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LATINA WOMEN EDUCATIONAL LEADERS:
THEIR EXPERIENCES, OBSTACLES, AND TRIUMPHS

By
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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of the Creighton University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Interdisciplinary Leadership.

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Abstract

The purpose of this ethnographic qualitative research was to describe the experiences of Latina principals in a western state. The aim was to use the findings to recommend a mentoring program of aspiring Latina principals. Ethnography was the preferred data collection method in an attempt to unveil cultural scenes unique to the informants and their role as school principals. Informants participated in face-to-face interviews, which made use of unstructured open-ended questions, in an effort to give informants the opportunity and freedom to openly share their views and experiences from their own frame of reference. The qualitative research study was comprised of ten Latina women school principals in a western state. Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Quality measures of an audit trail, triangulation, and member check were conducted. All participant information was kept confidential and each was provided informed consent. The study found five themes. These themes were: they had no defined limits, family played a vital role, had mentors, had a need to influence lives, and were resilient. On a systemic level, the findings from this research study may help implement a mentoring program for aspiring Latina women leaders at the district level to help support Latina women who may under current circumstances be overlooked. The need for a mentoring program was supported by the findings. The results demonstrated a need to establish a formal mentoring program for aspiring Latina principals. Additionally, the following recommendations emerged: a focus on the hiring process, staff retentions, professional development, and networking groups. Further research in the area of Latina principals is warranted.
Dedication

I first want to thank God; He is my light and savior. Without His blessings I would not be here today.

I want to first thank my mother Sonia Lopez, who taught me to dream and reach for my goals. I also want to thank my father Nestor Valentin Pimienta, who taught me the importance of work ethics, education, and hard work. I would not be the woman I am without their role modeling, sacrifice, and endless support. I continue to strive and make them proud.

My brother Nestor Jose Pimienta, I cannot imagine a more intelligent, talented, and compassionate brother. His perseverance and work towards social justice inspires me to be the best that I can be. He has taught me that anything is possible and dreams come true to those who work for it. I am so proud and honored to be your sister.

I want to thank my husband Richie Rodriguez, my best friend. Thank you for always supporting, motivating, and taking care of me throughout this process. You truly make me a better person. Lastly, I want to dedicate this dissertation to all the Latina women who aspire to lead and change lives.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank and acknowledge my dissertation committee Dr. Peggy Hawkins, Dr. Barbara Brock, and Dr. Virginia Tufano for their guidance and support.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

There is not much academic inquiry on Latina educational leaders. However, the common denominator on the research that has been conducted is the lack of Latina women principals throughout the United States. As the number of Latino students increases in public schools, the need to have Latina principals leading these schools is vital because these students need role models with whom they can identify. According to the United States Census Bureau, the Hispanic population has surpassed 45 million, making it the largest ethnic group in this nation. Approximately 49% of the six million students attending California schools are Latinos (California Department of Education, 2009). The social structures pertaining to educational leadership must meet the needs of the Latino students. The barriers that prevent Latina women from moving up to the leadership roles in education must be addressed. In spite of being highly experienced and capable, many Latina women administrators face distinctive trials and hindrances.

For Latina women leaders, access to information, visibility, and prospects to demonstrate competence are examples of opportunity dimensions that are not sufficiently available to them (Dreher & Cox, 1996). The lack of Latina women in principal roles makes it challenging for aspiring Latina women educational leaders to find mentors and role models. This disproportion ultimately influences the Latino students who are trying to find someone with which they can identify. It is necessary that the needs of students throughout the United States are met. Currently in Southern California, as in the rest of the nation, the ethnic composition of principals remains the same despite the increasing number of Latino students (Cooper & Conley, 2011). More research needs to be
developed on this matter so that aspiring Latina women educational leaders will acquire strategies that will enable them to reach their professional goals and change this imbalance.

Chapter one of this dissertation is divided into nine subdivisions that serve as the fundamentals of this study. This chapter begins with the background that provides an outline of the topic of Latina women educational leaders including the demographics of Latino students and Latina women principals and the root of this inequality. The next subdivision of this chapter focuses on the researcher’s inspiration for this investigation. The chapter begins with the purpose of this study, including the rationale, the importance of this research, and the researcher’s perspective. The end of chapter one covers the definition of terms, assumptions, limitations, and summary.

**Background of Problem**

Women in leadership roles encounter many obstacles to obtain their management positions and continue to overcome challenges once they achieve their positions; when differences such as race are added, the level of adversity only increases. Latinos in the United States comprise 16.3% of the total population. The Latino population increased by over 43% nationally from the 2000 census to the 2010 census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This brief glimpse of the population movement of Latinos in the United States and the rate at which the Latino population is increasing is a vital indicator that as the Latino population increases, the need for educational role models they can relate to is essential. Based on the numbers from the Census Bureau, one would assume that the number of Latina women in principal positions would not be so scarce. Figure 1 displays the statistics of students’ demographics by ethnicity.
Table 1

*Ethnic distribution of public school students: 2011–12*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American not Hispanic</td>
<td>406,089</td>
<td>6.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>42,539</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>535,829</td>
<td>8.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>157,640</td>
<td>2.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>3,236,942</td>
<td>52.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>34,944</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White not Hispanic</td>
<td>1,626,507</td>
<td>26.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races Not Hispanic</td>
<td>130,947</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None Reported</td>
<td>49,556</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,220,993</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Latina women principals are undeniably underrepresented compared to Caucasian and African American principals (Banks, 2000). Latina women principals can be role models at schools with a high Latino population; not only will students feel they can look up to them, they will feel they can relate to them and feel motivated to achieve great things. Latina women may also serve as role models at schools with a low Latino population by emphasizing the importance of diversity. Understanding the barriers that Latina women educational leaders must overcome can offer insights to help equalize the underrepresentation of Latina women in educational leadership positions.
Magdaleno (2006) noticed the great disproportion of Latina women administrators (15.4%) and Latino students (54%) and as a result created California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators. He inaugurated a mentoring program with trustworthy and knowledgeable Latino leaders mentoring aspiring Latino leaders as a way to help balance this inequality. Latina women leaders go through different experiences than non-minority administrators go through because of the stereotypes, expectations, and biases.

There are numerous causes for the lack of Latina women in principal roles. Many Latina women are raised on values that prioritize marriage and family. The obligations that arise from forming a family conflict with their goals of advancing their careers. Although some Latina women seek out a support system from friends and family, other Latina women view advancing their careers as an impossible goal.

The root of this gender inequality that hinders Latina women is the idea that women leaders must be the perfect balance of argentic and communal. If for any reason a woman displays too much of one or the other, her opportunity may be hindered. As Eagly and Carli (2007) mentioned in chapter 10, “Women must quell two types of doubts: suspicion that they are not sufficiently argentic and they are not sufficiently communal” (p. 163). It is unfair to demand a perfect combination of both: yet it is expected.

According to Eagly and Carli (2007):

Nice, friendly female leaders may be criticized for not being assertive and decisive enough unless they temper their communion with agency. But strong,
decisive female leaders may be criticized for not being warm and nice enough unless they temper their agency with communion. (p.163)

For Latina women, the factors of race and gender have complicated their career advancement to principal roles. However, the Latina women leaders acknowledge the necessity to increase the number of Latina leaders in principal roles for the next generation of Latina women aspiring to lead schools.

If one wants to close the Latino Achievement Gap, the number of Latina principals needs to increase. The Latino Achievement Gap refers to the poor academic achievement of Latino students. If the number of Latino students keeps growing and the lack of Latina women administrators keeps increasing, the result will be students who feel they have no one with whom they can identify. Table 2 displays the disproportions of Latino/Latina principals compared to Caucasian, non-Hispanic principals in the United States and in California. It is evident that the ratio of Latina women in principal roles needs to increase to meet the ratio of Latino students in the United States. Out of the 90,000 principals in the United States only 7% are Hispanic. In California the percentage of Hispanic principals is a little higher at 17%. The ratio of Hispanic principals should reflect the Hispanic student enrollment in public schools so students can have someone with whom they can identify and relate with.
Table 2

Number of Public School Principals and Percentage Distribution of School Principals, by Race/Ethnicity and State: 2011–12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hispanic, regardless of race</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>115,040</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from U.S. Department of Education. *National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)*, (2012)

**Statement of the Problem**

This research study was about Latina women educational leaders who overcame adversity to obtain their principal roles. These women shared their experiences so that the future generation of Latina women aspiring to be leaders can learn from their knowledge and expertise. This research is crucial to the millions of Latino students in public schools who lack principals with whom they can identify and relate with. Most importantly, this study is vital for the millions of Latina women in this country who have no one to mentor them and are striving to lead schools and break down barriers and stereotypes. The contributions made by this research serve as a guide to assist those interested in recognizing and knowing the leadership traits and qualities exhibited by effective Latina women principals. It is also vital to comprehend and expose the challenges these Latina women principals had to overcome, as well as expose the elements that assisted Latina women in climbing the leadership ladder.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this qualitative, ethnographic study was to describe the experiences of Latina women principals in a western state. This research contributed
empowering narratives to the study of Latina women educational leaders and the limited existing research. By valuing the experiences of these Latina women educational leaders, inquiries such as this dissertation contribute to the limited research on this matter. It was imperative to obtain an understanding of what philosophies, qualities, characteristics, and values Latina women must possess in an educational leadership position. The aim of this study was to use the findings to recommend a mentoring program for aspiring Latina women principals.

**Research Questions**

This research was guided by the following questions:

1. What macro and micro forces do Latina women principals describe as influencing their attainment of leadership positions?
2. What are Latina women principals’ interpretations of their role as a principal?
3. How do Latina women principals perceive the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions?

**Method Overview**

"Ethnography literally means 'a portrait of a people.' An ethnography is a written description of a particular culture - the customs, beliefs, and behavior - based on information collected through fieldwork" (Harris & Johnson, 2000, p. 4). Ethnography is a useful methodology that can provide a new perspective for people with preset notions on a particular culture or group of people.

