Smith, 2005; Steinbach, 2013). This current study indicates that participants believed that the fine arts engaged students in critical thinking, creative thinking, cognitive ability, improvement of social skills, and teamwork. However, school district stakeholders and administrators continually shift their focus to measurable core subjects. Further supporting urban and rural fine arts programs can have various obstacles. As the results illustrate, budget constraints, budget cutbacks, school demographics, and hiring qualified teachers are some of the themes and obstacles that emerged from this study.

Participants revealed that their training in the fine arts at a public-school level was nonexistent in their principal certification programs. Some relied on past experiences to manage their existing programs. Principal certification programs must be revamped with a section on the effects of fine arts on education and a section on fine arts management. This study indicates that such training would give principals a new outlook on managing and what to expect from a fine arts program. I believe that including the fine arts in principal certification programs will bridge a gap between personal perception and past attributions towards the fine arts and the reality of fine arts education to instruct the school principal to become "the whole leader."

Recommendations for Teachers

As some participants revealed, their experiences in the fine arts as former teachers or as current principals have aided them in understanding some aspects of fine arts education. This experience was only possible through the invitation of the current fine arts teacher. Through the

lens of attribution theory, teachers can influence their leaders through participation as the underlying mechanism to impact behavior and actions. Fine arts teachers should create opportunities to involve their administrators of all levels in various productions. It is vital for the growth of the fine arts programs and vital to show a school leader the rigor of fine arts education. However, participation should not be limited to just administration. Core subject teachers should get involved with productions and concerts as a medium to bridge any existing gaps, especially for those teachers with no fine arts experience. Allowing this form of participation also aids the students in bridging gaps between core subjects and fine arts through core teacher participation.

Recommendations for Future Research

The pandemic caused a variety of new issues in education. Future researchers should explore COVID-19's effect on fine arts programs in all demographic areas. A study of this type may help in understanding the negative impact on programs a pandemic has and how schools and districts can avoid program closures. Another interesting study would include a comparison of principal certification programs from state to state. A study of this magnitude would give researchers new insight into the inclusion of fine arts in their respective states and aid in understanding the state stakeholders' perceptions of fine arts education. Additionally, a beneficial study of the relationship between the fine arts and school leadership is to examine how different leadership philosophies affect fine arts teachers.

These studies would provide valuable insight into understanding the perception of fine arts and further aid in the sustainability of fine arts education. This information would be valuable to new principals, district curriculum designers, university principal certification program stakeholders, and fine art teachers.

Conclusions

Because of economic challenges, past educational policies, and the pandemic, school districts are cutting back on noncore subjects such as the fine arts. Specifically, in rural and urban schools, the fine arts exist as either afterschool programs or as actual classes that district leaders do not have the capital to grow. However, principal perception regarding the fine arts may help increase funding to fine arts programs, create more fine art opportunities for rural and urban students, and help keep these programs for all students. Fine arts advocates posit the significant neural enrichment the fine arts give students to promote the skill, creativity, and stability needed for educational and social success.

With this study, I aimed to explore principals' perceptions affecting their curriculum decision-making regarding supporting fine arts education in rural and urban public schools. Using a qualitative multiple case study research design, I conducted semistructured interviews to equip school principals with the knowledge needed to provide various forms of support to existing fine art programs.

Through the attribution theory framework, the qualitative findings indicated a strong agreement among school principals about the importance of fine arts in a curriculum and their effect on student productivity. The most important finding was that a principal's experience in fine arts affected their perception of the fine arts in adulthood. Via attribution theory, attributions created as children are linked to strong negative or positive perceptions of fine arts, affecting the support of fine arts in their curriculums as adults.

The study also included an emphasis on aligning principal certification programs with fine arts education and management. Additionally, the study results highlighted the importance of involving community members with school fine arts programs as a support mechanism for

school and parental involvement. Finally, with this study, I sought to address the persistent parity between budget cuts and the hewing of fine arts education programs. This research includes suggestions to consider in changing attributes gained from negative experiences and for making the case to include fine arts education as a core class in the school curriculum.

