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The Career Development of Latina Women Achieving the Position of Public High School Principal

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**THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF LATINA WOMEN ACHIEVING THE
POSITION OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

by

Consuelo A. Palacio

A Dissertation Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In Urban Education

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The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

December 2013

ABSTRACT

THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF LATINA WOMEN ACHIEVING THE POSITION OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

By

Consuelo Anna Palacio

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013

Under the Supervision of Dr. Gail Schneider

For this qualitative study, I used the lens of the Social Cognitive Career Theory to investigate the lived experiences of Latina women navigating their career paths into the roles of public high school principals. Latina women are underrepresented and in some states they are not represented at all. Few Latina women have secured the position of high school principal in public education; however for those who have, it is unclear how they attained the position. It was significant to learn about the factors that have lead to the representation of Latina women who serve as high school principals. The representation of Latina women high school principals is minimal and limited to states where there are high concentrations of the Latino student population. The U.S. Census reported that the increasing number of Latino students entering public high schools will continue to grow in the 21st century. The changing student body demographics in public schools with Latino students are also expanding to different parts of the United States. This qualitative investigation asked the

central question: How do Latina women describe their lived experiences while navigating their career paths into public high school principalship?

Participants were asked fourteen open-ended questions. Five major themes emerged from the interviews: (1) early influence (i.e. family and cultural traditions), (2) diverse career background (i.e. professional careers and opportunities into education profession), (3) high achieving teachers (i.e. initiatives and advancement), (4) professional leadership initiatives (i.e. data management, accomplishments, challenges, and support systems), (5) professional upward mobility (i.e. leadership style, supervisors opening doors to the principalship, aspirations beyond principalship). Through their experiences with family and cultural traditions, the Latina women principals developed an *early influence* foundation. The early influences meant having high expectations and aspirations for children's education, which compelled the principals to ensure that students succeeded in the classroom. A second feature was a *diverse career background*. A diverse background meant having broad business perspectives, having specialized skills and knowing how to incorporate their talents to manage the implications of leadership in education. Findings from this study confirmed and added to past literature contributions.

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Dedicated to my mom and kids: Angela, Victor Jr., Christian, & Anthony

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Where I'm From By Consuelo Palacio

I am from Fruitvale apartments, from "hamidown" clothes,
dirt grass backyards and stray dogs we keep.

I am from a house with a porch
and a friendly watch dog,
from my "granma" whose
work, ironing clothes,
is next door.

I am from a house of parties with relatives near and far,
where drinking is free, dancing is fun to watch,
and laughter is abundant.

I am from "granma's" backside triplex, cement patio, tall chain-
link fence, five barking dogs and a new
lemon tree, where parties no
longer festive
at night.

I am from a place where fear of sexuality, shame,
distrust of home-living
and drunkenness
exists.

I am from a house of our own where memories are born,
feelings run deep and secrets I keep.

I am from the church down the street and wear a checkered
skirt, white shirt and two-tone
brown suede
lace-ups.

I am from innocents, a walk with the lord,
and psychic prophesies that
reveal and come to
life.

I am from that crazy place outside of school where gunshots,
whores and pimps, pregnant teens and
bloody people run the streets, where Barts
speed up-top and buses are
everywhere.

I am from heat, and sunny beaches, and surrounding bridges
and buildings where immediate

relatives can be
reached.

I am from the land where Dorothy once visited the yellow brick
road, a place where I dream about clicking my heels
and where family feuds are
everywhere.

I am from a place where it heats like an oven and winter's snow
reach to my knees, a place where cows grow
big only to fill the air with their fear
at the slaughter house
all through the
summer.

I am from a place where thick large black and brown locusts click
in chorus, a place where I have died
while living.

I am from deep thought, isolation, and attempt my education.
I am from a place where its safe and independence takes shape,
where I experience joy, heartbreak,
Chill'n and feel'n.

I am from Him who rejuvenates my soul and blesses me
with three who need
me.

I am from a place where I lay my head down and wonder "what the
HELL am I doing here!" when there is
suppose to be two!

I am from a place where I love my children and conscientiously
guide them in their schooling,
where I see others not so
fortunate.

I am from a place where others are not so lucky, where voice is not
heard, but should be.

I am from those moments when I reflect on those who had not
cometh to their potential, but should have.

I am confronted to pave the sticks that turn to roads
that turn to dreams...that turn to goals!

I am from this not so "far out" place where butterflies mate, live
and die with so much
Grace.

Who Am I

This poem is presented to my reader so that you may get a sense of who I am and know how I fit in the research. I am a Latina woman. I am tri-cultural. I was born in California. I am tri-cultural because I grew up with my mother's cultural values, my dad's cultural values and cultural values of the United States. My mother was born in Nicaragua and moved to the United States at age eleven. My father is Mexican American born in Kansas. His grandparents migrated from Mexico to work the railroads in the United States. He is third generation; however, his parents held strong roots to Mexican traditional cultural values. The presence of my poem demonstrates my appreciation to my professor who showed me how to express my reflections of self. Without her guidance, I would not have been able to create such a keen insight. It is through further reflection that I have decided to reclaim my maiden name, Consuelo Palacio. I am inspired by the opportunity to help Latina women like me achieve career aspirations in public education. It is my hope to give voice to these women principals who have experiences and perspectives rooted in American education that ought to be distinguished in scholarly literature. My long-term goal is to work as a college professor in the field of education and to bring forth scholarly literature to the forefront to highlight the works of educational leadership not yet heard.

My Curiosity About Latina Women Principals in Public Education

After completing the course work in the Ph.D program, I was required to write a dissertation. What topic I would research I did not know. My Chair asked me about the representation of Latina women in the principalship. Upon research, I learned that there were few Latina women high school principals in public schools, and in some states there were none. I was obviously curious and wanted to investigate Latina women who chose to serve

as high school principals. What was extraordinary about these few women who became high school principals in mainstream society or White society? Were these women influenced at an early age with Latino cultural values, Latino traditional values, family values or other values? Was their principalship development influenced by early influences? Does the Latino culture identity for women called *marianismo* contribute to or hinder Latina women ascending to high school principal? What does leadership development look like? My research to learn the knowledge about Latina women's career paths to the principalship would produce evidence that would answer my questions. The central question became: How do Latina women describe their lived experiences while navigating their career paths into the public high school principalship?

Identified as Latina

Men and women who speak Spanish, who have parents who speak Spanish, who come from Spanish-speaking countries or who are descendants of individuals who come from Spanish-speaking countries are categorized in the United States. For example, Hispanics, Chicanas/os and Latinas/os refer to the community as a whole— Latino and Chicano for men and Latina and Chicana for women. For this paper, I will use the term Latina/o so that the paper reads more fluently. Chicanos is referred to Mexicans only.

BACKGROUND

In the United States equal opportunity for education leadership for our ethnically diverse population came as a result of the landmark case *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), a desegregation case, and the civil rights struggle. As a result, underrepresented ethnically diverse women and men have aspired to and advanced into leadership positions in public education. So why is there low numerical representation of Latina women school principals, especially those serving in the high schools? Additionally, for Latinas who have excelled, why is there a lack of knowledge on their ascension into the role of high school principal? Dominated by White males, a public high school principal has a challenging position. Principals hold power and authority to influence academic progress, advocate for students, regulate policy, lead, and manage. They recruit schoolteachers and assistant principals. Further, they influence the curriculum and instruction in classrooms and act as a role model (Ubben, et al., 2004). However, Latina high school principals are nearly unseen to Latina teachers and youth. Latina women's voices are often silent. Minimal attention in academia is given to understanding how they advanced into their roles and managed to be successful serving as high school principals. How do we let people know how this happens? For these reasons, this study examined Latina women's unique experiences as they navigated their career paths into the role of high school principal. The goal was to provide useful information to policy makers, principalship preparation programs, and future Latina women striving to achieve, succeed and excel as high school principals.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to examine the experiences of Latina women principals serving in comprehensive high schools in public education; as it is unclear how a few Latina women

successfully attained the position of public high school principal. The study's purpose was to describe the personal and professional everyday lived experiences of Latina women navigating their career paths into a public high school principalship position. The study used Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000) as a theoretical framework.

Latina women serving as principals are commonly placed at elementary schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2007) where a majority of Latina/o students are enrolled. Latina women serving as high school principals represent less than 4.5% of all high school principals. National data show that Latina women principals are not fairly represented in grade level distribution and ethnic representation (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Because of these disparities, the few Latina principals serving in public comprehensive high schools were the focus of this study.

Despite the disparities, Latina women do aspire to the role of high school principal and are prepared with teaching experience and credentials (González & Ortiz, 2009, p. 192-197). These exceptional Latina women have been successful in achieving high school principal leadership positions; however, it is not well understood how these women have achieved such a high level of leadership success. What did Latina women do and how do they do it to achieve a high school principalship position?

Research Questions

The central question guiding this study was: How do Latina women describe their lived experiences while navigating their career paths into public high school principalship? The subsequent questions provided increased depth in understanding the experiences of Latina women public high school principals:

1. What was most significant about their principalship career path experiences?
2. What meaning did they make of their career experiences in regard to the principalship career path?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is multiple. It adds to and goes beyond the existing literature on Latina women high school principals in public education. It adds categorized themes, cultural implications about Latina/o identity, and understanding gender roles based on the traditional cultural values. Finally, it highlights career pathways, career development, challenges, and problem-solving strategies of Latina high school principals.

By conceptualizing culture, race, gender, and sex identity scripts as interconnected, my dissertation research fills theoretical and empirical gaps in the existing literature. In addition, it adds to our understanding about the experiences of Latina women as they navigated a path toward successfully attaining careers as public high school principals. In order to change the status quo for Latina women principals, it is necessary to better understand their unique experiences, compared to White principals in their career paths, challenges, opportunities, and problem-solving strategies.

Historically there is racial and gender partiality in the public education system, especially between teachers and principals. The historical perspective goes back when Anglo-Saxons of the Protestant Church established public schools. The Protestant religion heavily influenced the school leadership role and hand selected White males to lead schools. Women were discriminated against and encountered barriers to the role of principal. Women were typecast as incapable of managing a school (see Appendix (I) Historical Perspective). As a result, White males have dominated the principalship role while White

females were the majority of teachers. While trends are changing there are still disparities (Table 2.2). When broken down by gender for all grade levels the percentage of female teachers (all ethnicities) is currently about 75% of the teaching population while only 51% are female principals. When broken down by grade level, the greatest disparity is at the high school level where teachers are 59% female, but represent only 29% of the principals. Elementary teachers are 84% female, but represent 59% of the principals. Within the ethnic minority groups, the percentage of minority teachers is about 19% of the teaching population while 18% are principals. Although there may seem to be equality between the teacher and principal ratio, within this group there are large disparities. In high school, teachers are 7% Black as compared to 7% Latina/o. However, only 4.5% of principals are Latina/o compared to 9.8% Black. This represents a greater than 100% difference between the representation between Blacks and Latinas/os as principals while their teacher numbers are the same (7%). The proportions of students of color who are in high school are Black, 17% and Hispanic 20% (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2012).

In high school, Whites represent 83% of the teachers and 84% of the principals. White principals mirror the proportion to their numbers as teachers. Black principals surpass the proportion to their numbers as teachers. Alarming, Latina/o principals fall below the proportion to their numbers as teachers. As Latina/o student enrollment has been increasing for the last decade, the Latina/o teachers and principals' representation have increased slightly (NCES 2010).