**Rationale**

This study consisted of data compiled from interviews of Latina women administrators who overcame adversity to attain their principal roles. Presenting the
findings of these interviews offered insights to reasons why there is such a lack of Latina women educational leaders. These data findings may benefit school boards, school districts, and other people researching ways to recruit Latina women administrators. One concept the researcher examined during the investigation was the Critical Race Theory (CRT) which acknowledges issues such as but not limited to: immigration, race, language, culture, phenotype, and sexuality (Delgado, 2002). Investigating this theory offered a probable insight for the underrepresentation of Latina women in principal roles.

**Definition of Terms**

This section provides a listing of terms that was used for this research.

*Latina women*: female members of populations who have either linguistic and/or cultural connections to the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, Cuba and Puerto Rico and Mexico (Shartrand, 1996).

*Principals*: the educator who has executive authority for a school (Princeton, 2014).

*Principalship*: the post of principal (Princeton, 2010).

*Underrepresentation*: minority women do not have adequate entry into the most prestigious leadership positions in K-12 education, and therefore, are not adequately represented in a group (Gardiner, 2000).

**Delimitations**

This research was designed within the factors of the following delimitations:

1. The geographic location for this study was limited to a western state.
2. Only ten current K-12 Latina women public school principals were selected for this study.
Limitations

1. Because the investigator is a Latina woman, this might affect the liaison between respondent and interviewer in which the conduct of each member is inclined by the suitable social standards.

2. Because the investigator is the primary instrument of this study, personal and professional biases can influence data analysis.

Assumptions

1. Interviewees agreed and were accessible to contribute in the research.

2. Interviewees were honest in answering to dialogue inquiries.

3. Interviewees were skillful of recollecting and construing their historical stories, reactions and experiences.

Significance of the Study

Before one can determine ways to promote leadership advancement amongst Latina women educators, one must first uncover what the detrimental forces are preventing Latina women from progressing and what macro and micro forces are advancing Latina women into leadership roles. There is not much research on Latina women principals; nor are there many literary articles that go into detail on the many obstacles Latina women face to become educational leaders. This study provided a glimpse into the key attributes that these Latina women displayed that enabled them to overcome adversity.

Researcher’s Perspective of Study

The topic of Latina women leadership in education is personal because the researcher is a Latina woman who aspires to keep advancing in educational leadership,
and it is essential to research the root of this imbalance. Second, as the researcher comes across the gender and race inequalities in the field of education it can get discouraging at times to feel like the outsider. When the researcher attended district and regional meetings, she realized there were no other Latina women in the room. This made her question why is there such a lack of Latina women educational leaders? The other question that arose was, what support systems are out there to assist the few Latina women in leadership positions? The researcher is a Latina woman who overcame much adversity and can relate to and comprehend why so many other Latina women may have gotten discouraged along the way. Like many Latina women the researcher overcame much adversity and persevered despite all the hardships. It is a personal goal to be a role model to students every single day. As the researcher looks around at leadership conventions and notices there are not many women that look Latina, she cannot help but wonder, what barriers have kept Latina women from advancing through the educational pipeline? It is the researcher’s belief that by interviewing Latina women school principals and sharing their stories other Latina women who want to be educational leaders in the future will be inspired by their experiences, obstacles, and triumphs.

Summary

The number of Latino students in public schools is growing; it is vital that role models they can look up to and relate to are leading these schools. It is essential that school districts offer ample opportunities for Latina women to develop as leaders. Latina women are endeavoring to lead in the field of education. As Latina women strive to lead in education, it is vital to expose the common obstacles, triumphs, and experiences that these women have so that the future generation of Latina women can learn from these
experiences and are inspired by their stories. Research on the disparity of the number of Latina women principals compared to non-Latina women leaders is essential if educators expect to close the Latino achievement gap and if society wants to enable more Latina women to be school leaders.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two is comprised of a review of the literature that functions as the base for this study. Chapter two is divided into three major sections. The first section provides a historical perspective on women and leadership. This section focuses on diversifying the workplace. The second major section of chapter two provides an overview on Latina women in the United States. This section concentrates on Latina women as professionals. The last section of chapter two focuses on Critical Race Theory.

Women and Leadership: A Historical Perspective

The state of women’s leadership in the United States has made significant progress since the salary gaps of the 1950s, but women’s leadership still has a long way to go. The glass ceiling needs to be broken. “Prejudice and discrimination that slow or sometimes completely block women’s advancement have surely not disappeared,” (Eagly, 2007, p.1). Although many ambitious and educated women in our society such as Meg Whitman and Hillary Clinton have attained top-level positions; many other women are hindered by the glass ceiling created by the socio-economical gender pay gap. The field of academia is no different. According to The White House Project Report (2009), “Women make up 57 percent of the undergraduates in U.S. colleges today” (p.17). Yet, men continue to govern in the most desirable leadership positions in academia. A change needs to happen. Even though the glass ceiling can be cracked, it still needs to be completely gone so that women are not funneled down, resulting in only a handful making it to the very top.
There are numerous causes for inequalities. For starters, the root of gender inequality is the concept that women leaders must be the perfect balance of argentic and communal. If for any reason a woman displays too much of one or the other, her opportunity may be hindered. As Eagly and Carli (2007) suggested “Women must quell two types of doubts: suspicion that they are not sufficiently tough and they are not sufficiently communal” (p. 163). The desirable psychological characteristic of women leaders is asking for a lot. It is unfair to demand a perfect combination of both, yet it is expected. “Nice, friendly female leaders may be criticized for not being assertive and decisive enough unless they temper their communion with agency. But strong, decisive female leaders may be criticized for not being warm and nice enough unless they temper their agency with communion” (p.163).

The academia sector is the foundation for all the other sectors, such as business, law, and science. The purpose of academia is to prepare students to cross the threshold into the workplace and beyond. Building capacity, educational leadership, and guidance remains one of the fundamental substances for achievement in education today. Yet, it is predominately men claiming this leadership, while the women are trying to catch up. According to The White House Project Report (2009), “Female faculty have not made any progress in closing the salary gap with their male counterparts. In 1972, they made 83 percent of what male faculty made: in 2008, they make 82 percent of what male faculty make,” (p. 25). The salary gap has not decreased in 40 years. In fact, the salary gap increased by 1%. This exemplifies the state of women’s leadership within this discipline, and how it needs reform in the compensation sector. Table 3 and Table 4 depict desegregated data on the difference in compensation.
Table 3

*Female Salaries as a Percent of Male Salaries by Rank*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female Salaries as a Percent of Male Salaries by Rank</th>
<th>2007-2008</th>
<th>1972-1973</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All faculty</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant professor</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Digest of Education Statistics (2008).

Table 4

*Average Salaries of Male and Female Faculties 2012-13*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty: 2012-13</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public 2-year</td>
<td>$64,152</td>
<td>$61,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 4-year</td>
<td>$84,822</td>
<td>$69,150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Digest of Education Statistics (2013).

The number of women in leadership positions such as presidency in the field of academia is an ignominy. According to The White House Project Report (2009),

“Women today account for 29 percent of presidents at two-year colleges, compared with 14 percent at universities that grant doctoral degrees,” (p. 20). Gender equity is far from equal in this sector. Drastic measures need to take place to close this gap. Glazer (1997)
made a suggestion: “It would be appropriate to determine what it is about institutional structures that make them more compatible with men’s lives” (p. 70). Institutions need to modify their policies so they are equitable and family friendly, making it accessible for women to rise to the top and not feel they have to compromise or sacrifice family along the way.

Gillespie and Temple (2011) brought up the crucial and vital role that plays a major cause in gender inequality, family responsibilities.

“Nonetheless, many of today’s moms have been sucked into the perfection maelstrom, feeling as if they need to coordinate and supervise their kids’ all-important activity schedules while staying up-to-date on every trend and keeping pace at the office and home,” (p.12).

Society puts so much pressure on women to be perfect. So much pressure results in mothers overworked because of the amount of hours they put in at their jobs and at home. According to Gillespie and Temple (2011):

“In fact, in 2000, employed mothers, spent the same amount of time interacting with their children, as at home moms did in 1975. The frustration, and sheer exhaustion, that inevitably followed this high-speed lifestyle was palpable in the heartfelt comments of the women who participated in our survey,” (p. 12).

Because women are spending the same amount of time as stay-at-home mothers did in the 1970s is a potential rationale of why working women in 2014 are tired. The modern woman is balancing two full time jobs, their careers and their families.
Diversifying the Workplace

The resistance to women in leadership in the academia sector is another cause for the gender inequality. Women’s advancement in education is concerning, “there is a significant pool of women trapped in contingent faculty positions without opportunity for advancement” (The White House Project Report, 2009). In order for the gender gap to close, human resources departments and hiring committees need to diversify the pool of candidates and provide advancement opportunities to women who are parents.

Latina Women in the United States

The history of Latina women in the United States stems from the immigration of Latinos to this country. Understanding the reason why women immigrated to this country is vital to the study of Latina immigration. The research on Latina immigrants is limited. Most of the research is focused on the male immigrants.

Immigration has enabled women to provide their children with opportunities to live a better life and achieve their dreams. Although many times these immigrant women will not make high wages, their income is still significantly higher than what they would make in their native country. The number of Latina women working in domestic jobs confirms that immigrant women are needed to fill these positions. In the 1960s low-income jobs started being generated in the United States for Latinos.

The transition has been easier once immigrants cross the border because communities have networks that provide resources for newcomers, “over the past two decades have created informal networks that facilitate the arrival of new people who, once in the country have a relative or friend who gives them lodging and helps them find work” (Uchitelle, 1999, p.3). Because most of the networks are led and composed by
men; it was essential for women to begin their own support groups. Women receive aid in finding domestic work through these support groups that include women who are employed in similar jobs.