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Appendix A: Emailed Invitation for Survey

Dear school administrator,

 Hello! My name is Osvaldo Altamirano, a Doctoral candidate for education at Abilene Christian University. I want to invite you to take part in a quick online questionnaire to see if you would be eligible to participate in my case study. I am studying on how a principal's perception affects their curricular decision-making regarding the support of fine arts education. The questionnaire will take no more than 5 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below.
If you meet the inclusion criteria, I hope that you might permit me to interview you on this topic. Your time is valuable to me, as well to you. I also teach full-time as an orchestra and mariachi instructor in elementary, middle, and high schools, to give you an idea of what day and time we could conduct this interview. I anticipate that this interview would take 30-40 minutes of your time with a possibility of a second interview. Please reply by completing the survey and respond to this email to confirm your interest, and I will then send you a separate email with scheduling times. Your response is much appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration,

Osvaldo Altamirano
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QNTV8F8

Appendix B: Email Scheduling and Consent Form

Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my study. The following dates are available for a ZOOM/Google Meets/Facetime interview. After scheduling, I will send you a confirmation email detailing our online meeting ID and the Informed Consent Form that you can digitally sign.

Please note that the study will only engage willing participants and will not use any form of deception. The topic, how a principal's perception affects their curricular decision-making regarding the support of fine arts education, is not a sensitive topic and should elicit no discomfort in the participant.

Because the data will be anonymous, there will be no breach of confidentiality. There are no other known risks associated with this research project.

If you would like more information, an Informed Consent Form letter is attached to this message. Please digitally sign this form.

Thank you for your participation,

Osvaldo Altamirano

Appendix C: Emailed School Demographics Survey

Public School Demographics Survey

Principal Participation Questionnaire

Please take a few moments to complete this survey.

1. Is your school in a rural, urban, or suburban community?

    a. Urban

    b. Suburban

    c. Rural

2. Does your school offer any of the fine arts? (Click all that apply).

    a. Band

    b. Orchestra

    c. Choir

    d. Theatre

    e. Mariachi

    f. All

    g. None

3. About how many years have you been in your current position?

    a. Less than 1 year

    b. At least 1 year but less than 3 years

    c. At least 3 years but less than 5 years

    d. At least 5 years but less than 10 years

    e. 10 years or more

4. Have you ever taken a fine arts course in your educational career?

    a. Yes

    b. No

5. What is your knowledge on fine art curriculum?

    a. Extremely familiar

    b. Very familiar

    c. Somewhat familiar

    d. Not so familiar

    e. Not at all familiar

Appendix D: Interview Questions

What experiences have West Texas public school principals had with the visual and performing arts?

- I'd like to find out about your life history. Could you tell me about it? Describe it to me as if you were telling me your life story?
- What was the main form of entertainment in your family when you were a kid (board games, listening to the radio, playing music/singing, reading books, putting on shows, etc.)?
- What was your earliest memory when you experienced music? Art? Theatre?
- Growing up, did you attend a private or public school? What do you remember about the fine arts in your school(s)? What was the most memorable performance, and why?
- Could you detail your experience with fine art classes as a child, either in school, or private instruction, or informal experiences (like church, community groups)?
  - How many years? If they quit, why did you give it up at that particular time? If no, what was the reason for you not to be enrolled in any fine art programs?
- During your schooling, did you ever attend any fine art field trips? Which was the most memorable?
- What can you tell me about your culture and how it viewed the fine arts as a career choice?
- What about in college, did you take any classes involving the fine arts? If so, what were they and how was your experience?

How do West Texas public school principals perceive their role in fine arts education?

- How long have you been in a school leadership position? What attracted you to become a principal?
- What is quality education in your leadership philosophy? How or do the fine arts fit into that definition? If not, please explain why they do not.
- What fine art classes do your school currently offer or are active? Why did you choose those or that particular program?
- How difficult is it to find qualified teachers that specialize in the fine arts in your district?
- Has there always been fine arts under your administration? What is your role in decision-making about inclusion of various subjects in the curriculum?

How do West Texas public school principals perceive the meaning of the phrase "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools?

- In what ways do you believe your principal training (education, certification) prepared you on how to be an active administrator for the fine arts?
- Is there a specific role you see the fine arts serving at your school?
- How do you support your fine arts programs?
  - If no programs, how would you support a fine art program if given the chance to have one or some?

What are the shared values among West Texas public school principals regarding the fine arts?