Table 1.1 Public Full-Time Teachers and Principals, by Sex, Race and Ethnicity, 2007-2008

| | Elementary Teachers | Elementary Principals | Secondary Teachers | Secondary Principals | All Teachers | All Principals |
|-----------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Sex | | | | | | |
| Female | 84.4 | 58.9 | 58.7 | 28.5 | 75.1 | 51.0 |
| Male | 15.6 | 41.1 | 41.3 | 71.5 | 24.9 | 49.0 |
| Race | | | | | | |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| White | 82.0 | 79.5 | 83.1 | 84.1 | 82.9 | 82.4 |
| Minority | 18.1 | 20.5 | 16.9 | 15.3 | 19.1 | 17.7 |
| Black | 07.4 | 10.9 | 07.0 | 9.8 | 06.9 | 09.7 |
| Latino | 07.9 | 07.6 | 07.0 | 4.5 | 07.2 | 05.9 |
| Other | 02.8 | 02.0 | 02.9 | 01.5 | 02.9 | 02.1 |

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education 2010, Characteristics of School Principals; Characteristics of Full-Time Teachers.

Research indicates that there is a shortage of school principals (Battle, 2012; Cusick, 2003; Fullen, 2008; Canavan, 2001). The shortage is most severe in public high schools especially those considered to be challenging schools (Roza, Celio, Harvey, & Wishon, 2003). In addition, national statistics and reports indicate that Latinas/os are among the most marginalized ethnic group serving as principals in the public education system (NCES, 2010-028; Battle, 2009; Fiore et al., 1997; Gates et al., 2003). Latinas/os represent about 9,593 (5.9%) of the 162,600 school principals (NCES, 2010-028).

In 2012, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, *Staff by Ethnicity and Gender Report Statewide – Licensed by Position*, revealed that Latina/o principals accounted for 1.7% of all principals (Elementary, 14; Middle, 6; High School, 2; Charter or Bilingual, 10). Whites and Black Americans accounted for 91% and 5.9%, respectively. Furthermore in Wisconsin, Latina women accounted for 2.2% of all women principals (Elementary, 11;

Middle, 1; High School, 1; Charter or Bilingual, 9) whereas White women and Black women accounted for 88.1% and 8.9%, respectively. Latina women are scarcely represented as high school principals across the United States and in some states there are none.

The representation of Latina/o principals, especially Latina women principals (<4.5%), does not mirror the United States' Latino community 50.4 million (16.3%). Nor does it mirror the Latino student enrollment 10.8 million (22.1%) (NCES, 2011-347). This pattern is consistent in Wisconsin where the representation of Latina/o principals, especially Latina women principals shows inequality. Latina/o principals do not mirror the Latina/o community 5.9% (336,058) or the Latina/o student enrollment 8.4% (73,472).

Following *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), the 1960s of social unrest, and The Civil Rights Act of 1964, both women and men of color, and White women progressed into the ranks of school principal. However, White women ascending into principalship positions have progressed most from the social unrest and pressures of the Civil Rights Act. As stated previously, White women presently represent the majority of the 51% of all women school principals in the nation. For ethnic women and men, a minimal distribution of their principalship representation across the United States has prevailed. Latina women school principals are scarcely represented, especially in high schools.

In addition, empirical research about the lives of Latina women school principals is nearly non-existent. The paucity of literature and research that exists present Latina women as *change agents*, but not well respected. The latter is a result of preconceived cultural gender deficit stereotypes (see Terms) by non-Latino administrators and society (Magdaleno, 2004; Marciano, 1997; Ortiz, 1982; Trujillo-Ball, 2003). In addition to overcoming barriers faced by both women and minorities (e.g., gender, race), Latina women face gender equity

issues while working with Latino men (Magdaleno, 2004). To change the status quo for Latina women principals several things should be investigated. First, it is necessary to better understand their career paths and the opportunities presented to them to enter the principalship role. Next, challenges of the principalship position and their successes in the role of principal should be explored. These discoveries can assist decision- and policy makers in recruiting and developing Latina women into the position of high school principal.

Latina principals have unique professional opportunities (Marcano, 1997; Ortiz, 1982; González & Ortiz, 2007), contributions, and content knowledge important to principals. Latina women high school principals have the opportunity to influence leadership and advocate for students. Latina principals can voice their opinions in education policy and act as role models for students, parents, community, and teachers aspiring to the principal position.

I hope that this research will benefit other Latina women by providing a roadmap to the high school principalship and influence professional Latinas to serve as high school principals. This dissertation provided an avenue for Latina women high school principals to voice their perspectives and experiences. Professors in higher education, policy-makers and principal preparation programs may benefit by having shared keen insights of Latina women principals familiar with the two cultures (Latino and American). The researcher hopes to deconstruct any negative stereotypes of Latina women school principals by illuminating their leadership attributes and their strategies utilized for upward mobility. It would seem to me that part of breaking the stereotype of Latina women principals includes obtaining principalship positions and demonstrating competency, thus increasing the number of Latinas serving as high school principals.

Contribution of Existing Research

Current research reports that Latina women principals are generally tracked into urban regions, or in communities with a high percentage of minority student, or high concentrations of Latino student enrollment. Further, they lead schools in challenging districts in deteriorating urban settings and in high levels of poverty. It appears that leadership opportunities in ‘challenging schools’ are available for Latina high school principals.

As urban school districts grow and minority student population increases, it is likely that opportunities may also increase for Latina women aspiring to become high school principals. Changing demographics show an increase in Latina/o student enrollment. Increased school administration should reflect the changing demographics; especially since qualified majority high school principals do not apply for employment at ‘challenging schools’ (Roza, Celio, Harvey, & Wishon, 2003; Militello, Rallis, & Goldring, 2009). In other words, qualified White principals do not want to serve in ‘challenging schools’ or ethnic ones.

New data show the number of Latina/o students attend schools in suburban areas. Latina/o students are now the largest racial/ethnic group to attend schools in suburban areas and towns (NCES, 2010). Latina principals are tracked into schools highly concentrated with Latina/o students in urban regions. Will Latina principals also be tracked into schools highly concentrated with Latina/o students in suburban school districts? Should this be the case, how do Latina women achieve the principalship role in these high schools?

The data show some Latinas have successfully earned college degrees (e.g., Masters and Doctoral degrees) to become high school principals. Some Latina women have negotiated between ‘the old and new way’ of life to empower themselves with a self-

awareness. They recognize that learned messages of what women are expected to be in Latino families and communities are opposite of what is taught to women, at an early age, in American society. American women are groomed to be assertive, independent, and to have career aspirations. This would allow them to be self-sufficient in the United States capitalist society in which we live while this is contrary to Latina gender scripts of *marianismo* (a term of womanliness) (Schmitz & Diefenthaler, 1998, p. 139). *Marianismo* is similar to the behaviors taught in the 'Cult of Domesticity' practiced in the United States in the early 1800s. This ideology of womanliness dictated women hold roles as mother and wife and that she be pious (holy), pure, submissive, and domestic (America in Class from the National Humanities Center). Some Latina women growing up, experienced these gender role scripts. They also faced racism. Therefore, Latina women are bicultural and experience a double bind (e.g., racism, gender discrimination) (Arredondo, 2002).

Forty years ago, majority (White) women who found unequal distribution in school principalship compared to teacher distribution challenged policy makers for the purpose of increasing their representation in the principalship role (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2009). They wanted to balance a distribution of principals to mirror the distribution of teachers. As a result, majority women have achieved increased numerical representation in the principalship. Latina women also need to seek equal sentiments to balance a distribution of principals to mirror the distribution of teachers. Principals are important to the teachers, students, community, and society. Principals' leadership can establish a school culture to improve overall student academic learning (Goldring, Rallis, & Militello, 2009; Leithwood & Wahlstron, 2008).

In an effort to understand underrepresentation, researchers explored this phenomenon. A number of studies on White women have reported numerous obstacles and guidance strategies to understand, achieve, and sustain school principal positions across the United States. Over time White women have increased their representation in the role as school principal. However, national reports show that White women are unfairly represented in high schools as principals. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) write, "...Proportionally, women are still poorly represented in the secondary principalship..." (p. 41). Equally, Latina women are unfairly represented as high school principals.

Researchers have reported valuable information about the correlation between high school principal attainment and Latina women (e.g. Magdaleno, 2004; Méndez-Morse, 1998; Ortiz, 1982; Trujillo-Ball, 2003). Factors such as resiliency, value for hard work, community, commitment, confidence, student academic focus, positive attitude, and safeguarding their administrative position are just a few of the positive influences in principalship attainment. Additionally, Trujillo-Ball (2003) noted that Latina women principals adopted an identity related to White middle-class [women principals] to maintain, and succeed in the leadership role as principals (p. 182).

Also documented are barriers and challenges of discrimination relating to race, sexism, lack of mentors and role models, salary inequities, and delay before entering administrative roles (e.g., Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2010; Hibbits, 2005; Magdaleno, 2007; Marcano, 1997; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Ortiz, 1982; Trujillo-Ball, 2003). Research has also documented the additional barriers Latina women face in regard to how they are perceived in leadership. For example, they are viewed as having deficit characteristic stereotypes from both Latino men and non-Latino persons (Ortiz, 1982). These stereotypes lead individuals to think less of

Latina principals and presume they lack competencies in education leadership. More detrimentally, Latina educational leaders experience negativity by a society who thinks of them as “submissive, docile, weak, incompetent, and sexual” (Trujillo-Ball, 2003, p. 169); they are “typecast and expected to portray passive behaviors” (Ortiz, 1982, p. 113); and they experience isolation and closed networks from male administrators of the same ethnic identity (Magdaleno, 2004). Finally, Latina school principals face challenges from Latina/o parents who accuse them as ‘being too White.’ Latina women principals stated that Latina/o parents thought of them to have experienced a ‘loss of culture’ (Marcano, 1997).

Limitations and Gap in Existing Research

The existing empirical studies on Latina/o public school principals serving in the high schools, although insightful, are scarce (González & Ortiz, 2009; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2007; Méndez-Morse, 1999; Ortiz, 1982; Smulyan, 2000; Trujillo-Ball, 2003). These studies were conducted of Latina women and Latino men principals, few in numbers, who managed schools during the 1970s to the present. Many of the studies are of Latinas/os serving elementary and middle schools. Few of these studies focused on Latinas/os serving in high schools, especially as it pertains to Latina women. In addition, minimal information is known about them. These studies were insightful when learning about positive and negative factors contributing to the success of and challenges faced in the principalship role. It was difficult to locate data on Latina/o principals, especially women, as they mobilized their career to attain the principalship at any school level. In these studies, the career development process of these women was not reported. More importantly, these studies did not explore their opinions and perceptions on the preparation and advancement into the school principalship role.

Further, these studies did not explore how Latina/o culture, race, gender, and gender identity scripts contributed to or hindered Latina women's ascension to the role of high school principal or leadership development. These studies also did not explore whether efforts were made to promote gender equity among Latina women and Latino men.

Limitations of the Study

I first attempted to conduct research in Milwaukee, Wisconsin of current Latina women public high school principals. Because I did not locate Latina women public high school principals in Wisconsin to participate in the study, I focused on mid-western states to find them (e.g., Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota). The researcher still did not locate an adequate number of Latina women principals, so she focused on the remainder of the United States to locate all study participants.

The findings of the study do represent all Latina women principals. For instance, Latina women school principals in Wisconsin may have different experiences when compared to Latina women school principals in other mid-western states.