Immigrants have always provided cheap labor in this country such as working in the fields, construction jobs, and domestic work cleaning. Latina women immigrants once they arrive in this country face the hindrance of the language barrier, the lack of education, and the cultural difference that prevents them from getting hired in mainstream, better paying jobs. Combining all these factors is what keeps many immigrants in minimum wage positions. Because their options are so restricted, most Latina women immigrants will stay as domestic workers.

Jackson points out the following statistics on Latina women (2013):

- “Latina women make 55 cents to the dollar when compared to white, non-Hispanic males. In comparison, white women make 78.1 cents to the same dollar” (Jackson, 2013).
- “Latina women earn $549 per week, compared with white women’s median earnings of $718” (Jackson, 2013).
- “According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 32.2 percent of Latina women work in the service sector, compared with only 20 percent of white women, and service workers are almost 20 percent less likely to have either paid sick leave or retirement benefits” (Jackson, 2013).

**Latina Women as Professionals**

Achieving that goal of advancement brings a great sense of pride to anyone; especially a Latina woman professional. Latina women leaders encounter a variety of
obstacles in the workplace. One of the biggest challenges is the wage gap. Gonzales-Figueroa and Young (2005) stated that Latina women “earn less than their male counterparts and female counterparts of other ethnic groups” (p. 1). Latina women in leadership positions are very limited. Where “Latina women who work full time earn 89% of what men earn each week, compared to 81% for women overall” (Reveron, 2007, p. 1).

According to the Table 5, weekly earnings of Asian women ($1,143) were higher than those of White women ($932), Black women ($812), and Hispanic women ($789) amongst the women in management positions.

Table 5

*Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2010*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management, professional, and related occupations</td>
<td>$1,408</td>
<td>$1,143</td>
<td>$1,273</td>
<td>$932</td>
<td>$1,002</td>
<td>$789</td>
<td>$957</td>
<td>$812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and office occupations</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Occupations</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along with the wage disparity, another challenge is the need to “belong” and fit the mold that is expected of them by their superiors. According to Catalyst (2003), Latina women try to conform to the expectations that society has for women. Latina women struggle to maintain their culture without showing it, (p. 22).

The number of Latina women who receive college degrees is extremely low and a sign that something serious has to happen in order for this number to increase. The disparity between Latina women receiving a bachelor’s and an advanced degree compared to White women is a gap that needs to be closed. In 2006-2007, 8% of Latina women received a bachelor’s degree compared to 70.8% White women (NCES, 2008). In 2009, only 3.1% of Latina women held management titles in Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 2010).

The figure below breaks down the percent of men and women employed by occupation. According to figure 2, compared to the other ethnicities, the majority of Hispanic women were employed in service occupations.

**Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) acknowledges that racism is not just a part of our culture; it is engrained in every sector, industry, institution, and class level. CRT emphasizes feelings of marginalization, alienation, and discrimination experienced across a variety of social establishments, mainly encountered in the public education system (Trevino, Harris, & Wallace, 2008). Thus, CRT offers a voice for those who are oppressed and can become the tool for ending inequality and injustice (Trevino, Harris, & Wallace, 2008). Critical Race Theory scrutinizes racism across all structures. There are three key points to CRT: 1) representing the stories of discrimination from the perspective of people of color, 2) taking action to stop racial subjugation while acknowledging race as a social construct, and 3) addressing the intersection of gender,
race, class, and inequity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Parker & Lynn, 2002). This storytelling conserves the past of ostracized and oppressed people who have never been legitimized within the master narrative (Solórzano, 1998).

Solórzano (1998) argued that CRT is committed to social justice and requires scholars to take an active role in working toward abolishing racism, resulting in the elimination of oppression (p. 122). Cooper (2009) also concurred, challenging leaders to their influence and authority to not only empower stakeholders to work for change, but also promote social equality. According to Price (2010), CRT moves the focus from equality to social justice through radical reform. Social justice comprises of liberty and justice for all, as well as the just and ethical treatment of people. CRT is focused on solving the socioeconomic and political disproportions that have remained since desegregation (Dantley & Tillman, 2006). Demographics are constantly changing in the United States; in particular the number of Latinos is increasing at a rapid rate. Therefore, social justice has become an important issue to address inequity of marginalized groups (Cooper, 2009).

Solórzano, Yosso, and Ceja (2000) stated that, CRT in education is described as a structure of simple outlooks, approaches, and pedagogy that pursue to recognize, examine, and reform the organizational, ethnic, and interpersonal pieces of education that preserve the bordering positions and relegations of African American and Latino students. Anyon (2005) mentioned, the economic policies of the federal government have greatly contributed to the current crisis in our schools by tapping away capitals from urban schools and leaving the empty shells of formerly thriving industrial centers. According to Parker and Lynn (2002), CRT questions the issues of differences in
inequities. Whiteness as property is used to explain much of the inequity in the funding of American public schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT assumes that the power, privilege, and the wealth in today’s American society is controlled by the white, in the meantime minorities that are growing up in poverty have limited access to opportunity and a first class education as compared to the white students. CRT delivers a multifaceted perspective that was utilized to examine the interviewees’ responses.

**Summary**

What was demonstrated in the literature is that the imbalance of Latina women in educational leadership positions stems from the issue of women and leadership. Women and leadership has been an ongoing issue in this country for a long time. In fact, diversifying the workplace is something with which companies are still struggling. Additionally, Latina women in the United States have a long way to go in order to close the gap. The Critical Race Theory provides a rationalization for the lack of Latinas in leadership. Developing Latina women educational leaders is essential.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, ethnographic study was to describe the experiences of Latina women principals in a western state. This research contributed empowering narratives to the study of Latina women educational leaders and the limited existing research. By valuing the experiences of these Latina women educational leaders, inquiries such as this dissertation contribute to the limited research on this matter. It was imperative to obtain an understanding of what philosophies, qualities, characteristics, and values Latina women must possess. The aim of this study was to use the findings to recommend a mentoring program for aspiring Latina women principals. Chapter three is comprised of the methodology and the description of the participants. The chapter then moves on to how the data were collected and the analysis of the data. The chapter concludes with the quality of the findings and ethical considerations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, ethnographic study was to describe the experiences of Latina women principals in a western state. This research contributed empowering narratives to the study of Latina women educational leaders and the limited existing research. By valuing the experiences of these Latina women educational leaders, inquiries such as this dissertation contribute to the limited research on this matter. It was imperative to obtain an understanding of what philosophies, qualities, characteristics, and values Latina women must possess in an educational leadership position. The aim of this study was to use the findings to recommend a mentoring program for aspiring Latina women principals.
Research Questions

This research was guided by the following questions:

1. What macro and micro forces do Latina women principals describe as influencing their attainment of leadership positions?
2. What are Latina women principals’ interpretations of their role as a principal?
3. How do Latina women principals perceive the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions?

Method

Qualitative ethnography was the method of study. Qualitative analysis collects a vast quantity of information concerning a single theme, even though approving the examiner to assist as an instrument to desegregate the data (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative research study was comprised of ten Latina women school principals in a western state. The principals worked for the Los Angeles Unified School District and Santa Ana Unified School Districts. All ten principals were interviewed for this study. The research looked at the trials these women faced and focused on how they turned adversity into opportunities. This study examined what common traits they needed to possess to attain their principal roles. All ten participants were interviewed at their preferred location so it was their “natural setting” and they felt comfortable. The researcher was a key instrument and provided the interview questions to the participants beforehand so they were familiar with the content. The researcher also provided them with a copy of chapter one along with the literature review so participants were familiar with the study and were aware of the purpose of the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2005), defined qualitative research as:
A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interviews; artifacts; cultural texts and production; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals’ lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding on the subject matter at hand. It is understood, however, that each practice makes the worlds visible in a different way. (p. 4)

The qualitative research design strategy that was used for this study was ethnography. Ethnography is “an analytical description of social scenes and groups that recreate for the reader the shared beliefs, practices, artifacts, folk knowledge, and behaviors of those people.” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 2). Participants of this study were part of face-to-face ethnographic interviews, comprised of unstructured open-ended questions, in an effort to give informants the opportunity and freedom to openly share their views and experiences from their own frame of reference.

"Ethnography literally means 'a portrait of a people.' An ethnography is a written description of a particular culture - the customs, beliefs, and behavior - based on information collected through fieldwork" (Harris & Johnson, 2000, p. 5). Ethnography is a useful methodology that can provide a new perspective for people with preset notions
on a particular culture or group of people. Ethnographies are especially useful at presenting cultural portraits of culture sharing groups because groups under study are presented holistically and in context (Airasian, Gay & Mills, 2009).

**Description of the Participants**

All of the women selected for this study are current school principals in a western state. A purposeful sampling of ten Latina women principals was used for this study. The criteria for this study was Latinas who held leadership positions as principals. The selection of these ten women was based on “networking” and selecting Latina women who achieved leadership positions. The first participant was Rosanna. She is a first-generation Latina woman who was raised in San Diego County. She is in her early 30s and currently works as an administrator in Orange County, California. She is a newlywed and lives with her husband. Rosanna has no children. The second participant was Daisy. She is a first-generation Latina who grew up in the gang infested East Los Angeles projects. Despite all the obstacles, Daisy persevered and became a successful administrator. She is married and resides with her husband; she has no children. The third participant was Rosario, a second-generation Latina woman who was born and raised in Orange County. She lives with her parents despite being in her thirties. She is single and has no kids. The fourth participant was Monique, a third-generation Latina woman who grew up in Torrance, California a small community fifteen minutes from Los Angeles. Monique is single and has no kids. She lives with her mother and her sister. Janet, the fifth participant, is another third-generation Latina woman who grew up in Anaheim, California. Janet is divorced and has a 10 year old daughter. The sixth participant was Laura a first-generation Latina woman who grew up in Santa Ana,
California. Laura is single and in her thirties. She lived with her parents up to a year ago. She still supports her parents even though she moved out to her own apartment last year. Brenda was the seventh participant. She also grew up in Los Angeles. Brenda recently bought her penthouse in downtown Los Angeles. She is divorced and has no kids. Christy was the eighth participant. She is in her early 30s and grew up in the valley. Christy is engaged and has a step daughter in middle school. She is a second-generation Latina woman. Maria was the ninth participant; she was born in Mexico and came to the United States when she was an infant. She was raised in Los Angeles and is in her late 30s. Maria is married and has no children. Eva was the last participant, she a first-generation Latina woman who still lives with her parents. She resides in Newport Beach, California and grew up in Orange County. Eva is single and does not have children. A common trend amongst the participants was that most of the single women live with their parents despite their age. It is expected they stay at home despite the fact that they are powerful leaders at their school sites.