- As a teacher, what subject did you teach and what was your perception on the fine arts programs that existed?
- What potential benefits do you believe or see a student enrolled in any fine arts programs can learn?
- What potential benefits did you obtain as a result of your fine art education?
- When fine arts programs are often the first to be cut, how do you justify keeping the fine arts in your school?
- Can you describe the obstacles that are hampering your ability to fully support the fine arts in your school?

Appendix E: Code Book

RQ1: What experiences have West Texas public school principals had with the visual and

performing arts? (Codes and themes that appear frequently.)

1. Family Life (Pair with 5).

    a. Both parents working – Living with grandparents

2. Family entertainment (Pair with 5)

    a. Gatherings

    b. No gatherings because of farm life

3. School experience

    a. Joined a fine art

        i. Impact or No Impact as a Grown up

    b. No fine arts

        i. No fine arts because of monetary problems couldn't rent an

            instrument.

        ii. No fine arts offered in their school.

4. Most memorable performance.

    a. Impact or no impact (past, preset, future)

    b. Didn't have one

5. Family culture and status

    a. Beliefs

    b. Social (cultural) stigmas

        i. Family members lived close to each other

            1. Same apartment complex

    2. Same street

    ii. Basic needs not met as children

c. Poor, middle class, rich

Possible umbrella themes for RQ1:

1. Socioeconomic status (SES) – In all interviews, participants willingly mentioned their family status as children. Some mentioned that as students in elementary their decision to join a fine art was not made by individual preference, but by the ability to afford the rental of an instrument. While others mentioned that their family life as children was working in a farm with no time or fine art availability.

2. Cultural relativism (CR) – As children, many of the participants viewed their status in society as normal. Some, however, experienced a disconnect between their classmates and themselves. First generation American born participants struggled to blend in with their native counterparts. Fine arts for parents of the participant were viewed as an upper-class activity. However, parents would either support joining a fine art with the intention of their children fitting in, or not support it for the preservation of family culture and traditions (ethnocentrism).

RQ2: How do West Texas public school principals perceive their role in fine arts education?

1. Teaching the whole student (meaning)

    a. Learning to communicate socially

    b. Teamwork

    c. Learning to express themselves

2. Quality education philosophy (combine with number 1).

      a. Fine arts role

          i. Teaching the whole-student the skills mentioned in 1.

          ii. Reaches a diverse set of children.

              1. Those kids that are not athletically inclined.

3. Current school fine art programs.

    a. Inherited.

    b. Implemented.

    c. No fine arts in curriculum only after school enrichment programs.

4. Finding qualified fine art teachers.

    a. Difficulty

        i. No attraction to small towns.

        ii. Do not want to start new programs

        iii. Cost of living (housing market) is high in one case.

5. Decision-making in curriculum

    a. School based (district implemented or autonomy)

    b. Autonomy (metropolitan districts)

    c. Immutable curriculum established by heads of district (smaller towns).

Possible umbrella themes for RQ2:

Role expectation (codes 1, 2) – The participants expressed great deal upon their expectations as principals with the idea that their responsibility as leaders is to shape a vision of personal academic success for all students. However, the concept of teaching the whole child without offering more than one fine art or no fine arts creates an urgency to change the curriculum and fulfill the void of the arts education. Participants gave several examples of

students that have changed through fine arts classes. These examples were given as a memorable student during their tenure as teachers, or a memorable student during their principalship. Those participants with after school enrichment programs has seen the balance and excitement in the students participating. These particular participants have an urgency to add fine arts in their curriculum.

Incapacitated to moving forward (Codes 3, 4, and 5) – Even though most of the participants have autonomy in creating their own unique curriculum, adding fine arts is not as easy as making a quick decision. Participant 7 discusses how his school district only has one school in a very small town. Their graduating class in 2020 were 15 seniors. However, there after school music enrichment program is the most popular after school activity for all students in elementary, middle, and high school. Participant 7 has tried to add band in his curriculum and has posted this job opening to all the surrounding metropolitan cities with no luck in obtaining a certified music teacher. Other participants expressed how their school districts do not allow principals to change curriculum programs.

RQ3: How do West Texas public school principals perceive the meaning of the phrase "supporting the fine arts" as it applies to their schools?