I used a qualitative method for this study that required a small number of participants. Findings from the small sample size involved cannot be generalized to majority (White), or other minority women, or to other Latina professionals.

Because I explored the study of Latina women public high school principals, the researcher set aside any "preconceptions [of traditional cultural gender scripts] to best understand the phenomenon as experienced by the participants" (Creswell, 1998, p. 31). The researcher asked her committee members to randomly cross check her recordings. Although in the end, the researcher interpreted the narrative. The researcher's upbringing with cultural

traditions were not generalized to that of Latina women as their experiences growing up may have been different.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are useful in understanding the background and issues related to this study.

Axiology – Also called *value theory*. This term concerns itself with “the nature of value and with what kinds of things have value” (Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 2009, p. 949). It concerns itself with “interjecting personal experiences and values into the inquiry, including issues of voice and political action” (Patton, 2002, p. 135). It answers the question: How do we personally engage in inquiry? (i.e. Do I engage in inquiry as a means to improve the community?)

Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka – A court decision issued in 1954, to end segregation in public schools; since, segregation in public schools denied “equal protection of the laws” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, pp. 505-507). In 1969, the Supreme Court mandated all schools still operating with legal segregation to desegregate without delay.

Cultural Deficit – This is a term that describes fault within a particular culture to cause academic failure in school or other settings. Yosso (2006) states,

“cultural deficit model finds dysfunction in Chicana/o cultural values and insists such values cause low educational and occupational attainment²⁶...These supposedly...emphasi[ze] on cooperation rather than competition, ... tendency to minimize the importance of education and upward social mobility²⁷...The models assert Chicana/o families also exhibit problematic internal social structures...-cause and perpetuate a culture of poverty²⁸...[and] argues that Chicano/o parents fail to assimilate and embrace the educational values of the dominant group, they continue to socialize their children with values that inhibit educational mobility²⁹” (p. 22-23).

Epistemological - Is a term that concerns itself with the “the desirability of objectivity, subjectivity, causality, validity, general – lizability” (Patton, 2002, p. 135). It answers the question: *How do we know what we know?*

Hispanic – A term introduced by the United States government in 1978 to establish an ethnic category to include persons (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, or others with a Spanish origin) with “a common ancestral language and cultural characteristics ... that ... differ in immigrant history and settlement in the United States” (Trevino, 1987; as cited in Jones & Castellanos, 2003, p. xx).

Latina/o – Refers “to persons residing in the United States whose ancestries are from Latin American countries...”(Jones & Castellanos, 2003, p. xx), (e.g., Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Nicaragua, and Guatemala). It also includes Latinas/os who speak a language other than Spanish (e.g., Brazilian). [US Census do not include Brazilians as Latinas/os]. Latino is a term sensitive to persons who have origins in Native Latin American countries who have mixed blood with European people by way of conquest (Ramirez, 1998; as cited in Jones & Castellanos, 2003, p. xx).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 - No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) - The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is a landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps...from kindergarten through high school. It is built on four common-sense pillars: accountability for results, an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research, expanded parental options, and expanded local control and flexibility (*No Child Left Behind...*, 2004, p. 1).

Ontological – Is a term that concerns itself with verifiable reality and truth. Its concern is that the object of the study must exist. It answers the question: *What do we believe about the nature of reality?* (Patton, 2002, p. 135). The reality and truth “is constructed in the minds of the actors involved in the situation” (Guba & Lincoln, 1988; as cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 254).

Title VII of the federal The Civil Rights Act of 1964 – as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, prohibits discrimination with regard to any personnel action, or a term, condition, or privilege of employment based upon race, color, sex, national origin, or religion (Affirmative Action...).

Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 – prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Affirmative Action...).

The Civil Rights Act of 1991 – provides recovery of compensatory and punitive damages for the violation of Title VII and the Americans with Disabilities Act (Affirmative Action...).

Racial/Ethnic (R/E) Minority - American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians or Pacific Islanders, Blacks and Hispanics (Affirmative Action...).

Underutilization - Having fewer minorities or women in a particular job group than would reasonably be expected by their availability in the relevant labor force (Affirmative Action...).

Overview of the Study

This dissertation has six chapters. Chapter I includes the background of the study, problem statement, significance of the study, the literature of past supports, the ‘need’ or rationale for the study, limitations of the current study, and definition of terms/variables. Chapter II presents the literature review related to the overview of the principals, women and minorities as principals, Latina women principals, Latina/o cultural values, and career development theory. Chapter III reviews the purpose of the study, presents the design, research questions, selection process of participant population and sample, interview protocol and questions and an explanation of the procedures used for the data analysis. Chapter IV describes the participants’ profiles. Chapter V reports the findings from the participants’ interview sessions and emerging themes. Chapter VI presents on integration model of the emerging themes from the data as well as the summary, interpretation, and implications for high school principals and future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter focuses primarily on Social Cognitive Career Theory and how it relates to the career development of Latina women high school principals in public education. The facts on the numerical representation of the Latina principals specified in Chapter 1 lead us to ask: What did Latina women do to ensure career opportunities existed to ascend into the position of high school principal?

Social Cognitive Career Theory

In 1994, Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett developed Social Cognitive Career Theory. Although SCCT incorporated other facets of career development theories, the SCCT framework was first derived from and built upon the general social cognitive theory created by Albert Bandura in 1986 (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996, p. 376). Bandura's theory was based on the "processes of interest formation, career selection [choice], and performance" (Lent et al., 1996, p. 376). The three variables from general social cognitive theory are "self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals" (p. 380). When self-efficacy and outcome expectations are interrelated, then goals are set in place to guide the outcomes of the personal goals (p. 378). Both Bandura's and SCCT's theories are used to guide a person's career development and academic goals.

Bandura believed in the "interlocking mechanisms that affect one another bidirectionally (model of casualty)." SCCT subscribes to Bandura's (1986) *triadic reciprocal* and connects it to SCCT's "models of interest development, choice, and performance" (p. 378). The term "*triadic reciprocal*," is represented with the following:

- (1) personal attributes (internal cognitive, affective states, and physical attributes)
- (2) external environmental factors

(3) overt behavior (distinct from internal and physical qualities of the person)

The SCCT framework also derives from Hackett and Betz's position of "application of the self-efficacy construct to women's career development" (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996, p. 376). The SCCT is most aligned with the position of Hackett and Betz, however it puts more emphasis on self-efficacy. Flores and O'Brien (2002), stated:

Lent and his colleagues (Lent et al., 1994) extended Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and Hackett and Betz's (1981) career self-efficacy theory to develop a social cognitive career theory (SCCT) that hypothesized the influence of personal, contextual, and social cognitive factors on interest formation, career goals, and performance... Finally, proximal contextual variables were hypothesized to exert direct effects on career goals...(p. 15).

Further, Lent and colleagues (1996) indicate that SCCT is more concerned about:

specific cognitive mediators through which learning experiences guide career behavior; with the manner in which variables such as interests, abilities, and values interrelate; and with the specific paths by which person and contextual factors influence career outcomes. It also emphasizes the means by which individuals exercise personal agency [self-regulatory] (p. 377).

Career development includes both external and internal barriers that affect choice (career possibilities), change, and growth. For example:

- social and economic conditions promote or inhibit particular career paths for particular persons
- different abilities and achievement histories
- a complex array of factors: culture, gender, genetic endowment, socio-structural considerations, and disability/health status (p. 374)

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is critical to career development. It involves a set of self-beliefs specific to performance and interactions with other person, behavior, and environmental factors. The self-beliefs are "acquired and modified with four sources of information or types of learning

experience: personal performance accomplishments; vicarious learning; social persuasion; and physiological states and reactions” (p. 380).

The effects of the sources of information of self-efficacy depend heavily on personal attainment for most of its information source. This means that self-efficacy increases with successful experiences while repeated failures lower self-efficacy. Self-efficacy concerns itself with whether a person can do something based on their capabilities. Herrmann (2010) further explained Bandura’s position about self-efficacy:

Bandura’s (1986) theory posits that self-efficacy may be that individual difference variable that allows people in aversive and challenging circumstances and unresponsive social systems to live efficaciously despite their environmental conditions (Turner, 1996). Achievement strategies, effort intensity, and tenacity in seeking solutions to barriers (Covington & Omelich, 1979) are also predicted by self-efficacy (p. 45).

Outcome Expectations

Another critical role to SCCT is outcome expectations. It describes a person’s beliefs about the resulting consequences or outcomes of “the performance of behaviors ” (p. 381).

It asks the question, “if I do this, what will happen?” (p. 381). Outcome expectations are:

- response outcomes, such as beliefs about... reinforcement (receiving tangible rewards for successful performance)
- self-directed consequences (such as pride in oneself for mastering a challenging task)
- outcomes derived from the process of performing a given activity (for instance, absorption in the task itself) (p. 381).

The role of outcome expectations is important because it is believed to motivate behavior.

The outcome expectations also result from learned experiences. Outcome expectations can also derive from a person’s memory of an outcome. For example:

- Rewards they received for similar past actions
- Observation of the outcomes produced by other people
- Attention to self-generated outcomes (like: self-approval) and the reactions of others
- Sensitivity to physical cues such as: level of emotional arousal or sense of well-being

Goals

SCCT defines goals as a person who takes action to engage in an activity or to affect an outcome. As people set personal goals, they are likely to organize and guide their own behavior. Lent and colleagues (1996) believe that personal history and environmental events shape behavior (p. 381). Behavior is also motivated by a person's personal goals.

Summary of SCCT

SCCT (Lent, 2006) is selected as the theoretical framework for the current study because of how it applies textual variables in career development. SCCT posits that background contextual variables exert and influence career self-efficacy, resulting in the influence of interests. This dissertation is seeking to understand how Latina women navigated a career path to the role of high school principal. Latina women have experienced career development, but what does this look like? SCCT can shed light in this arena as it has “its applicability with diverse racial/ethnic groups (e.g., Flores & O’Brien, 2002; Ladany, Melnicoff, Constantine, & Love 1997; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; Mau & Bikos, 2000)” (Ojeda & Flores, 2008, p. 84). The components that make up SCCT are: (1) Person factors (e.g., gender, ethnicity); (2) Background contextual factors (e.g., social support, environment); and (3) Proximal contextual factors (e.g., perceived barriers) (Lent, 2006).

Both qualitative and quantitative research on Latina school high school principals are needed to understand their career path experiences, roles and challenges in the principalship. Researchers report on how Latina women have taking the challenge to lead public schools in the United States (Méndez-Morse, 2004; Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Manual & Slate, 2003; Trujillo-Ball, 2003) as high school principals, however, limited information is known.

Latina Leadership

Latina women high school principals are an understudied population rarely examined in education scholarship. Data on preparation for, advancement into, maintenance of the principalship position are a rarity in education literature (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2007, p. 21; Ortiz, 1982, p. 115). More specifically, Latina women's voices are nearly silent (Trujillo-Ball, 2003, p. 194) when describing a broad range of content like, principal demographics, board/central office principalship relations, professional development, leadership style, and career paths. Literature about Latina women high school principals is limited. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2007) believe the lack of literature is due to "the few women of color in educational leadership positions" (p. 21). It is unclear for example, whether Latino culture and gender role identity for women influenced principalship development; or if Latino culture and gender role identity have contributed to or hindered Latina women acquiring principalship; or if there were efforts made to promote gender equity among Latino male and Latina female high school principals; or if identity scripts of *marianismo*, specific for Latina women, influenced their role as principal. This information may prove to change the status quo for Latina high school principals.

Beyond principalship, Glass and Franceschini (2007) and others report on Latina women school superintendents who lead American public schools; however, an in-depth profile of their role is lacking. As principals, Latina women lead schools successfully, and often were hired to bring about stability in minority-populated schools or to 'fix' schools in deteriorating condition (Ortiz, 1982; González & Ortiz, 2007, Palacio, 2013, unpublished). González & Ortiz (2007), found that Latina superintendents who served as principals improved overall student test scores, lowered disciplinary issues, and increased parent

involvement. These reports indicate that there are Latina women who are competently skilled in their administrative roles as principals to make improved changes in schools.

Research shows that Latina women who have achieved principal positions developed a more well-rounded educational experience before serving as high school principal. Further, Latina women held advanced degrees compared to White principals not required for a school principal (González & Ortiz, 2007; Grogan and Shakeshaft, 2011). Examining the perceptions of Latina women principals familiar with the two cultures (Latino and American) may prove insightful considering their unique professional opportunities (Ortiz, 1982; González & Ortiz, 2007), contributions, and content knowledge important to principals.

Yosso (2006) wrote in her book, *Critical Race Counterstories Along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline*, about the contributions Latina women offer. Yosso wrote about cultural wealth in Chicana/o communities. She described the social theory, “Model of Community Cultural Wealth” as a model that defined a list of capital attributes offered by Latina women: (1) Aspiration; (2) Linguistic; (3) Navigation; (4) Social; (5) Familial; and (6) Resistance. A detailed description is provided in the section: Latina Cultural Values.

A positive aspect of Latina/o school principals is that they are effective role models for minority students (Magdaleno, 2006). Latina high school principals were able to connect Latina/o students and their parents to school staff and guided them through the education system for academic success while maintaining success for all students (Palacio, 2013, unpublished).

Historical Data: Principal Representation

An overview of historical national data presents a general view of Latina/o principal representation and the increases made over time. A series of dissertation studies include data and a close up view on Latina women principals. Data taken from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that in 1987-88, principals were overwhelmingly White men. The National data also reports on minority principal representation. The term *minority* represents both women and people of non-White ethnicities. In 1999-2000, White women principals were nearly half of all principals and continue to be heavily clustered in elementary schools. In 1987-2000, racial minority principals were minimally represented (Gates et al., 2003, p. 77). Of the racial minority cluster (i.e., Black, Latino, Asian, American Indian), Latina/o school principals are significantly underrepresented with minuscule growth predicted (Battle, 2009, pp. 8-8; Fiore et al., 1997) for future principalship positions.

Although White women principals have almost doubled in numbers from 24.6% to 43.7% in 1987-2000 compared to a slight increase for racial minority principals from 52.0% to 54.6% in 1988-2000 (Gates et al., 2003), their numbers grew minimally. Racial minority public school principals increased from 13.4% to 19.1% in 1987-2008 compared to a slight increase from 7.0% to 12.8% in 1988-2008 in private schools (Battle, 2009, p. 8-9; Gates et al., 2003, p. 77). Latina/o public school principals increased almost 100% from 3.3% to 6.5% in 1988-2008 compared to an insignificant increase from 2.5% to 4.0% in 1988-2008 in private schools (Battle, 2009, p. 8-9; Fiore et al., 1997). The representation of the Latina/o school principals is 5.9% or approximately 6,998 of all 118,610 principals in 2007-08, reported in, NCES, a national survey (Battle, 2009).

The exact number of Latina women principals is unknown. Although, Latina principals' gender and race identity is self-reported on national surveys (e.g., NCES), their numeral representation (e.g., ethnicity and gender) is not recorded in public records due to the low numbers of returned surveys. Another reason their numeral representation is unknown is due to the way gender race/ethnicity are reported on national statistics of school principals. Data reveals that Latina principals are clustered in elementary schools. Further, Latina principals serve in schools that have a high enrollment of minority students who are impoverished and low achieving.

The following section present several studies that identify Latina women principals in public education. Marcano's (1997) quantitative study of a sample of ten Hispanic female principals in Chicago, Texas, and Wisconsin included five Puerto Ricans, one South American and four Mexican female principals. All were fluent in Spanish and English. Four were married and six were single women of which three were divorced and three never married. The research findings illuminated barriers of language, gender, and culture as well as racial and sexual discrimination in their career advancements. The results also showed "that Hispanic female principals do not want to be considered 'outsiders' by their colleagues; they seek entrance into leadership positions and acceptance by the White culture. Condescending attitudes and tokenism, once they are detected, are destructive to positive working relationships" (p. 6). Marcano found "a richer understanding of [their] experiences [as principals]" (p. 2). To maintain a positive work environment, Latina women must look beyond the condescension of attitudes and perceptions of others in order to move forward.

Research indicates that Latina women principals were frequently found to serve schools in urban areas. Ortiz's (1982) qualitative study of a sample of 350 school administrators, her

report further examined 55 Latina women administrators in California. Ortiz reported on “how social science research can be utilized by policy makers in their decision-making processes...[using] the case of educational administration...to show how socialization and role theories help to explain the participation of its members” (p. 1). Ortiz’s work revealed that Latina women principals were hired in the mid sixties and early seventies as tokens to calm social unrest and were placed in schools where “their ethnic group is dominant” (p. 89). Most Latina women principals referred to as change agents were hired to improve school conditions. After bringing order back to the schools, some Latina women principals were transferred to another school to replicate their successful efforts. Although the Latina women administrators “displayed skills and competencies in school administration...viewed as ‘warriors’ who bring about stability in minority schools” (p. 112), their responsibilities were limited. Latina women were tracked into deteriorating schools with high concentrations of poor socio-economic Latina/o students. Latina women were ‘tokens’ in school administration and they were typecasts to be expected to portray similar roles of passive behaviors (p. 113) according to Ortiz.

Manual and Slate’s (2003) quantitative study of practicing superintendents reported Latina women administrators to be at the bottom of the hierarchy of public school administrator positions. The study examined 23 Latina women’s reflections on becoming superintendents. Their achievement of superintendent positions was heavily grounded in their trials of principals. A survey was used to measure “attitudes toward career pathways and perceived barriers” (p. 12). Findings revealed that Latina superintendents reported to work in school districts with high enrollment of Latina/o students and high poverty rate. Similarly, they faced discrimination issues comparable to White female superintendents.

Another challenge noted was how Latinas experienced minimal support and encouragement from their spouses (22%) and no support and encouragement from parents or siblings regarding leadership career paths. White women superintendents were reported to receive a higher level of support from their significant other. According to this study, Latina women lacked family and spousal support for high-ranking leadership aspirations. Findings for this phenomenon were not investigated; therefore, it is unclear whether traditional Latino culture influences were a factor in their rise to the position of superintendent.

Magdaleno's (2004) qualitative dissertation study of a sample of 22 Latina/o school administrators, examined Latinas/os's reflections on how they became superintendents in California. Their rise to the superintendent position is grounded in their trials serving as principals. The study highlighted Latino administrators' experiences and mentorship.

Magdaleno's work revealed several important findings:

(1)...a positive professional and personal relationship between the school board and the superintendent is critical to position tenure; (2) the superintendent position is intensely isolated; (3) for many Latina and Latino superintendents, isolation is a result of racial and gender discrimination; (4) superintendents acknowledge the covert and overt racism and discrimination exists but have learned to insulate themselves in order to tolerate and move beyond its effects; (5) a mentoring program is key to the development of successful leadership characteristics for Latinas and Latinos (p. xi.)

Further, findings also revealed how both women and men of the same Latino ethnic group experienced issues of gender socialization. This issue emerged regarding "the effect that 'machismo' [gender behavior specific for men] has on the relationship between" Latino men and Latina women (p. 90); as well as the idea that Latina women are socialized into gender behavior of *marianismo* (womenliness), specific for women. In other words, *marianistic* behaviors are geared towards the domestic and not career mobility.

Glass and Franceschini (2007) conducted a study of practicing public school district superintendents leading American schools. The study examined self-reporting opinions and perceptions on a broad range of content that shapes the current condition of the superintendency. Data collection comes from a survey with 59 questions. The study updated findings of the 2000 status report, *The Study of the American School Superintendency 2000: A Look at the Superintendent of Education in the New Millennium*. This study follows similar studies in 1982 and 1992. Glass and Franceschini's study is considered "midpoint 10-year study, conducted during an era of rapid change fueled by heightened accountability demands, shifting demographics, and an array of other social and political stressors" (p. 9). The work revealed that of the 1,338 responding superintendents, more White women (21.7%, n=285) had entered the superintendency, however, the number of minority superintendents remained small at 6.2%, n=18 (p. 17, xix). What is more disturbing, Latina/o superintendents were only 1.4%, n=8. In addition, a large percentage of women and minorities were hired as change agents 28% and 10%. These groups hired as change agents had a significantly higher percentage of doctoral degrees (p. 70). Their study did not report on the sex and race/ethnicity segregation, so the status on the proportion of Latinas compared to White women and other minority women are nearly impossible to determine.

As echoed in previous studies, Glass and Franceschini (2007) found similar results concerning Latinos and their experiences with slow and minimal growth in the role of public school superintendents equal to that of public school principals. The focus was an in-depth look at superintendent preparation and guided the development of standards-based preparation and licensing developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLCC). These data provided a set of guidelines for an administrator preparation program

for school principals. Providing a survey such as Glass and Franceschini's would offer a framework for school principal training for Latina women. This may aide Latinas in leadership development to serve as high school principals as positions become available.

Schools in the 21st century face the challenge of recruitment and succession in the principalship role (Fullan, 2008). Wynn (2007) reported on a potential shortage of both school administrators and teachers. Similarly, Canavan (2001) indicated that principals in Catholic schools in the United States are leaving their profession. Studies report that principals in both public and private schools are leaving due to retirement (Cusick, 2003), private (22%) and public (45%) (Battle, 2010); high turnover (42%) (Doud & Keller, 1998); and for other reasons (Hertling, 2001). In addition, there are growing concerns of ill prepared principal candidates. Garrison-Wade, Sobel, and Fulmer (2007) reported how "recent research points out the need to improve skills of current and future administrators" (p. 117). Roza, Celio, Harvey, and Wishon (2003) reported a concern of the few high school principal candidates available to fill high schools. Furthermore, prospective majority (White) principals avoid assignments to schools "with the most challenging working conditions, higher concentrations of poor and minority students and lower salaries..." (p. 1).

Role, Duties and Responsibilities

The elementary, middle, and secondary school principal is an established official position. Depending on the school's needs, the principal's role is shaped by school principalship expectation in combination with personal expectations of those demands (Ubben et al., 2004, p. 4). The role of the principal comes with established expectations set by the school community. The expectation are also established by the following: "school mandates and policy, state and federal policies and directives, court decisions, the general

public, the educational profession itself and various interest and professional groups” (Ubben et al., 2004, p. 11). In other words, the school principal’s role has evolved into one that is created by both internal and external factors.

The principal’s role can be shifted in one of several ways depending on the school’s local, state or federal policy driven initiatives and on the way the school is perceived according to Ubben et al., (2004). For example if the school is policy-driven, the principal’s role would shift toward managing both organization and its people “so that order, predictability and tradition are maintained” (p. 9). If the school were driven by the changing needs of its internal and external environment, the role would move toward that of a “facilitator of a shared mission that unites organization members through purposeful commitment” (p. 10). Next, if the school is “characterized as a think/learning model” (p. 10), a reflective and problem-finding approach is emphasized for problem solving. Further, the principal’s role is to improve daily conditions and practices and to disperse knowledge and empowerment to open communication to generate new ideas (p. 10). Additionally, if the school is student academic performance-driven, the principal’s role would be to meet the expectations set “by increasing diverse communities and political pressures arising from policy initiatives at local, state and federal levels” (Ortiz & Ogawa, 2000, p. 7) so that students meet academic benchmarks set by the state (p. 10). Finally, if the school is reform-driven the principal’s role is to develop community leaders and learners within the school to increase student productivity (p. 20).

The restructure in the form of school-based management is assigned to the school principal. The district level authority delegates “decision making to the school level” (Ogawa, 1994, p. 520). The principal’s role shifts to that of a “transformational leader”

(Ortiz & Ogawa, 2000, p. 4; Ubben et al., 2004, p. 10). The principal must then “orchestrate shared power and decision-making...” (Ubben et al., 2004, p. 20) and “authority” (Ortiz & Ogawa, 2000, p. 4) to school personnel. They are responsible for providing quality instructional academic curriculum to ensure that all students receive the same education. She must also improve and increase student academic achievement especially to diverse student population living in urban areas that may fail school or score below average in academic benchmarks (Fullan, 2008, p. 4; Ubben et al., 2004, p. 20).

School administrators are also responsible for the management of five essential functions for school operation: curriculum development; staffing and instructional improvement; student services and resource procurement; and building utilization including budget and maintenance. The last function pertains to duties and responsibilities directly involved with community relation, parents and the public (Ubben et al., 2004, p. 13-14).

Principals must assume a leadership position and gain committed partnerships by staff, parents, and school leaders. Leadership visibility is crucial. She must articulate a shared vision and create an environment that fosters empowerment of others (Ubben et al., 2004, p. 18). Further, principals must share authority to make decision, train, and motivate staff to work alongside them as they manage the functional aspects to operate the school (p. 14). Fullan (2008) contends that principals need to “establish conditions, cultures and commitment on a large scale and to engage in continuous improvement” (p. ix). The goal is to approach improvement with teamwork so that results are maximized.

A principal must also interact with parents on several levels and agendas associated with the students. She interacts with parents when their students are not performing academically and when parent/teacher conferences are scheduled during daily school hours

(Ubben et al., 2004, p. 102-103). The principal collaborates with parents when concerns are raised about their special needs children who have discipline issues and require services provided under the Individual Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (p. 171). Collaboration also occurs when parents have students who are at-risk to receive special education services in learning assistance based on language and race barriers (p. 161). Principals maintain good relations with actively involved parents and community members involved in advisory boards (pp. 335, 336), parent teacher organization (PTO) (p. 339) and the local board of education (p. 327). To reassure parents that their students are in a “safe learning-living-working environment” (Ubben et al., 2004, p. 292), principals maintain communication with custodial staff. Custodial staff is to ensure that major needs for building and grounds are identified and maintained (p. 292). Principals ensure a safe and gang-free environment by regulating student conduct, providing disciplinary action, implementing and sustaining policies and rules (p. 365).

In addition to parent communication, principals maintain responsibilities over fiscal management and teacher recruitment. She is responsible for teacher budget and “molding” (p. 221). She acts as human resources manager handling appraisals, selection, orientation, staff development and placement on tenure (p. 225). Although not required, the principal may mentor teachers (Hubbard, Mehan, & Stein, 2006, p. 5; as cited in Fullan, 2008, p. 7). Principals must prevent at all cost employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or disabling condition. Federal regulations such as: The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 and their several amendments and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1992 “make it unlawful to discriminate” (p. 215).

Finally, principals are responsible for organizing, coordinating and articulating student services in the school. She provides technical services to staff to provide “diagnosis, prescription and treatment of individual learner difficulties” (Ubben et al., 2004, p. 105). She is responsible for student advising. She stands before the school board and other community business organizations to advocate for student and staff services and policies (pp. 26-40). Principals are responsible for collecting and segregating demographic data to create a needs assessment to learn of other services to provide to the student population (pp. 64-68). The various responsibilities of principals are broad and can be overwhelming. Government policy played a role in ensuring that teachers are treated fairly and students are meeting benchmarks.

Qualifications and Career Pathways

Aspiring principals of public schools must achieve educational accreditation, acquire certified teaching experience and pass the national or state licensure examination before attaining both the principal licensure and the school principal position (Gates et al., 2003, p. 31). Private school principals are not mandated for state certification requirements (p. 61). Some states depending on policy and regulation will allow public school principals to assume these positions without certified teaching experience (Gates et al., 2003, p. 5). Graduation from a four-year institution or principal preparation program (Glass et al., 2004) and “a master’s degree often from a state-approved program in educational administration” (Gates et al., 2003, p. 31) is required by most states. Although many principals have experience as vice-principal, this position is not required. However, it is an important career step when entering a “medium size to large school district” (Ortiz, 1982, p. 7).

Principals are expected to maintain a higher set of standard once they complete the principal licensure program, pass principal licensure exam and attain the role of principal. The standards are guidelines to assist the principals' role development and professional preparation. As stated previously the *principalship standards* were developed by: The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Six standards were created in an effort to form a framework and base of excellence developed for the preparation of school site administrators (Ubben et al., 2004). The principal is to:

- *Facilitate the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a clear vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.*
- *Advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth.*
- *Ensure management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.*
- *Collaborate with families and community members responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources.*
- *Act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.*
- *Understand, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (Ubben et al., 2004, p. xx)*

Principals use these standards to help guide their performance in the areas of curriculum, instruction, staff development and planning (Glass, 2004, p. 121).

Challenges Faced by Principals

Over several decades (e.g., 1985-2000), the government placed numerous mandates on public education (Glass et al., 2004, p.109). The government expected education leaders to be accountable for managing shifting demographic, social and political mandates, cultural proficiency, academic achievement accountability and leading special education initiatives such as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). As a result of change, school principals may face the challenge of “building a new generation of leaders and workers with international experience, a global perspective, and the skills to match” (Caine & Stier, 2010; as cited in

Abonyi & Van Slyke, 2010, p. 533). In addition, some principals faced personal challenges of not being able to effectively work with “students from diverse career backgrounds and needs” (Garrison-Wade, Sobel, Fulmer, 2007, p. 127).

More specifically, Fullan (2008) described the barriers faced by principals who strive to be change agents. Fullan described these barriers as initiatives, high-stakes vulnerability, managerial diversions and new principals who are considered “unfit for purpose” (p. 1). Initiatives were described as launching innovations that were unmanageable. They were considered policy initiatives with inconsistencies and were minimally funded (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2007, p. vii; as cited in Fullan, 2008, p. 2). Further, he argued that initiatives were chaotic to manage in current conditions (p. 3).

Fullan (2008) described high-stakes vulnerability as the accountability factor. The accountability factor is considered to be “externally imposed, ill conceived and punitively driven” (p. 3) components of *No Child Left Behind*. They are defined as government-imposed resolutions “irrespective of local conditions and motivations” (p. 3). They imposed an external intervention for student learning improvement to be provided by qualified teachers. When principals fail to produce continuous improvement and standards, their teachers face “one-sided anxiety-producing pressures” (Minthrop, 2004, p. 5; as cited in Fullan, 2008, p. 4). This situation can result in loss of Federal funds or school closure.

As principals prioritized their time with the components of operating the school, they spent less time on “strategic imperatives” (p. 4) to improve academic instruction. Next, Fullan (2008) described managerial diversion as the increase demands placed on principals. Principals are expected to manage the budget, building, personnel and public relations (complaints), as well as improve instruction (p. 4).

Principals experienced highly complex job responsibilities. Fullan (2008) identified the term *unfit for purpose* as being new hired school principals who were not prepared to manage demographic changes. Rapidly adding in increased responsibilities in a short amount of time resulted in unexpected realities for school principals. Fullan argued that two problems have emerged:

- (1) Principals entered the role with different expectations [however they] have mislead themselves (p. 5). They expected that demographics in regard to ethnic composition would change but not management;
- (2) Many educators were promoted prematurely lacking the experience to meet the demands of the job (p. 5).

Principals encounter challenges of demographic changes, political expectations, and unpreparedness. This may cause some principals to refrain from working in schools in urban cities or with students not meeting academic benchmarks.

Women and Minorities in School Principalship

From the 1970's, women have progressed into the ranks of what used to be a male-dominated profession as school principal. As shown in Table 2.1, data are provided regarding the number of women in school principal positions. The data represents a rapid increase over a period of 20 years; however, women principals do not mirror their proportion as teachers (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2009). According to the report, The Condition of Education 2010, women are 75.1% of teachers and 51% of principals (Battle, 2009). The difference between the principals and teachers in the high schools for 2007-08 is a significant difference than what is found in the elementary ratio.

Table 2.1: Public School Women Principals and Teachers, by School Level, 1987-1988, 1990-1991 and 2007-2008 (Percentage)

| | Principals | | | | Teachers | | | |
|------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Schools | 1987- 1988 | 1990- 1991 | 1999- 2000 | 2007- 2008 | 1987- 1988 | 1990- 1991 | 1999- 2000 | 2007- 2008 |
| Elementary | 30.0 | 36.5 | 51.8 | 58.9 | 82.8 | 83.2 | 74.7 | 75.1 |
| Secondary | 9.4 | 11.0 | 21.8 | 28.5 | 52.1 | 53.2 | 55.2 | 58.7 |

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, School and Staffing Survey, 1987-1988 and 1990-1991; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education 2010.

The upward executive mobility for White women principals is impressive compared to minority individuals who serve as school principals, especially when compared to Latina women. Minority women and men representation in the principalship are almost stagnant in growth (Aud et al., 2010).

In general, the gap between minority principals and White principals is drastically growing wider (Battle, 2009; Fiore et al., 1997). The disparity is illuminated when Minority women and men principals combined are compared to White women principals. Alarming, this pattern is even more extreme when comparing minority women principals to White women principals. In other words, it appears that there are few minority principals and fewer minority women principals. According to national statistics, it can be interpreted that fewer minority women are underrepresented. However, since data are not reported on race/ethnicity and gender their direct correlation cannot be proved and are never reported in tandem with one another. Therefore, it is almost impossible to determine minority women of race/ethnicity representation as school principals (Gorgan & Shadashaft, 2007, p. 21) because they are not reported in federal statistics. When comparing numerical principal representation to student increase for Latinas/os reflection does not occur.

There has been an influx of rapid increase of Latina/o student population; the Latina/o teachers and principals are not growing at the same rate as Latina/o student population. Student demographics in the United States continue to change as the Latina/o students have increased beyond Black student population. In some school districts, Latino student population is the largest race/ethnicity category (Garden City, KS).

A problem occurs with some current principals when they admit having difficulty managing changing demographics. Much of the changing demographic occurs in urban cities, a place where few qualified principals apply to work as school principals. Preparing and training qualified Latina/o teachers and principals may fill the gap of qualified teachers and principals needed in these area.

Barriers Faced by Women and Minority Principals

Barriers are common concerns that must be addressed as roadblocks, which can hold back or stall a person's career path. Polczynski (1990) defined barriers as social and societal constraints that impede access of a certain individual from membership in a particular group. In other words, it is something that stands in the way between individual and organization. Shakeshaft et al., (2007) and others have reported on women and minorities who have experienced *road blocks* in their succession into school principalship positions. These are in addition to other challenges experienced by the White principals.