Every participant was asked demographic questions about (a) her ethnic and cultural background, (b) her professional journey to becoming principal, and (c) her role in raising Latina/o achievement. Basic demographic and professional information collected from the survey is displayed in Tables 1 and 2. All participants selected the pseudonym of their choice. Information pertaining to each principal’s campus, including (a) total population percentage, (b) Latina/o population percentage, (c) free/reduced lunch percentage, and (d) federal accountability program improvement status is displayed in Table 6.
Table 6

**Demographic Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Resides with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosanna</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>with spouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>with spouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosario</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>Guatemalan</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christy</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>with spouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>with spouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>Salvadorian</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

**Professional Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years in education</th>
<th>Years as a teacher</th>
<th>Years as an assistant principal</th>
<th>Years as principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosanna</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosario</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

*Campus Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Latino/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosanna</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosario</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique</td>
<td>2,268</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>1,753</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christy</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>98.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Researcher’s Role**

The researcher is a Latina woman who overcame much adversity and can relate to and comprehend why so many other Latina women may have gotten discouraged along the way. Like many Latina women the researcher overcame much adversity and persevered despite all the hardships. It is a personal goal to be a role model to students every single day. As the researcher looks around at leadership conventions and notices there are not many women that look Latina, one cannot help but wonder; what barriers have kept Latina women from advancing through the educational pipeline? It is the researcher’s belief that by interviewing Latina women school principals and sharing their story other Latina women who want to be educational leaders in the future will be inspired by their experiences, obstacles, and triumphs.
Data Collection Procedures

Interviews were the source of data collection. Patton (1990) stated that,
We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly
observe. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot
observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. The purpose of
interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective.
(p.196)

Based on Seidman (1998) and Merriam (1998) the size of sampling is not
determined on numbers, but on the fact that once no original data is presented from new
interviews, the research has reached the point of saturation of information. After the
researcher noticed that there was no new information presented; the researcher
determined saturation had been reached. The investigator can determine if saturation has
been reached with the selected sampling or continue with purposeful selection until
saturation or redundancy is reached (Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1998).

Data Analysis Plan

All interviews were transcribed. No one else had access to the interview
transcripts. Before the interview, each participant was reminded that the researcher
would record and transcribe each interview and transcriptions would be provided for
review. Interpreting data included looking for connective themes among the experiences
of the participants.

Quality and Verification

In order to assure quality and verifications the researcher recorded all interviews
and transcribed them verbatim. The finished product was emailed to the participants for
member check. Triangulation is a technique utilized to verify the validity in research by examining a research question from multiple perspectives. Triangulation procedures were utilized for this study by the researcher.

Figure 3 is an example of what triangulation looks like. Source one was the literature review, source two were the interviews, and the third source was the member check.

![Triangulation of data diagram]

*Figure 3. Triangulation of data.*

Another method that was used in this research study to determine quality is bracketing (Newman & Tufford, 2012).

Bracketing is a method used by some researchers to mitigate the potential deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research and thereby to increase the rigor of the project. Given the sometimes close
relationship between the researcher and the research topic that may both pre-cede and develop during the process of qualitative research, bracketing is also a method to protect the researcher from the cumulative effects of examining what may be emotionally challenging material. (p.81).

The researcher bracketed herself by removing preconceived notions, experiences, and feelings from the research. This enabled the researcher to gather rich data. The researcher maintained self-awareness throughout the entire research process. The researcher also bracketed herself by bringing in an outside source during the interviews to observe. This served as an unbiased set of ears between the researcher and the research data.

**Ethical Considerations**

An ethical concern relates directly to collection of the data and observations that articulate the research in a clear and unbiased manner, yet protects the integrity and anonymity of the school leaders. One of the main ethical concerns for this study was confidentiality. These women shared experiences involving negative influences or bad leaders involving someone powerful in the district. However, to make this study more effective, all regional or localized identifying factors were removed. Therefore, the outcomes were generalized in such a manner as to support possible expansion/inclusion of key critical communication training in principal preparation programs. The researcher assured that all field notes did not contain personal identifiers and kept data safely locked up and/or password protected. The researcher only shared data with the participants. All partakers were informed about the purpose of the research in which they are asked to participate. All participants comprehended the risks associated with this research study.
and comprehended the benefits as a result of sharing their experiences. All participants
signed an informed consent. The researcher received IRB approval. There were no
known risks for the participants.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, ethnographic study was to describe the experiences of Latina women principals in a western state. This research contributed empowering narratives to the study of Latina women educational leaders and the limited research that is available. By valuing the experiences of these Latina women educational leaders, inquiries such as this dissertation contributes to the lack of information on this matter. It was imperative to obtain an understanding of what philosophies, qualities, characteristics, and values Latina women must possess. The aim of this study was to use the findings to recommend a mentoring program for aspiring Latina women principals.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the qualitative data collected to understand the experiences of Latina women principals in both established and burgeoning Latina/o communities. Data analyzed included survey information, field notes, and the one-on-one interviews that allowed the participants’ voices to be heard. The semi-structured interview protocol was designed to elicit rich information from participants to answer the three research questions.

1. What macro and micro forces do Latina women principals describe as influencing their attainment of leadership positions?

2. What are Latina women principals’ interpretations of their role as a principal?

3. How do Latina women principals perceive the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions?
Review of Methodology

Qualitative ethnography was the method of study. Qualitative analysis collects a vast quantity of information concerning a single theme, even though approving the examiner to assist as an instrument to desegregate the data (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative research study was comprised of ten Latina women school principals in a western state. The principals worked for the Los Angeles Unified School District and Santa Ana Unified School Districts. All ten principals were interviewed for this study. The research looked at the trials these women faced and focused on how they turned adversity into opportunities. This study examined what common traits they needed to possess to attain their principal roles. All ten participants were interviewed at their preferred location so it was their “natural setting” and they felt comfortable. The researcher was a key instrument and provided the interview questions to the participants beforehand so they were familiar with the content. The researcher also provided them with a copy of chapter one along with the literature review so participants were familiar with the study and were aware of the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Interpreting data included looking for connective themes among the experiences of the participants. The researcher analyzed the transcripts using thematic coding and categorization. The researcher analyzed the data to determine what major themes came into play in all the participants’ lives.

Results

A purposeful sampling of ten Latina women principals from the state of California were used for this study.
Results for Research Question 1

1. What macro and micro forces do Latina women principals describe as influencing their attainment of leadership positions?

The biggest macro force that influenced Rosanna was her intrinsic motivation. Her drive and ambition is intrinsic and stems from growing up in poverty. Rosanna struggled growing up. She began working at a young age and knew right away that she wanted better for herself and her children someday. The lack of availability of resources during her childhood played an enormous role in prompting her attainment of a leadership position. Rosanna’s school lacked a facility conducive to learning and positive school culture. Her teachers and counselors never guided nor prepared her for college and a career. Rosanna looks back and realizes it was because of the neighborhood. “The low-income neighborhood schools are often neglected and forgotten,” stated Rosanna. Rosanna went into detail about how so many teachers showed movies everyday instead of teaching. She even had one high school teacher who worked at the campus that always smelled like alcohol. Rosanna stated that, “Macro forces such as these exposed her to the dark side of public education and the detrimental effects it has on its youth.” It was then that she knew she wanted to be a teacher.

Rosanna worked since she was young girl cleaning houses with her mother. The macro force of experiencing racism first hand made Rosanna resilient. She remembers the looks the white children would give her as she cleaned their bathrooms. Rosanna mentioned she will never forget waiting for the bus with her mom carrying the rags with which they used to clean the houses and the cruel jokes random people made as they drove or walked by.
A positive macro force that influenced Rosanna’s attainment of a leadership role was her former principal when she was a fourth year teacher. Her principal, Dr. Jimenez, mentored and taught her the skills she needed to attain a leadership role. Dr. Jimenez started giving Rosanna administrative projects and assignments, and included her in leadership conventions and meetings. Rosanna admires Dr. Jimenez and is thankful for everything she taught her. The influence of Dr. Jimenez is reflected through Rosanna’s leadership style. Rosanna is a visionary just like her mentor Dr. Jimenez. Rosanna provides direction for her staff to achieve their common goal.

Daisy’s illegal status as a child is the biggest macro force that influenced and motivated her to be a leader. Growing up illegal, according to Daisy, is one of the most difficult obstacles one can face. She remembers all her friends obtaining a driver’s license. Daisy could not because she was illegal. Daisy could not apply for any job during college because she did not have a social security number. Although she was at the top of her class in high school, she had to attend college near her home because she could not even board an airplane due to the lack of a state issued identification card. Being an illegal alien pushed Daisy to work as hard as she could and seek out resources that would enable her to achieve bigger things.