    1. No training received in fine arts management, expectations.

        a. Out of the 10 participants only one mentioned that fine arts was briefly mentioned during their principal certification programs.

            i. Briefly mentioned. Meaning, the types of programs one might have in their future schools.

        b. Training occurred based on past or current knowledge of the fine arts.

    i.   Participants were in the fine arts as elementary, middle, or high school students.

    ii.   Briefly participated in college "fine arts" activities: i.e., Greek Week play contest. However, not enough to count as experience in the fine arts or give knowledge on how to support the fine arts.

    iii.   The impact they see on students that participate in each participant fine art program make them "wish" they had more opportunities for all students.

2. Fine arts creates mental connections and deliberate creative actions.

   a.   See fewer behavioral issues.

      i.   Even in students with behavior modifications.

   b.   Participants have seen core connections during teacher observations in their fine art program.

   c.   Creative dissonance.

      i.   Participants have observed the idea of how a note played wrong isn't wrong.

      ii.   Participant 10 describes his only fine art program as a place where children cannot be scolded for playing wrong notes, however, encouraged to analyze how they played the wrong note.

      iii.   Most participants with elementary music programs (that meet twice a week) have observed music students during concerts and their passion for performing (regardless of student performing accuracy).

3. Budget constraints have pushed participants to support the fine arts as active observers.

a. Attending concerts

b. Agreeing to all forms of fund raising

c. Active participation in performances (those participants that were musicians or dancers in the past).

d. Promoting the programs by pushing performances in front of district administrators.

4. Most participant schools know that parents cannot afford rental fees from instruments if more fine art programs are created.

    a. Districts budgets are based on property taxes.

        i. Some participant schools have less than 900 students between elementary, middle, and high school.

            1. Small town issues.

                a. More people moving in with no children.

                b. People from bigger cities buying up cheap property and building big homes, but no children.

RQ4: What are the shared values among West Texas public school principals regarding the fine arts?

1. Participants as teachers remember the creativity, the student's ability to make art happen.

2. Some participants believe that student engagement in the fine arts yields to communal pride.

    a. Small group of students performing known works from their respected towns or cities. Collaboration.

        i.   Mariachi music

        ii.   Country/patriotic music

        iii.   Folk dancing (Mexican/barn dancing)

b.   Cooperation. Some participants see the fine arts as support to small town football games.

        i.   Band is a big part of athletic games.

            1.   Band support is big in small and big towns.

            2.   Some participant schools, however, have resorted to find whatever instruments are available to make audible noise during games.

3. Fine arts promote outside thinking and feeling. Partnership.

   a.   Student council members mostly fine art students

   b.   Compassion

        i.   Performing for public

            1.   Nursing homes

            2.   Armed forces vets

   c.   Artistic expression in art students.

        i.   Political thought and feeling.

        ii.   Humor

4. Fine arts promote self-awareness.

   a.   Participants that were in fine arts during their primary schooling described themselves as not being afraid to be in front of people and speak or act.

   b.   Participants with no fine arts participation as students, however were athletes, learned late in life how to speak to a crowd.

    c. Student expressive or descriptive art or dance.

        i. Coming out as homosexual through art.

        ii. Family life through dance.

5. Teamwork and commitment (collaboration)

    a. All participants mentioned teamwork and commitment.

        i. One participant made the connection between athletic kids learning these values on the field or court and fine art kids (nonathletic kids) learning the same set of values on the stage. Participant also mentioned that the kids with both athleticism and artistry (talent in a fine art) were "a double threat" to future endeavors.

    b. Citizenship skills

        i. Social thinking

        ii. Work ethic

        iii. Analyzing information

        iv. Critical thinking

        v. Educational independence.

            1. Learning on their own.

        vi. Self-improvement

6. Obstacles of participants affecting support of the fine arts

    a. Attracting certified teachers to move to a small town

    b. No qualified teachers available to add fine arts in current curriculum. Resort to after school enrichment programs.

    c. Budget constraints from district.

Possible Umbrella Themes for RQ4:

Synergy – Participants mentioned the culmination of student collaboration in fine arts and the merging of various skills to create an artistic interaction that promotes social and individual proficiencies that benefit both student well-being and societal challenges.

Appendix F: IRB Approval Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

December 8, 2020

Osvaldo Altamirano
Department of Graduate and Professional Studies
Abilene Christian University

Dear Osvaldo,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Principal Decision-Making and Perception of Fine Arts Programing in Curricular Design",

(IRB# 20-199   )is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs