

TITLE: Puerto Rican School Principals' Perceptions of How Their Cultural Background Impacts Their Leadership Style

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OBJECTIVE: To explore how Puerto Rican school principals perceive their role as a leader and how they think their cultural background impacts their leadership style.

METHODOLOGY: Sample consisted of four Puerto Rican school principals; two were elementary school principals in Pennsylvania and one elementary and one secondary school principal in Puerto Rico. There were a series of three in-depth interviews with the principals, along with participant observation. The Personal Best Questionnaire (PBQ) was also completed by the participants. An independent expert in Puerto Rico, who has worked in administrative positions with Hispanic populations in the U.S. educational system for more than 20 years, evaluated the PBQ and concluded: "...is an excellent tool to evaluate anyone's accomplishments in the field of administration. I did not see many problem applying this to a Hispanic population since their experiences should not be any different from any one else. I believe the only difference is in the way in which you as an individual would approach your career."

KEY FINDINGS: The Puerto Rican principals who work in U.S. schools are aware of the cultural differences between themselves and their staff and how it affects their leadership style, especially their focus on people and their cultural tendency to express their feelings. This perception was not true for the two principals in Puerto Rico.

Dissertation contains four well-documented personal best leadership case studies. A copy of the PBQ in Spanish is also available in the appendix.