Another macro force that influenced Daisy’s attainment of a leadership role was her neighborhood growing up. Daisy grew up in the gang-infested East Los Angeles projects. Daisy did not have positive role models growing up; the gangster veterans were the role models for her and her peers. Daisy knew since she was young that she wanted to help children who were at risk of falling into the gang lifestyle and serve in a low-income neighborhood like the one she grew up in.
A micro force that continues to influence Daisy’s leadership achievements is her husband. Daisy’s husband Omar has been her biggest supporter since they met her first year of teaching. Omar motivated Daisy to apply to law school and continue teaching, which was her passion. Once Daisy finished law school, Omar encouraged her to apply for a prestigious position where she addressed discrimination cases. From there Daisy felt compelled to lead a school and model how students should be inspired and nurtured. Omar’s influence on Daisy continues as he emboldens her to keep climbing and apply to the assistant superintendent position next year.

Rosario is a spirited first year high school principal. A macro force that influenced Rosario was her mother. Growing up, all Rosario ever heard was how lucky she was to be a United States citizen and to be able to achieve anything she wanted. Her mother was and continues to be her biggest influence. Rosario’s mother made her the woman she is and because of her mother, Rosario feels she is fearless. A micro force that influenced Rosario was her former assistant principal Ms. Palacios. Ms. Palacios taught her the basics in leadership and leading.

Monique’s attainment of her leadership position is in part because of her mentor, a veteran elementary school principal named Ms. Esteban. This macro force has been influencing Monique for the past thirteen years. It was Ms. Esteban who recognized the leadership skills in Monique and encouraged her to become an administrator. After nine years being in the classroom, Monique applied and with the coaching of Ms. Esteban, Monique landed her role as an assistant principal after her first interview. Ms. Esteban continued guiding Monique and after only three years Monique became a principal.
Monique does not know if she would have ever reached this goal without the mentoring and encouragement from Ms. Esteban.

A micro force that influenced Monique was getting bullied because of her ethnicity. Being called “wetback Monique” was hard for her growing up. Monique entered the field of education to make a difference. She feels it is her calling in life to make sure no one ever experienced the shame she felt about her ethnicity and her culture. As a principal now she creates awareness to bullying. Monique has assemblies and rallies to promote tolerance and acceptance.

Janet gives credit to her upper middle class neighborhood for shaping her into the woman she is today. Janet’s family was the only Latino family on her block. Janet was one of the few Latinas in her high school. Janet experienced many obstacles because of this. She was a loner most of her youth because kids did not want to be her friend. Janet believes it is because she was Latina. When Janet was young it was not a good thing to be a Latina at a white school. Times were not like today when people looked past these barriers. Because of this macro force, Janet knew she wanted to contribute to schools and make a positive impact somehow. Another macro force that influenced her attainment of her leadership role is CALSA. Janet is a member of the California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators.

The California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators was established in 1989. The members of CALSA are administrators and superintendents throughout California. The California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators is a specialized association that promotes and supports the continuous growth and employment of Latino leaders in academia who are devoted to excellence in
academia. According to CALSA, its mission is to encourage leadership, unity, and mentorship for educators. CALSA promotes “educational distinction through networking with other school leaders to share ideas and discuss strategies; members generate enthusiasm for their profession from this interaction and encourage colleagues to maintain a personal commitment to leadership,” (www.calsa.org, 2014). Because of CALSA, Janet attends seminars, conferences, and networking opportunities. Being a member of CALSA really enabled her to develop her management skills and grow as a leader. Janet is grateful to be a member of CALSA. Janet is currently a mentor to a Latina woman who is preparing for a principal position. It is her way of giving back.

Laura’s greatest macro force was her father. In 2008, Laura’s life was changed forever when she lost her father to pancreatic cancer. The weight of his absence still haunts her. Laura feels she did not just lose a father, she lost a mentor. He was her biggest positive influence, positive role model, and motivator. Although he is gone, Laura still lives by all the morals and advice he instilled in her. Laura has a passion for educating and leading. Laura’s purpose in life is to leave a footprint behind in all her students just like her father did with her.

A micro force that influenced Laura’s attainment of her leadership role is one her former principals. Although this principal was never her mentor, Laura idolized and admired her. Laura knew that she just wanted to be like her principal. It was then that Laura enrolled in an administrative credential program at California State University, Long Beach. Laura wanted to be a role model and an inspiration just like this principal was to her.
Brenda is the eldest of seven siblings. Brenda still gives part of her paycheck to her mother to help her out with the bills. Growing up Brenda had to help her parents out a lot since she was in middle school. She remembers helping them at the flea market on the weekends. Brenda’s family is the biggest macro force that influenced her because of the lessons she learned from them growing up. She learned from her parents the consequences of not having an education yet the importance of hard work and passion for working. Brenda learned the importance of commitment from her mother. Brenda knew she would be financially responsible for her parents and her siblings as a grown up. Brenda is aware there are so many families just like hers struggling to make it by. This is why she is so passionate about educating others on the importance of obtaining an education. Brenda educates the families and her students. Brenda motivates them to pursue a higher education. It is because of Brenda’s family growing up in poverty that Brenda was so passionate about becoming a leader.

Christy did not pinpoint a macro or micro force. The only person or force she can think of is herself. Christy has always been driven. Part of the reason is because she did not grow up wealthy. Although she did not grow up in poverty she always strived for something more. In college Christy worked full time to support herself. She never felt that she received much support from her family. In fact, they never believed she would make it this far. Christy has always had to motivate herself and be her biggest fan. Although her family taught her the importance of education and working hard, Christy knew there was so no limit to her dreams. Christy is currently pursuing a doctorate from San Diego State University. Her dissertation will focus on the influence of culture, socio
economic status, and family, which are three negative aspects of her life that she turned into strengths.

Maria’s experience of growing up as a migrant family is an intense macro factor that pushed Maria to always strive as high as she can. Migrant families move around so much because they follow the crops and what is in season. Many students like Maria are so far behind because they are never at a school for more than six months. They never fully engage as students and rarely get prepared for college. This is why Maria entered the field of academia. Now Maria volunteers with organizations that assist migrant families. Maria shares her story about growing up in a migrant working family and the perseverance it took to find a better life. A micro force Maria shared was her sister. Maria’s sister became pregnant at the age of fifteen and has worked in the field since age seventeen. Maria’s sister Paloma was never guided and never had any ambition to seek a better life. However, her advice to Maria was to not be like her and not make the same mistakes she did. Maria feels sorry for her sister Paloma, who still works picking strawberries. Maria used her sister as an example of what she did not want to be.

Eva’s greatest macro factor was attending an Ivy League school. Attending Cornell University opened her eyes to a whole new world. The diversity that Cornell University exposed Eva to challenge her. Eva channeled that energy into becoming a resilient, ambitious woman. She moved to California shortly after to pursue a leadership role in education.

Results for Research Question 2

2. What are Latina women principals’ interpretations of their role as a principal?
The role of principal is an ever changing role. According to Rosanna, she views her role as a role model and a leader. Rosanna is aware of the big price tag that comes along with being a principal. It means everyone always watching every move and every decision. The most difficult part of playing this role is that a principal can do one hundred things right, but the one thing that goes wrong is what everyone will remember. Rosanna interprets her role just like any other leadership role. The pressure is high and the demands are even higher. This is a major reason why Rosanna does not plan to have children; she works an average of 14 hours a day. Rosanna cannot imagine having time to raise a child when the stresses at work leave her with no free time.

The amazing and best part of being a school principal is knowing that it is the most important role at any school. The principal is the most influential and vital person at any school site. Rosanna feels fortunate to hold this title and knows the important role she plays in all of the stakeholder’s lives. She is a mediator, counselor, friend, advisor, security, listener, and many other things all at once. Wearing different hats at once is part of the job. Rosanna cannot picture herself doing anything else. Her interpretation of her role as principal is her vision and mission for the school: to promote student achievement is her most important role. Rosanna continuously inspires the school to enact the vision and mission by enlisting stakeholders in developing, maintaining, and implementing a vision and mission for high school student achievement and college readiness. The school mission is clearly articulated and understood by all staff. Rosanna aligns school practices, messages and routines of the school with the mission and vision by reinforcing that all students can achieve at high levels through expectations for students, staff, and parents.
Daisy interprets her role as principal as her calling to create positive change and change lives starting with establishing a positive school culture. Daisy has established a welcoming climate and positive school culture at her school site through her emphasis on PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports). Daisy acknowledges her role as principal as her toughest role yet. Daisy’s practice includes consistent school-wide expectations for all staff and students. She promotes constant, simple, significant, expectations about school initiatives and student achievement. Daisy makes it her goal to establish relationships with all stakeholders. Daisy infers her role as principal as being a mentor and not just a leader. She supports teachers with specific improvement plans that focus on what steps they will take to promote student achievement based on data. Daisy also supports her staff by helping them achieve their personal goals as well. She is currently mentoring an aspiring principal.

Rosario interprets her role as principal as a change agent and an opportunity to make a difference. Rosario takes advantage of her role as principal by working with her stakeholders and enabling them to better themselves. Rosario believes family engagement is everything. She created a successful Parent Academy at her school site that provided effective learning opportunities for families and vital information on community resources. Rosario serves as a resource to the community. Her successful Parent Academy was built on research and best practice in the field of school-family-community partnerships. Not only did Rosario focus her classes on activities that are linked to children’s learning, the classes also promoted family literacy. She knows that being a principal is more than leading a school; it is also leading families, and her community.
Monique defines her role as principal as a role model. She expresses the role of principal as a management role that is under constant scrutiny. This is why Monique is a strong believer of always modeling a strong work ethic. Monique expresses that ethics is about human relationships and leadership is part of cultivating interpersonal relationships. Monique is an educational leader, a mentor, and a role model. She demonstrates her strong work ethic on a daily basis by creating a framework that enhances workplace relationships. Just like teachers need to build relationships with their students; administration needs to establish a relationship with the all stakeholders. Monique also leads with a stern yet caring demeanor taking all parties in consideration at all times. She disseminates information as necessary to students and staff yet honors confidentiality when needed.