Women face barriers that stand in their way of ascending into the role of school principal. Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, & Ballenger (2007) noted that although some barriers in the 1980s are gone, some are still evident in the 21st century:

- family and home responsibilities currently affect the career patterns
- sex role stereotyping
- gender

- overt discrimination “impede women’s career progress” (p. 114)
- administrative preparation programs, which lack curriculum and materials for both women students and students of color
- gender discrimination in the hiring decisions
- unequal salaries
- women principals “continue to experience hostile workplaces that discourage participation and leadership” (p. 114)

Women enter the teaching career without plans of aspiring into administration; therefore, women remain as teachers longer than men before acquiring an administrative role. As a result, their career path into administration differs from men (Polczynski, 1990).

Although women continue to face barriers, they have made progress over the last thirty years. Women have overcome some of the barriers that used to hinder their steps forward into school administration. For example, more women are confident to do the job and inspired and motivated. Further they are “encouraged to enter administrative careers and are represented in numbers in preparation programs or in doctoral degrees” (Shakeshaft et al., 2007, p. 114). Although improvements have been made, there is room for further growth as it pertains to women entering school principalship. Entering the ranks as high school principals is another area where women can gain improvement in administrative leadership. Further, Latina women principals experience the aforementioned barriers listed.

Research has shed light on the correlates of low representation among Latinas/os who aspired to attain the role of school principal. Latina principals confront issues with the loss of identity, typecasting, cultural bias and inferiority. Their abilities, skills and competencies are underestimated because of ethnicity [stereotypes] (e.g., Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2010; Hibbits, 2005; Magdaleno, 2007; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Ortiz, 1982; Trujillo-Ball, 2003). In general, other minority principals face similar issues.

Minority school principals face the following barriers: few educational leaders are in the recruitment pool; they follow a career path atypical from White administrators; experience racial segregation; face difficulty gaining support from White colleagues (Magdaleno, 2007) and lack mentors and role models (Manual & Slate, 2003). Finally, Latina principals experience gender role stereotyping (Magdaleno, 2004). The shortage of Latina/o principals makes for a minimal recruitment pool to future aspirations of advanced administrative positions, such as the superintendent.

In his study, Magdaleno (2004) reported that Latina/o administrators experienced racial and gender discrimination both covert and overt. Discrimination is defined as differential treatment of people of color on the basis of their race, ethnicity, or background (see terms). A related concept of discrimination is racial segregation referring to “differentiation based on race” (Verdugo, 2003, p. 243). Ortiz (1982) reported on how Latina/o principals experienced a closed network sometimes referred to as ‘old boy/old girl’ network, by White school principals. Dana (2006) defined *network* as building and maintaining strong interpersonal relations. In addition, Dana also found that “60 percent to 80 percent of all jobs are found by way of networking” (p. 202). Building on strong interpersonal relations such as *networks* is important as it represents self-identity, capable skills and provides opportunities for advancement in business such as education administration.

The benefits of networks are abundant for novice school administrators. They include having acquaintances with people in advanced positions such as school superintendents. Superintendents have the power to promote and hire principals. According to Dana (2006) the novices may gain the knowledge and insight from established administrators in their efforts to maintain positive support from the board of education. For example, a novice

superintendent or any other school administrator (principal) can benefit by receiving personal attention in training, style, practice in leading, guidance on leadership, functions and responsibilities from networking. More importantly, they may gain mentorship, sponsorship, and visibility. When there is a system powered and controlled by 81% Whites who limit the entrance of minorities in the principalship, it is difficult for those who do manage to gain entrance to receive support and mentorship (Dana, 2006; Magdaleno, 2007). As a result, Latina/o school administrators experience isolation. The role of mentorship and sponsorship is a factor in attaining and sustaining advanced school administration (Magdaleno, 2007).

Minority principals and White women principals experience challenges ascending into the roles principals. Minority principals have yet to overcome many of the barriers that White women have already overcome. Both groups, especially minorities, have a way to go before a fair representation in school administration is attainable. Latina women principals also incur the same challenges, which include unique challenges reflecting cultural identity.

Latina Women Principals

Brunner and Grogan (2007) stated that, “no attention has been paid to creating a profile of women of color” (p. 109) in school leadership. Ortiz (1982) also made reference to the lack of research on Latina school administrators. Méndez-Morse (1999) echoed the visibility regarding the lack of administrators’ studies, data or information about Latina women administrators absent from academic literature. Rivers-Wrushen and Sherman (2008) elaborated on the paucity of literature for minority women:

While few studies exist on minority women leaders’ lived experiences, a limited number of studies have emerged that focused on African-American women leaders. Fewer exist outside of dissertation studies and self-reports on Hispanic women [are]

virtually non-existing...Research on Hispanic women leaders indicates that family support for achieving educational goals is also crucial (Méndez-Morse, 2004).

A call for quality research on minority women has existed for decades. Does the lack of research result from the lack of minority women credentialed with doctoral degrees? Will more research come about for Latina women school principals as more Latina administrators advance into the professorship position? Studies are needed to gain unique experiences of Latina women administrators.

In a study of 16 males and 6 female superintendents, Magdaleno (2004) reported that Whites and Latino men have, “pigeon holed [Latina women] as *passive* mothers, wives, daughters; away from education and professional careers” (p. 11). In his investigation on the perspectives of Latino superintendents, he found “Latino men to regard *machismo* as an ingrained [male] behavioral trait that affects the way they respond to Hispanic (Latina) educational leaders” (p. 91). Ortiz (1982) reported how “Hispanic female principals...[were] expected to portray either the sultry Latin character or the Virgin de Guadalupe image (mother of Jesus)” (p. 113). Although Latina women principals are referred to as ‘change agents’, they are not well respected (Ortiz, 1982). Traditional Mexican culture provides a set of gender behaviors that discourage women from acquiring leadership positions outside the home. For some, this can create deficit stereotypes. These generational stereotypes hurt Latina women’s image (Magdaleno, 2004). This is an especially difficult clash since Latino families and gender role behaviors “are undergoing transformation” in the United States (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, Gallardo-Cooper, 2002).

Latinas/os are socialized by way of religion and community to live honoring cultural values, which can sometimes discourage women from gaining higher education and positions

of leadership. For example, González, & Ortiz (2007) investigated two Latina women educational leaders and found that one Latina woman experienced a cultural traditional barrier regarding female gender role behaviors of *marianismo* reserved for women. This occurred when her father stated to her that “he believed only males needed a college education” (p. 193). With the support and influence of her mother she enrolled in college. However, she was discouraged from pursuing a degree in education. She eventually dropped out and later re-enrolled in the education field and funded her own college expense. Her passion for education and student achievement enabled her to move forward and attain the state school superintendent position. Dedication to service public education, such as this participant, should be highlighted in current literature.

Informed literature should provide positive leadership skills of Latina women school administrators. This elicited information could help women attain their aspirations of school principal. Latina principals who display competent skills are referred to as *change agents* in school administration. They manage schools with a large percentage of ELL (English Language Learners). They increase test scores or stabilize schools in deteriorating condition that are staffed with disorganized personnel and pupils (González & Ortiz, 2009; Ortiz, 1982). As a result, some Latina women principals are transferred from school to school to bring about stability as requested by central office. There is a need for strong, well-organized, motivated and compassionate principals who take on the role of change agent.

Latina women school principals have insulated themselves from barriers by changing, adapting, or accepting different “identities to conform to expectations and to play the games of race and gender successfully” (Trujillo-Ball, 2003, p. 192). As Latina women acculturate

or assimilate into American culture their options to work outside the home or acquire professional leadership positions increase (Gil & Vasquez, 1996). Ortiz (1982) states that,

...women who are successful [principals] are extremely wary and highly possessive of their positions. They view themselves realistically in comparison to the rest of the school organization. They remain ever ready to defend themselves and fight for their position. In addition, they develop loyalty and tenacity towards their work and the organization. They learn to assess what is possible and to pace themselves to accomplish whatever is necessary... (p. 113-114).

In González and Ortiz's (2009) study of two Latina women superintendents in New Mexico, women reported on success factors to include: strong work ethic, high-energy level and the ability to get along with most people. Their work described the career paths of Latina women experiences as teachers, principals and superintendents. Their investigation found these women had education career aspirations early in life. One Latina principal found that her aspiration and motivation led her to become a teacher and later principal. She was appointed to a school with issues of staff, students and low-test scores. The Latina woman principal turned the school into a "Blue Ribbon School with the second-highest district scores in the state" (p. 193) in five years. Later, a position was created for her in central office. Next, she was appointed to Associate Superintendent of Human Resources. Finally, she became school superintendent. She attributes her success to working hard and having good people skills.

Another Latina administrator, investigated by González and Ortiz's (2009), reported that being divorced for 20 years made it easier for her to advance into leadership as it provided her freedom received from divorced, and space to build on career. Such freedom

provided mobility for career opportunities (p. 194). Shakeshaft duplicated this finding. The administrator worked as a teacher for six years and later worked in central office before becoming a principal. As a superintendent, she was appointed to a school district with a \$2.5 million deficit and in two years “led the district to financial upswing...” (p. 195). González and Ortiz found that both Latina administrators worked as change agents and reformers and received their doctoral degrees while serving at central office. As reported, some scholars identified factors that limit or advance the attainment and success in the principalship position; however, limited literature resources are available in this phenomenon. It is clear these women have aspiration, passion, desire, and motivation.

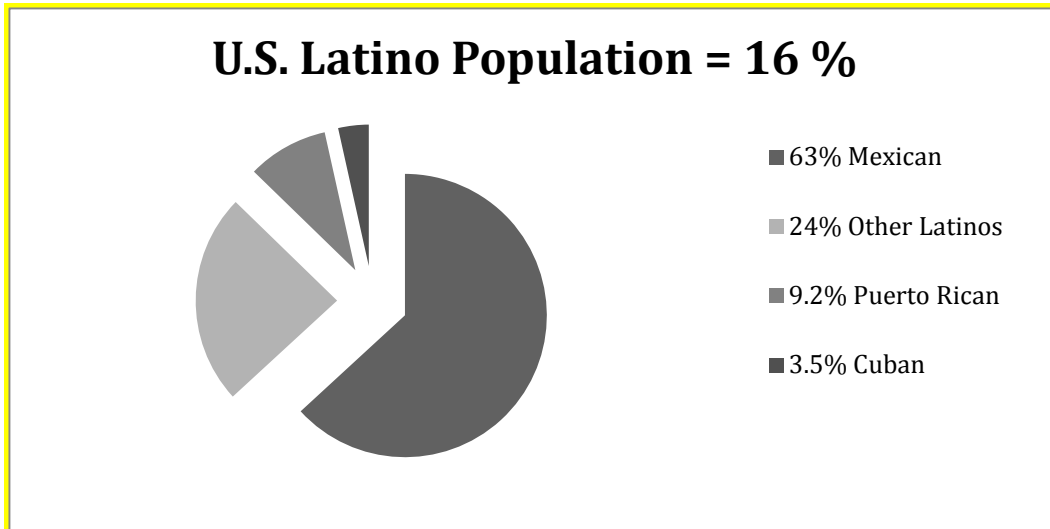
Women of color aspire to education leadership and they earn all necessary educational requirements before seeking education leadership positions (Brunner & Grogan, 2007, p. 111). Often they earn more credentials than required (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 30). In fact, a large percentage of minority women received doctoral degrees, although not necessary. Dissertation studies report on how Latina women school administrators are taking the challenge to lead public schools in the United States (Méndez-Morse, 2004; Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Manual & Slate, 2003; Trujillo-Ball, 2003) as principals. However, not much is known about their quest in their ascension to the high school principal position. In the following, the author will describe Latina demographics in the United States.