Janet’s perception of her role as principal is an opportunity to assure that all students at her school site are achieving. Janet is a member of the California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators. She is currently a mentor to a new principal. She provides compassionate assistance to guide and empower her mentee to achieve her mentee’s stated professional goals in education. Janet inspires other educational leaders in CALSA through her passion, persistence, and integrity.

Janet also perceives her role as principal as a vital role to use as an advocate for her students; starting with digital equity. Janet continues to promote the success of all students by supporting and cultivating her students. She believes digital equity is essential. Janet views technology funding as an essential part of the school’s budget. In fact, she views it as the most important expense on her school site plan. She instilled a well-articulated technology expectations plan that is supported by the staff including a
schedule for the two full time computer labs. Janet believes technology can be used to streamline education, enable the staff to take the lesson from the textbook to real life, and most importantly support learning by providing students the tools to be technology savvy. Her clear expectations are for teachers to integrate technology in their lessons on a daily basis.

Laura’s interpretation of her role as principal is simple; to promote student achievement for students of all levels, ethnicities, and socio economic statuses. Laura promotes student success by making safety her top priority. She believes learning will not take place if a school’s facilities are not conducive to learning. Laura created a comprehensive school disaster and safety plan. She goes over it in detail every school year with her teachers and conducts drills once a month so that all stakeholders are prepared for any type of emergency. Laura remembers being a teacher at multiple sites where no safety or emergency protocols and systems were in place. In 1998, one of the schools she was teaching at had a fire and because of a lack of emergency evacuation plan, everyone panicked. Her multiple bad experiences regarding safety made her realize just how crucial it is to have an effective safety plan in place.

Brenda interprets her role as principal as an instructional leader. Brenda mentioned that if she did not feel as an effective instructional leader, she would not feel resourceful. Hanny (1987) perceived that "effective principals are expected to be effective instructional leaders . . . the principal must be knowledgeable about curriculum development, teacher and instructional effectiveness, clinical supervision, staff development and teacher evaluation" (p. 209). Brenda feels confident and competent and stresses the importance of those two traits for any effective principal. Brenda believes
her goal is not to manage teachers, but to lead them to grow as educators and leaders themselves.

Christy views her role as principal as an effective change agent. As the only Latina woman principal in her small district, Christy feels the added pressure to perform and outdo the other principals. Christy understands that the role of principal means constant pushback sometimes from the staff, long hours, and thankless good deeds. However, it is the children’s faces and the gratification of motivating, enabling, and preparing kids for college and career that makes the most difficult day rewarding. There is no price to measure that.

Maria, a former migrant worker, interprets her role of principal as an instructional leader as well. Maria knows the power and influence a principal has and the effect she can have in every one of her teachers and students. Maria is an active participant as a leader. She enables all her stakeholders to reaching the next level by inspiring all her students and teachers and working with all stakeholders in ways to improve the school.

Eva interprets her role as a position to impact, serve, and most importantly lead. Eva was the third person to define her leadership role as an instructional leader. Eva focuses her energy on collaborating with everyone to promote buy in and a shared vision for the school. This becomes the basis for shared instructional leadership. She stated that, “As a principal my goal is to serve the school and everyone connected to it including the community. It is my duty to make a positive impact and promote student achievement. I lead and role model inside and outside school and hope to change lives.”
Results for Research Question 3

3. How do Latina women principals perceive the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions?

Rosanna, the first participant, felt that all these elements hindered her growing up. However, all these factors made her a lot stronger and more ambitious. She started with emphasizing the fact that her culture is looked down upon by many. She remembers vividly going with her mother on Saturdays to clean houses when she was a child and will never forget the stares people would give her. She was Latina and poor and hated it growing up. This made her the ambitious woman that she is. Her goal of leading a school is to prove herself and all the people who never believed she would amount to anything that nothing was going to stand in her way. Achieving a leadership position is influenced by all these factors because without the struggles these elements put her through; she would not have that “thirst” to keep climbing and leading until there is nothing else to achieve.

The second participant, Daisy, believes the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender are the influences she needed to achieve her title as principal. Daisy grew up in poverty as an illegal immigrant. She felt invisible because she did not have a social security number nor the right to obtain a basic state issued identification card. These factors played an immense role in making her realize she had to one day help all those children who were just like her. Daisy knew that being a school principal would enable her to impact thousands of kids a year. More importantly, she believed many kids needed someone to believe in, someone to guide them, and be their role model. Her motto of “Si se puede” (it can be done) is seen all over her school. She uses herself as an
example to her students that anything is possible; especially in this country. The influence of living in poverty, being illegal, and being Mexican are what made Daisy decide she was not going to let anyone else experience what she did growing up.

Rosario never experienced poverty, a negative connotation of her culture or ethnicity. However, she heard all about it growing up from her mother. As a second-generation Latina woman, all Rosario remembers growing up was listening to her mother talk about how good she had it because she was born here. All the horror stories her mother told her growing up are embedded in her memory. Rosario remembers every depressing, embarrassing, and discriminating experience her mother shared with her. Listening to stories about racism and poverty motivated her to be the top of her class. Rosario always knew the importance of education and how it was the key to success. Rosario became a teacher and quickly realized the need to have a strong role model to guide these children. Rosario sees many of her students go through what her mother went through and works closely with families setting them up with social workers and resources. Rosario is a strong leader not just in her district but in her community as well. Rosario works closely with the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA). CHIRLA is an organization that was formed in 1986 to advance the human and civil rights of immigrants and refugees in Los Angeles. Rosario mentors and assists many families through this organization. Rosario perceives the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender as the reason she achieved leadership position; that the community needed a Latina woman like her who the people can see as their defender.

Monique perceives the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions as her “purpose in life”. Monique is a third-generation
Latina who has every right as a legal citizen of this country, but still experienced difficult economic times growing up and received severe bulling for being Mexican. Monique mentioned that she will never forget the taunting she experienced and the infamous nickname “wetback Monique”. Monique never comprehended why these kids called her wetback if she was born here. She laughs about it now, but remembers going home crying and hearing the kids yell at her “go home wetback Monique. Go eat your beans.” These experiences played a strong role in Monique wanting to become a school principal. She remembers her principal not taking the taunting seriously and telling her to ignore them and not to bring beans and rice for lunch anymore so kids would stop teasing her. Monique felt like her teachers and her principal made her feel ashamed of her culture. Monique shared this with her interview panel during her principal position interview and mentioned it was her duty in life to make sure no one ever experienced the shame she felt about her ethnicity and her culture.

Janet, a third-generation Latina woman who grew up in an upper middle class neighborhood always felt like the odd girl out because she was not white. Janet perceives the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions as factors that pushed her to achieve leadership roles in education. She started as department chair, then became a lead teacher, then assistant principal, and finally principal. Her Guatemalan culture influences her up to this day as a principal. She has coffee chats with the parents every Friday morning but she calls it “Tamale y champurado viernes” Tamales are a big part of the Latino community and champurado is a Mexican chocolate based drink that is enjoyed by all Latinos. Janet uses her leadership role to support and strengthen her community through these Friday parent meetings.
Laura is a first-generation Latina who grew up surrounded by Latinos. Laura always took pride in being a Latina and always looked forward to the weekend full of quinceaneras, baptisms, and carne asada. Laura vividly remembers only speaking English when she was at school. Everyone in her apartment building and neighborhood only spoke Spanish. Laura was taught to cook and clean as a child. The fact that she had to take care of her seven younger siblings made her wish she was a boy many times. Laura always aspired to be someone important. She perceives the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions as the puzzle pieces that make her unique. Her culture consists of cooking enchiladas, attending birthdays filled with piñatas, drinking tequila and eating rice and beans at every family gathering, and listening to romantic mariachi music on her down time is what she loves the most about her life. Laura brings that passion to work and with her students. Laura is a principal at a school that consists of 97% Latino students.—Culture, ethnicity, and social class were never a hindrance to Laura. In fact, they influenced her in such a positive way that her pride is perceived by her staff and students as “contagious”.

Brenda recognizes the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions as her biggest enemy at one point in her life. Brenda applied at various school sites for various leadership roles and was never even considered for many years. Brenda started working at the age of seven at the flea market helping her parents sell pirated DVDs and CDs. By the age of 15 she had two jobs: assisting her dad delivering the newspapers during the weekdays and on the weekends working at the flea market. She remembers her brother not having to cook or clean because he was a male and although he was older, she had to pitch in for the bills since middle school because
she was a girl. Brenda is now a powerful principal who is an active participant in Justice for Immigrants coalition, an organization in California that assists immigrant families. Her culture, ethnic, social class, and gender influence that hindered her when she was younger are now her most powerful forces. She educates immigrant families by setting them up with resources to assist them.

Christy is a Latina woman who does not speak Spanish. Her parents were born in this country and grew up during a time when it was looked down upon to speak Spanish so they never taught Christy. Although she does not speak Spanish, her Latina roots are well shown. Christy has five sisters and three brothers. As the youngest child, she loved attending Catholic mass every Sunday and then heading to her grandmother’s house with all her cousins and siblings. There they ate pozole, a Mexican stew. Christy grew up in an average middle class neighborhood. Both her parents held two jobs to support her family of nine children. Christy was taught early on that hard work, honesty, and education was important. She never forgot those values. She spoke about the values her parents taught her, especially the importance of family. Christy’s identifies the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions as essential components that shaped her growing up.