Demographics of The Latino/a Population

As of September 28, 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau reported the United State population of 308,746,000, of that number Latino population (e.g., Mexico, Spain, South and Central America, not Brazil, and the Caribbean) consists of 50,478,000 million (16.3%) and 25 million (8%) are Latina women, respectively. In 2008, Latino children under

the age of 18 were 22%. The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) reported that of the Latino population of 50,478,000 (16.3%) in the United States, 31,798,000 (63%) of the U.S. Latino population is of Mexican descent. The remainder is described as 4,624,000 (9.2%) Puerto Rican; 1,786,000 (3.5%) Cuban; and there are 12,270,000 (24%) other Latino.

Figure 2.1. Latina/o Population in the United States by Percentage.



The projected growth of Latina/o population in the United States by 2050 is expected to be 132.8 million, 30% respectively. The growth of Latina/o public school students has grown 60% from 1990-2006. By 2050, this growth is expected to be strong in the coming decades to represent “more school-aged Latina/o children than non-Latina/o white children” (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008, Education). This may also be because Latina/o families birth more children than the average number of 1.5 children in majority White families in the United States. Latinas/os are the largest ethnic group in states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010; González & Ortiz, 2007).

Latina/o student pushout (dropouts) rates are significantly higher than both White and African American students. The United States National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics (Table 262), annual reports on the following 18-24 years old total dropout rate, 10.2%; of the total dropout rate: White, 10.0%; Black, 10.2%, Latina/o, 25.3%. Hispanic 18- to 24-year-olds completed high school at 72.7% in 2010 (Pew Research Center, 2011). Of the 25- to 29-year-olds who completed a bachelor's degree only 13% of Hispanics, 53% of non-Hispanic Asians, nearly 39% of Whites and 19% non-Hispanic blacks (Pew Research Center, 2011).

In Wisconsin, according to the 2010 United States Census, 75% of women participate in the labor force. Further, 39% of women are employed in management, professional and related occupations. According to a national study, most Latina women in the United States have either a technical job, one related to service or employment in sales (González & Ortiz, 2007; United States Census Bureau, 2010). Jobs in service and sales include vendors, food preparers and department store sales associates (including cashiers). Less than 25% of Latina women work in managerial positions compared to nearly 42% of non-Latina white women who work in such capacities. Latina women are underrepresented in the workforce. This pattern is evident in other professions lead by women, in particular education. Latina women in Wisconsin comprised a small percentage of the state's teachers and have a smaller representation at the principalship level. More importantly, the Latino student population is the fastest growing in the nation's schools. However, the demographic change does not appear in school leadership. Regarding academic achievement, the number of women attaining higher education has doubled over a period of ten years, 2000-2010.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2012) reported on the degrees conferred to Latina women compared to White and Black women.

Table 2.2: Number of degrees conferred to U.S. residents by degree-granting institutions, percentage distribution of degrees conferred, and percentage of degrees conferred to females, by level of degree and race/ethnicity: Academic years 1999–2000 and 2009–10

| Level of degree and race/ethnicity | Number | | Percentage distribution | | Percent conferred to females | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|---------|------------------------------|---------|
| | 1999–2000 | 2009–10 | 1999–2000 | 2009–10 | 1999–2000 | 2009–10 |
| Associate's | 554,845 | 833,337 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 60.3 | 62.0 |
| White | 408,772 | 552,863 | 73.7 | 66.3 | 59.8 | 60.9 |
| Black | 60,221 | 113,905 | 10.9 | 13.7 | 65.2 | 68.3 |
| Hispanic | 51,573 | 112,211 | 9.3 | 13.5 | 59.4 | 62.4 |
| Bachelor's | 1,198,809 | 1,602,480 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 57.5 | 57.4 |
| White | 929,106 | 1,167,499 | 77.5 | 72.9 | 56.6 | 56.0 |
| Black | 108,013 | 164,844 | 9.0 | 10.3 | 65.7 | 65.9 |
| Hispanic | 75,059 | 140,316 | 6.3 | 8.8 | 59.6 | 60.7 |
| Master's | 406,761 | 611,693 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 60.0 | 62.6 |
| White | 324,981 | 445,038 | 79.9 | 72.8 | 59.6 | 61.8 |
| Black | 36,595 | 76,458 | 9.0 | 12.5 | 68.2 | 71.1 |
| Hispanic | 19,384 | 43,535 | 4.8 | 7.1 | 60.1 | 64.3 |
| Doctor's¹ | 106,494 | 140,505 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 47.0 | 53.3 |
| White | 82,984 | 104,426 | 77.9 | 74.3 | 45.4 | 51.4 |
| Black | 7,080 | 10,417 | 6.6 | 7.4 | 61.0 | 65.2 |
| Hispanic | 5,039 | 8,085 | 4.7 | 5.8 | 48.4 | 55.0 |

¹ Includes Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level. Includes most degrees formerly classified as first-professional, such as M.D., D.D.S., and law degrees.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The Condition of Education 2012* (NCES 2012-045), Indicator 47.

Underrepresentation of Latina Principals

As shown in Table 2.3, the reported data for public school teachers and principals are presented for both the majority population and the Latino population.

Table 2.3: Public School Teachers and Principals, 2007-2008 (Numbers) Compared to Latinas/os in Public Schools, by Job Title and Level, 2007-2008 (Percentage)

| | Elementary Teachers | Elementary Principals | Secondary Teachers | Secondary Principals | All Teachers | All Principals |
|--------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| U. S. | 2,069,200 | 99,000 | 1,062,770 | 53,600 | 3,291,400 | 162,600 |
| Latino | 7.9% | 7.6% | 7.0% | 4.5% | 7.2% | 5.9% |

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education 2010-028, Characteristics of School Principals; Characteristics of Full-Time Teachers; Glass & Francechini, 2007.

González and Ortiz (2009) reported that in New Mexico there were “a higher percentage [31%] of ethnic minority teachers than the nation [14%]” (p. 191). However, the Latino teachers “make up a small percentage of the state’s teachers and ...a smaller representation at the superintendency level” (p. 192). Of the more than 2,000 teachers, one of five is a Latina woman (p. 192). Of the 53% of women principals in New Mexico, Latina women principals (although few) out number Latino male principals.

In more than 20 years, school conditions and student populations have remained the same for Latina women school principals who serve in public education settings. Ortiz (1982) and González and Ortiz (2007) reported that Latina women principals were appointed to school buildings with physical deterioration, low student test scores in the district, schools challenged with multiple gangs and out of control students. It was found that schools with a large population of Latino students enrolled represented 85%-98% and a large percentage of free and reduced lunch 86%-96% (Trujillo-Ball, 2003). School conditions and student populations in school remain the same for Latina women principals serving in public schools.

Ortiz (1982) reported that the few Mexican-American principals do not mirror the large proportion of Mexican-American students. More than twenty-five years ago Ortiz found that “while 17% of pupils in the Southwest are Mexican-American only about 3% of the

principals are this ethnic background (45)” (p. 89). González & Ortiz (2007) reported similar findings on a national scale as they cite the work of Ramos (2007). He stated, “Ethnic minorities represent 14% of the teaching population nationwide while ethnic minority students comprise 36%” (p. 191). This proportionate gap continues. While 22.1% of all school enrollment pupils in the United States are Latina/o (any race) only 7.2% teachers 5.9% principals are of this ethnic background (Chen, 2011).

Table 2.4: Pubic School Students, Teachers and Principals 2009-2010 (Numbers) Compared to Latinas/os in Public Schools by Student Enrollment, Job Title, and Level 2007-2008 (Percentage)

| | All Students | All Teachers | All Principals | All Superintendents |
|----------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| U. S. | 48,775,838! | 3,209,637! | 169,171! | 14,000* |
| Latina/o | 22.1%! | 7.2% | 5.9% | 01.4%* |

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education 2010, Characteristics of School Principals; Characteristics of Full-Time Teachers; Glass & Franceschini (2007).

!U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education. Public Elementary and Secondary School student Enrollment and Staff Counts From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2009-10 (NCES 2011-347). Statistics,

*Data reflecting approximate number of all school districts, 14,063.

Latina women are underrepresented in school administration. Most statistics for Latina women principal data comes from individual and principal data comes from individual and private institutions studying Latina principals.

Career Pathways

In a study of 23 Latina women superintendents, Manual and Slate (2003) reported that superintendents spent an average 11 years as teachers and about 11 years as principals before attaining the superintendency (p. 6). The most common career pathway was “teacher, elementary principal, central office (34.8%) [followed by]... most common career pathway were teacher, central office (13.0%), teacher, high school principal and central office

(13.0%)” (p. 6). Approximately 17.4% of the women superintendents reported pathways different from options provided in the survey by Manual and Slate. It is unclear how different the pathways of the 17.4% were since it was not indicated in the findings. González and Ortiz (2009) found similar results regarding Latina women administrators’ not experiencing typical career pathways to senior level administrative positions. For example, in their study of two Latina women superintendents they reported a career path for Latina woman as working first as a teacher in an alternative school and later worked in central office before attaining the school principal position (p. 195).

In Brunner and Grogan’ (2007) study of 95 women of color respondents, 17% identified themselves as Latina. It was found that these women were “better educated than white women” (p. 114) with 61% holding a doctorate degree yet they experienced up to six administrative positions compared to four administrative positions for women before acquiring a higher-ranking administrative position. Women of color spent more time as assistant principals before attaining the school principal position in their career pathway to school superintendency (pp. 112-115). Several studies previously mentioned have reported that Latina women take a delayed zig-zag approach before attaining the principalship position compared to White female school principals.

In Trujillo-Ball’s (2003) dissertation of four Mexican American female principals, women experienced different “career development patterns” (Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, & Ballenger, 2007, p. 114). For example, one principal began her career as psychological associate for a university, interned as school psychologist, worked as a schoolteacher, promoted to assistant principal then finally attained the principalship. The second principal spent three years teaching served as school counselor for 16 years and later

served as assistant principal for four years before attaining the school principal position. The 19 Latina women principals studied by Ortiz (1982) reported duplicate finding different from that of White female and male principals. Ortiz reported that most Latina women principals hired in the mid-1960s and early- 1970s earned their teacher and administrative credentials during their role as educators (Ortiz, 1982).

Latina/o Traditional Cultural Values

Unfolding Latina/o cultural values is both academic and personal. The reader should note that while some Latina women have experiences within the confines of these values, other Latina women are at least aware of Latina/o traditional cultural values. A description of Latina women and men, their culture, and historical perspectives is provided in this section of literature.

Although Latinas/os are grouped as one monolithic category in the United States and are stereotyped as having similar characteristics, there are “differences among subgroups” (Lewis-Fernández et al., 2005, p. 282) and within groups (Santiago, et al., 2002). Latinas/os from Latin American countries are different. Furthermore, although all countries have indigenous populations, many of the differences are attributed to the influences of Spanish and European settlement.