Maria grew up moving from place to place throughout California; her parents were migrant workers that worked in the fields picking everything from strawberries to lettuce. Maria was smuggled into this country at an early age and started working shortly after that alongside her parents in the fields. Maria never had an opportunity to make real friends or connect with her teachers. The longest time she ever lived at one place was about five months. It was very difficult for her to pick up the language and keep up with
her academics. Every school was at a different pace. Maria’s family never connected with anyone except other migrant families. She was very ashamed of being illegal, a migrant worker, uneducated, and poor. Maria recognizes the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions as something that gave her extremely thick skin. She shares her stories with many others to inspire them to also reach for the stars. Maria mentioned there are different social classes within the Latino community. There are those who have been here for generations and are educated and well off financially. There are those who are United States citizens, then those who have green cards and have rights, and then at the very bottom are the undocumented immigrants like her family. Latinos like her family are not just looked down upon, they are rejected, laughed at, and treated like second class citizens. It took Maria many years to share her story of growing up in a migrant family. When Maria wrote her dissertation on migrant workers, her case studies made her realize she had nothing to be ashamed of. Writing her dissertation made her realize what pride it was to have such diligence and commitment to hard work. Maria continues to help and educate migrant families. She is in Fresno every summer and is a strong advocate for educating migrant students.

Eva, a strong high school principal with an Ivy League education, never recognized the influence of culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender in achieving leadership positions until she was attending graduate school and trying to obtain a leadership position. Eva grew up proud to be a Latina. She grew up middle class and was never favored or discriminated because of her culture or for being a woman. It wasn’t until attending Cornell University that she felt a little different. Her love for pupusas, a traditional Salvadorean dish was made fun of. She would not speak Spanish
because it was mocked. Eva’s best friends at Cornell University always laughed at the thought of her in a management position. At the time, Eva did not know what she wanted to do the rest of her life. However, she knew she wanted an important position where she could lead and influence. Eva embraces the influence of culture at her school site by having school culture day every June. Each classroom has a booth and they adopt a country or a culture they will research. The students do fun projects and intensive research papers. Some students even try to make some of the delicacies. The second day of culture day is an opportunity for students to share about their culture. Students bring artifacts, pictures, and food that represent their culture. Some students put on dance shows and tell folktales. Eva knows the influence that culture and ethnicity plays. After all it is what makes a person who they are. Eva reassures her students that social class is just a temporary status but their culture is their roots. Eva is very thankful that she was challenged at Cornell University by the student body. This made her feel much more proud to be Salvadorean, speak Spanish and grow up middle class.

**Major Themes**

**Family**

Family is important in the Latino community. The ten Latina women who were interviewed agreed family played a vital role in their experiences. When the ten Latina principals spoke about their family, it was obvious because of their body language that their experiences and stories in regards to family came from the heart. Some principals even got emotional. They conveyed what a crucial role their mothers, fathers, husbands, and siblings played in shaping their career pathway. The results of these interviews are supported by the findings of a survey conducted by the American Educational Research
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Association, in which Gorena (1996) studied the insights of influences that assisted or hindered the development of Latinas to hold senior level administrative positions. One of the forces that influenced them was family. One Latina principal shared, “Without my husband’s support and constant pushing, I don’t know if I could have done it. To have support when you have to work six days a week, be home and be on your laptop answering work emails, change plans last minute due to after school unexpected events, and most important knowing I will never cook because of the long work hours; what more support can a woman ask for?” One Latina stated, “I do not know where I would be if it wasn’t for my mother’s guidance and motivation.”

No Defined Limits

The Latinas interviewed did not have defined limits. What they all had in common was the thirst to reach as far as they could. The perception they have of themselves was not limited to teaching or assistant principal. The principal’s knew they would make great school leaders and achieved it. All the principals were highly motivated and had not set limitations.

For many of them their goals do not stop at principalship. In fact, some have aspirations of becoming superintendents or district administrators. They succeeded because giving up was not an option.

Mentors

The principals interviewed revealed that other principals or administrators influenced and encouraged them to apply for principalship. Some of the principals had formal mentors, while others simply had a principal who recognized the leadership qualities in them and took them under their wing. All of the principals had someone they
admired and saw as a role model. One principal stated, “My former principal taught me
everything I know now, she took me to every meeting she attended and made me shadow
her during every event. She taught me to be strong, confident, and recognize that being
an innovative leader was the best challenge I was ever going to take.” Another Latina
principal affirmed, “My mentor taught me lessons I never learned in my PhD program.
She taught me that making mistakes and failing was part of growing as a leader and to
always learn from my mistakes and assure people they would never happen again. She
taught me to have thick skin because in this field only those with thick skin survive. She
coached me and turned me into one of the best principals in my district.” Having a
mentor was crucial for some of these principals. If it was not for their mentors coaching
them and enabling them, many admitted to, “not ever passing the interview process.”

**Strong self-efficacy**

All of the principals accomplished their goals despite the challenges they faced in
their lives. Their strong self-efficacy played an immense role in that. One principal
stated, “I knew I was always going to achieve all my goals, one at a time, one step at a
time. It was only a matter of time before I would be a principal.” Bandura’s (1994)
definition of self-efficacy is, “people’s belief about their capabilities to produce
designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their
lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and
behave,” (p.67). Their self-efficacy contributed to their achievement as leaders.

A need to influence lives

All ten principals emphasized their passion for making a difference. It was
evident in the interviews that all the principals felt a strong sense of pride knowing they
were changing lives every day. One principal stated, “I push my teachers and students to work to their full potential. There are no words to describe the gratification of knowing that I impact 1,500 people every day with something as easy as an encouraging phrase.”

All the principals had a desire to promote equity and change. Many principals expressed that is their “purpose” or “calling” in life. For many of the principals it was because they did not want students to go through what they experienced themselves as children.

Whatever the reason was, all ten principals wanted to be a principal to make a difference.

**Resiliency**

All ten principals experienced some type of obstacle in their lives that made them resilient. Bandura (1994) noted that how people respond to difficult circumstances and how resilient they are when facing adversity can determine the level of success as a leader. Some principals experienced racism while others experienced bullying because of their race. A common trend in their obstacles was their ethnicity playing a vital role in their impediments. One principal stated, “I was discriminated because I was illegal. I looked just like all my classmates, yet that one piece of paper set your fate to be a piece of trash in society’s eyes.” Another principal mentioned, “I was made fun of because I was Mexican, not because I was short, ugly, or overweight.”

**Summary/Results of the Interview and Patterns**

The results demonstrate that the subjects in the study agreed they had no defined limits, family played a vital role, they had mentors, had a need to influence, and were resilient. Furthermore, the subjects all overcame obstacles based on ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic background. All of the subjects in the study are influential leaders.
It is shown they all embrace diversity at their respective schools, and participate in community outreach programs to encourage Latina/o students to pursue higher education.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, ethnographic study was to describe the experiences of Latina women principals in a western state. This research contributed empowering narratives to the study of Latina women educational leaders and the limited research that is out there. By valuing the experiences of these Latina women educational leaders, inquiries contribute to the literature on this matter. It was imperative to obtain an understanding of what philosophies, qualities, characteristics, and values Latina women must possess. The aim of this study was to use the findings to recommend a mentoring program for aspiring Latina women principals.

Summary of the Findings

The results demonstrate that the subjects in the study had no defined limits; family played a vital role, they had mentors, had a need to influence, and were resilient. Furthermore, the subjects all overcame obstacles based on ethnicity and socio-economic background. All of the subjects in the study are influential leaders. It is shown they are more likely to embrace diversity at their respective schools, and participate in community outreach programs to encourage Latina/o students to pursue higher education.

Conclusion

The results of this research study lead to the conclusion that there is a need to develop a Latina women principal mentoring program. The mentoring program can include individually site-based preparation for Latina women assistant principals by experienced Latina women principals. The mentoring program can consist of leadership development that provides Latina women assistant principals with the skills they need to
attain principalship. The mentoring program can include on-site one-on-one mentoring every two weeks and focus on longer term professional growth goals, and longer term school leadership issues.

A formalized mentoring program could be one instrument to assist and support Latina women aspiring leaders. The Latina women aspiring principal mentor program the researcher is proposing will begin with a prelaunch preparation phase that will focus on clarifying what the institutional needs are at the school site to increase the number of highly effective Latina women principals. The second step will be to identify what the potential protégés are looking for in a mentor. This can be done by sending out a survey to all potential protégés. The third step would be to recruit mentors. The goal is to find successful Latina women principals and district level leaders who will take an aspiring principal to the next level. Once the mentors are identified, they need to be assessed to determine their potential effectiveness. The assessment will determine if mentors need to be trained on mentoring. Once all mentors and protégés have been identified, a mentor protégé meeting can take place. At that time mentors will be paired with their protégé and meet their protégé. During this meeting the goals for the mentoring program should be emphasized and agreed upon. As the school year starts mentor and protégé will meet twice a month. When the school year concludes the mentors and protégés should evaluate the program and suggest modifications that the mentoring program needs to improve to the committee overseeing this mentoring program. The committee should consist of a cabinet of district level leaders who can successfully oversee this program successfully.

Figure 4 is an overview of the Latina women aspiring principal mentor program.
Implication for Action/Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher undertook this specific research study because there was not a substantial amount of literature highlighting Latina women educational leaders; specifically Latina women school principals. Additional research is needed on the experiences of Latina women serving as K-12 principals.

Recommendations

A formal mentoring program can serve as one vital instrument to support and promote aspiring Latina women principals. What was learned from this study was that none of the Latina women principals had a formal mentoring program in their district.
They all agreed it would be something pivotal in assisting Latina women aspiring leaders. The need to establish a formal mentoring program will benefit both human resources and Latina women coming down the educational pipeline. Magdaleno (2006) noticed the great disproportion of Latina administrators (15.4%) and Latino students (54%) and as a result created California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators. He inaugurated a mentoring program with trustworthy and knowledgeable Latino leaders mentoring aspiring Latino leaders as a way to help balance this inequality. School districts need to mirror this type of mentoring program at the district level. According to Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000), “dominant culture of educational administration is adrocent, meaning informed by white, male norms,” (p.1). It is imperative to develop highly effective Latina educational leaders.

Mentoring is essential for anyone who needs professional or personal guidance and support. Supporting Latina women through mentoring will assist them in navigating through the male-dominated authority structures. A formal mentoring program will be beneficial if it tailors to the needs of Latina women. The mentoring program will also serve as emotional support.

Establishments, such as school districts can assist Latina women by focusing their energy in their hiring processes, staff retentions, and professional development that meet the needs of all their employees, including Latina women. Networking groups that focus on women and Latina women are a great way to expose women to other women in leadership. The mentoring program can hold mixers and networking nights focused on these women. It is important to understand that Latina women bring a distinctive standpoint to principalship. This is only one of the additional benefits Latina women
bring to leadership roles. A mentoring program that promotes and prepares Latina women for principalship is something any school district can greatly benefit from.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study was limited to Latina women principals in a western state. One potential research study for the future is to look at the negative experiences of Latina women in other urban cities such as Chicago or New York City. It is vital to examine any common trends that aspiring Latina women leaders can learn from so more of them can move into leadership roles. The data from this study and other studies conducted in a western state on Latina women educational leaders could be aggregated to identify common practices and structures to increase the number of Latina women principals in a western state.

Future researchers should seek to investigate more urban schools with high Latino student populations. Future researchers should include observations in data collection to gain more in-depth knowledge on how Latina women principals successfully manage schools.

There presently exists a wide disproportion between the number of Latina women principals and the number of Latino students. Another recommendation is for researchers to learn the reasons more credentialed and capable Latina women are not being promoted to positions of the principalship and other higher levels of school administration.

A final recommendation is for research that examines what programs are implemented and being developed in other districts to promote mentoring and networking for aspiring Latina women principals.
Summary

The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of what virtues Latina women need to possess and what personal and professional obstacles they have to overcome to succeed as a principal. The discoveries provided a fresh insight on elements that affect Latina women such as: family, role models, and racism. Latina women principals are undeniably underrepresented compared to White and African American principals (Banks, 2000). This research studied the discernments of Latina women principals and analyzed their obstacles and accomplishments. The research questions were, “What macro and micro forces are hindering and what macro and micro forces are advancing Latina women into leadership?” and “What are the Latina principals’ interpretations of their role as a principal and how do issues such as culture, ethnicity, and social class, and gender influence it?”

With the increasing number of Latino students in public schools; it is vital that role models they can look up to and relate to are leading these schools. School districts need to provide ample opportunities for Latina women to grow as leaders. Latina women are endeavoring to lead in the field of education. As Latina women strive to lead in education, it is vital to expose the common obstacles, triumphs, and experiences that these women had so that the future generation of Latina women who are coming down the educational pipeline can learn from these experiences and are inspired by their stories. Research on the disparity of the number of Latina women principals compared to non-Latina leaders is essential if we expect to close the Latino achievement gap and if we want to enable more Latina women to be school leaders.
What was demonstrated in the literature is that the imbalance of Latina women in educational leadership positions goes back to the fact that women and leadership has been an ongoing issue in this country for a long time. In fact, diversifying the workplace is something that companies need to improve. Additionally, Latinas in the United States have a long way to go in order to close the gap. Policy changes need to be implemented so that the number of Latina women in management increases. The Critical Race Theory provided a rationalization for the lack of Latina women in leadership. Developing Latina women educational leaders is essential. The limited research on the difference of the number of Latina women principals compared to non-Latina women leaders indicates that a mentoring program needs to be created and implemented to help close this disparity.

The purpose of this qualitative, ethnographic study was to describe the personal and professional experiences of Latina women principals in a western state. This research contributed empowering narratives to the study of Latina women educational leaders and the limited research that is available. By documenting the experiences of these Latina women educational leaders, inquiries such as this dissertation can offer valuable research to the lack of studies on this matter. It was imperative to obtain an understanding of what philosophies, qualities, characteristics, and values Latina women must possess to successfully lead. The aim of this study was to use the findings to recommend a mentoring program of aspiring Latina women principals.

The results demonstrated that the subjects in the study were intrinsically motivated, were influenced by a role model, and possessed a desire to affect change in their respective schools of employment. Furthermore, the subjects all overcame obstacles
based on ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic background. All of the subjects in the study are influential leaders. They are more likely to embrace diversity at their respective schools, and participate in community outreach programs to encourage Latina/o students to pursue a college education.

This study has captured the experience of Latina women principals and the leadership qualities they display to achieve their goals. On a systemic level, the findings from this research study may help implement a mentoring program for aspiring Latina women leaders to help support Latina women who may under current circumstances be overlooked.
References


Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in...*
education and the social sciences. New York: Teachers College Press.


U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools, and
Appendix A

Participation Request Letter

March 15, 2014

Dear Participant,

My name is Maria Pimienta and I am a doctoral student at Creighton University in the School of Education. I am conducting a research study on Latina Leaders. The title of my research is Latina Women Educational Leaders: Their Experiences, Obstacles, and Triumphs. I am inquiring if you would be willing to participate in my research. I am conducting a qualitative, ethnographic study, which means I will be interviewing Latina women leaders in education. These interviews can be done at your convenience, at a mutually agreed upon place. Each interview will take approximately 1-2 hours. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

To maintain confidentiality, I will provide you with an alias as well as describe your position in a manner that will in no way link you to the interview results. I will be transcribing all interviews myself, so no one else will have access to the interviews. While there are no direct benefits to you, I hope to gain more knowledge on the experiences that Latina educational leaders have.

It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but I have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential risks. If you have any questions, please contact me by email at: maria.pimienta@sausd.us or by phone at 310-844-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Maria Pimienta
Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Creighton University

TITLE OF STUDY: Latina Women Educational Leaders: Their Experiences, Obstacles, and Triumphs.

INVESTIGATOR: Maria Pimienta

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? As a Latina woman leader, your experiences will provide valuable insight into Latina women’s leadership in education.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? Maria Pimienta, a doctoral student at Creighton University, under the guidance of Peggy Hawkins, Ph.D, and the School of Education at Creighton University.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of what a Latina woman has to possess and what personal and professional obstacles they have to overcome to succeed as an educational leader.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? The study will be conducted in the spring/summer of 2014 and your participation will last up to two hours in a mutually agreed upon place.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? You will be asked to participate in one 1-2 hour interview. You will be asked to share your leadership experience, obstacles, and triumphs. If necessary, you may be asked some follow-up questions. You will be contacted by phone or email within one month if follow-up questions are necessary. If the questions are simple clarification, it may not be necessary to meet again in person. However, it may be necessary to have a follow-up interview in person.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? Unless you do not want to share your experience as a Latina leader, there is no reason not to participate.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS? The interview questions relate to your personal and professional experiences. If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable, you are not required to answer them. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no direct benefits to participating in the study, but we hope this information will help us better understand the experience of Latina women leaders.
DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHAT WILL IT COST ME TO PARTICIPATE? There is no cost to participate.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE? We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep you name and other identifying information private. The audiotapes will be erased once transcribed.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? No.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS? Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Maria Pimienta at 310-844-xxxx. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?
Please check off each activity and initial each step you agree to.

_________ The interviews will be audiotaped. All tapes will only be heard by the investigator and transcribed.

_________ Field notes will also be taken to provide the researcher more information regarding the feelings, impressions and other interesting occurrences that may arise during our interview sessions.

_________ I will have the opportunity to review the interview transcriptions, but not make changes that alter the meaning of the statements.

_________ Yes, you may contact me if follow-up questions are necessary.

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 2 pages.

___________________________________________  _______________________________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study          Date

___________________________________________  _______________________________________
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

___________________________________________  _______________________________________
Name of person providing information to participant          Date
Signature of Researcher
Appendix C

Interview 1 Questions

1. Please share with me your name (pseudonym), age, and current professional Position?
2. Tell me about your family background—where were you born/raised, how many siblings, parents background, etc.
3. Where were you born? If outside of the U.S., at what age did you come to the U.S.?
4. Tell me about your family values and traditions that you lived by as a child and still hold true now.
5. Please tell me what language(s) were spoken in your home. What language(s) do you consider yourself proficient in?
6. Please share with me your ethnic background and how you believe it has shaped you.
7. Tell me about your own educational journey.
8. How did your educational journey fit into your professional goals? Elaborate on how this fit into your jobs you held.
9. Can you share your professional aspirations and the steps you have taken to attain your goal?
10. Please share with me why you chose education as a profession.
11. Have there been any obstacles in reaching your goal? If so, can you share them?
Appendix D
Interview 2 Questions

1. Did ethnic background, race, or gender have any impact on your professional growth and attainment?
2. How did your professional goals lead to your position?
3. How long have you held this title?
4. Were your capabilities ever questioned?
5. If you experienced any biases, how did you overcome them?
6. How did your background prepare you to lead Latino students?
7. Where did you learn your leadership skills?
8. What were your first challenges as an educational leader and how did you overcome them?
9. Describe your leadership philosophy—give an example of how you used it
10. Do you feel as if you had to function in two different cultural environments—one being that in which you were raised in and the other being the academic environment? Were you ever able to merge the two environments?
11. What do you think are the greatest skills one needs to have to become a Latina education leader?
12. What do you think needs to be done to promote and retain more Latina principals?
Appendix E

Ethnic distribution of public school teachers: 2012–13

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<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Male Teachers</th>
<th>Number of Female Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>1,546</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3,383</td>
<td>11,376</td>
<td>14,758</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>929</td>
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<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>2,967</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>14,276</td>
<td>36,913</td>
<td>51,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3,370</td>
<td>7,897</td>
<td>11,267</td>
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<tr>
<td>White (not Hispanic)</td>
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<td>136,885</td>
<td>188,027</td>
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<td>Two or More Races Not Hispanic</td>
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<td>2,682</td>
<td>6,731</td>
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