Crouch (2004) in his book, *Mexicans and Americans: Cracking the Cultural Code*, wrote about how immigrants have influenced Latin American countries. Crouch indicated that Mexican people are predominantly *mestizo*, which means they are of mixed ethnicities, Indian [indigenous] and Spanish. The Spanish, Italian, and German people influenced Argentineans. White European (English) and the Spanish influenced the Chileans. The Indigenous civilization (Inca) and the Japanese (settlement) influenced Peru. Spaniards

settled in Costa Rica. Belize was formerly British. Honduras is ethnically and culturally diverse with escaped Black slaves, Mayan, and Spanish-speaking refugees from the Mayan wars and Garifuna Creoles (Afro-Hondurans). Brazil is tied to Portugal and European ancestry (p. 27); however, it is not considered in the U.S. census categorization of Hispanics. The country has a large Black population grounded in its African slave ancestry. Another group of immigrants who settled throughout Latin America are of Jewish descent (Roniger, 2010).

Latinos' ethnically diverse populace was influenced by "migrations by various cultural groups to Latin countries" (Frevert & Miranda, p. 293). The population is a common blend of "Spanish and indigenous peoples of North, Central and South America. However, Latinos of African, Italian, German, French, Japanese and other nationalities abound in Latin America and in the United States" (p. 293). Although viewed as one group in America, the Latinos in the United States historically are ethnically and racially diverse.

Historic Establishment of Traditional Latina/o Gender Roles

Contemporary Latina women became socialized in the traditional role of women's behavior when, in 1519, Don Hernando Cortes and his Spanish conquistadores conquered the Aztec natives of Mexico. Aztecs were a dominant force and intelligent people. Cortes and his army, in collaboration with Catholic priests, overpowered the Aztec people and the surrounding metropolitan populations' riches and forced upon the people Christianity and the Spanish language. The conquest of millions was harsh. "Mexico's Aztecs were conquered, killed off by smallpox and made to wear stigmatizing white pajamas to work" (Crouch, 2004, p. 27). The Aztecs, a feared nation, were put to shame as a result of the conquest. Women were violated. In addition, the people endured enslavement, persecution and

disempowerment (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002, p. 22) all in the name of the King and the Queen of Spain.

Death came to unrelenting natives refusing to accept the new religious Roman Catholic doctrine. Natives wanting to escape death “embraced Catholicism and its rituals...” (Arredondo, 2002, p. 312). The teachings and establishment of Christianity provided a set of behaviors for both women and men, including the doctrine of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* (Mary, mother of Christ). Anzaldúa (1999) noted how Latina/o traditional cultural values, influenced by the conquistadores and Catholic missionaries, restricted women and defined her role (p. 39). Hardin (2002) also noted that the Spanish conquest of the Mexican Indians and the Catholic missionaries instilled gender role themes termed *machismo* and *marianismo*, which influence gender identity to this day. The history of Latin America, Mexico in particular, is an example of a diverse group influenced by the conquest by Hernán Cortes and Spanish culture, indigenous peoples, African slavery, and the Catholic religion.

Foundation of Cultural Values

Pre-Spanish conquest, the indigenous people of Mexico maintained different ideologies that supported and gave power to women. A matriarchal society was accepted (Arredondo, 2002). The way of life for Latin indigenous people, for Aztecs and women in particular, changed immensely as a result of the conquest.

The Latina/o community expressed expected behaviors taught from generation to the next generation by having the roles of males and females clearly identified. Men are expected to financially support the family economically and women to raise their children and do other domestic activities (Miranda, Bilot, Peluso, Berman, Van Meek, 2006, p. 270). Family is the center of Latina/o culture (Miranda, Frevert, & Kern, 1998) and departing from

these established traditional behaviors is frowned upon. As Frevert and Miranda (1998) noted, “exercising personal uniqueness and deviating from...traditional ways of behaving is frequently discouraged” (p. 294). Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, Gallardo-Cooper’s (2002) *The Chadwick Center for Children and Families* have defined a set of Latina/o cultural values typically seen in Latino families. (see appendix I for an extended description):

- *Familismo*...socialized to value close relationships, cohesiveness, and cooperativeness with...family members...extended to close friends of the family...
- *Los hijos* [sons and daughters] is used by parents in relation to their children, and reflects the value that Latino/Hispanic families place on children...often very affectionate with their children...some homes, children are expected to be seen, and not heard
- *Marianismo* is a gender-specific value that applies to Latina females...
- *Machismo* is a gender-specific value that applies to Latino males...
- *Personalismo*...valuing and building of interpersonal relationships...as opposed to impersonal relationships...
- *Respeto* [respect]...implies deference to authority...importance of setting clear boundaries and knowing one’s place of respect...
- *Simpatía* [kindness]...being polite and pleasant, even in the face of stress and adversity. Avoidance of hostile confrontation...
- *Religion and Spirituality*...critical role that faith plays in the everyday life...the majority...Catholic...religion offers...direction in their lives and guidance in the education and raising of their children...

The Latino worldview and the inherent cultural values provide a set of guidelines that prioritize *personalismo*. These values influences and set expectations for politeness, respect to authority, faith, and interconnectedness. For some families who follow strict patriarchal practices, the women’s role can be overly restricted and dominated. Women who follow this patriarchal value system, dislike it when it is abusive, and are powerless to leave this controlling family environment (Stevens, 1973). Regarding the gender role behaviors,

Bracero (1998) termed *machismo* as “male privilege” (p. 271). The *machismo* concept implies that men have freedom and women are tied to domestic responsibilities (Comas-Díaz, 1987, p. 463). Other cultures within the United States and across the globe have patriarchal dynamics of social structures, such as *cult of domesticity*.

In addition to cultural values, Latina women have personal, family, and community cultural assets. The assets are made up of knowledge and skills that help Latinos navigate a system made for non-Latinos in the United States, particularly the educational system.

Yosso (2006) wrote in her book, *Critical Race Counterstories Along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline*, about the cultural wealth in Chicana/o communities. It is a cultural capital Latinas/os have “required for social mobility” (p. 37). She and a community of Latina women created the social theory, Model of Community Cultural Wealth having the following components defined:

- Aspirational Capital: The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even in the face of barriers (real or perceived).
- Linguistic Capital: Those intellectual and social skills learned through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style.
- Navigational Capital: Skills of maneuvering through social institutions
- Social Capital: Networks of people and community resources.
- Familial Capital: Cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition.
- Resistant Capital: Resistance to oppression in communities of color and refers to those knowledges and skills cultivated through behavior that challenges inequality.

The model comes from “working-class Parents of Color applying Freire and Bourdieu theories to their everyday experiences” (p. 49). The following section describes rigid women’s roles.

Gender Role Scripts

The characteristics of *marianismo* illuminate the unique insight of what Latina women may experience. According to Frevert and Miranda (1998), *marianismo* “originates from the

virtues ascribed to the Virgin Mary by the Roman Catholic Church” (p. 298). As defined by Méndez-Villarubia (1994), the virtues that Latina women should adopt are identified as living “sexually pure, holy, caring, maternal, peaceful, faithful, handmaiden to the Lord, subservient to the will of a masculine God” (p. 156). Women who are raised in a home where traditions of honor and dedication are valued (Miranda et al., 2008, p. 270) are socially molded to live their lives “morally superior and spiritually stronger [than men] to resemble the Virgin Mary in attitude and demeanor” (Martin, 1997, p. 2). The Virgin Mary attributes include self-sacrifice. For Latinas, this means to first serve the needs of their husbands, fathers, and nurture their children. To remain loyal to family and to serve the community is expected of women and the display of humility achieves virtuous standing. Saving one’s virginity until marriage is an emphasized behavior. According to Kulis, Marsiglia, Lingard, Nieri, and Nafoshi (2008), “In Mexico, the Virgin of Guadalupe is the *marianista* model who exemplifies traditional, post-conquest female attributes that are highly valued: she is the *mestiza* [indigenous mixed race] version of the Virgin Mary” (p. 260). According to Stevens (1973) and Comas-Días (1987):

- Ambition and competition for women are discouraged
- Respect husband’s authority, elders, and people with power
- Allow husbands to make all decisions
- Obey orders from fathers, brothers, and husbands
- Service others
- Withhold feelings of emotions without complaint
- Latinas are groomed early in childhood to be patient, forgiving and to resign themselves from conflict by remaining submissive and passive at home.
- Women learn a way of life that limits their independence, voice and self

Characteristics of *marianismo* were articulated by Gil and Vazquez (1996) as:

- Do not forget a women’s place
- Do not forsake tradition
- Do not be single, self-supporting or independent-minded
- Do not put your own needs first

- Do not wish for more in life than being a house wife
- Do not forget that sex is for making babies—not for pleasure
- Do not be unhappy with your man or criticize him for infidelity, gambling, verbal and physical abuse, alcohol or any abuse
- Do not ask for help
- Do not discuss personal problems outside the home
- Do not change those things, which make you unhappy that you can realistically change (p. 8).

Women are responsible for raising obedient children, translated to *bien-educados* [well raised], and for teaching them traditional codes of behavior. Mothers are accountable for teaching “girls [how]...to be women and mothers who honor the model of the Virgin Mary” (Santiago-Rivera, 2002, p. 49). Unfortunately, “Girls are expected to be passive, obedient and homebound [without voice]...Women are perceived as defenseless and vulnerable” (Comas-Díaz, 1987, p. 463). Although these may seem to be outdated cultural norms of behaviors, they still exist (Gil & Vasquez, 1996, p. 6; Ariza & Oliveira, 2001) in American non-immigrant and immigrant Latino families. There are many examples to the contrary, however.

Mental health professionals, such as Bracero (1998) and others, report their findings from their study on the issues Latina women endure regarding the stress they experience living with traditional cultural gender scripts in very rigid conditions. Although some women who live according to *marianismo* learn about expectations of loyalty, faithfulness, and endurance, they live with troublesome relationships or family hardship. These women have gained inner strength to manage stress in order to move forward and keep their families intact. Women are encouraged to look up to and model the Mother of Christ, who had great strength through her faith as she carried and protected her child and kept her family intact. Latinas who follow this path of Mary are admired for it by society. Women are positioned as

role models to their children, especially as they strive to instill good behaviors, respect, and resilience.

Machismo

Social science literature is abundant with common negative descriptors of *machismo* behavior. In their study titled HIV Prevention and Low-Income Chilean Women: *Machismo, Marianismo*, Cianelli, Ferrer, and McElmurry (2008) surveyed fifty Chilean women about the themes of *machismo* and *marianismo*. They provided a description of *machismo*, as to “the social domination and privilege that men have over women in economic, legal, judicial, political, cultural and psychological spheres” (p. 298). As noted by Cianelli et al., the term *machismo* includes behaviors that are about “gender inequality, lack of communication between partners about sexuality and violence in relationships” (p. 304). Further, traditional *machismo* was associated with more arrests, fights and alcohol consumption (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracy, 2008, p. 28). Cianelli, Ferrer, and McElmurry (2008), believe that superiority and other *machismo* traits “contribute to discrimination against women” (p. 298).

Negative implications of male supremacy are marked with behaviors unhealthy for women (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008; Kulis, Marsiglia, Lingard, Nieri, & Nagoshi, 2008). This view is mirrored by Comas-Díaz (1987) as she stated, “sexual codes...condone the oppression of one group (female) by another (male), coinciding with the feminist precept that sex-role stereotyping is destructive and oppressive to women” (p. 463). Often the term is associated with alcoholism (Arciniega et al., 2008), sexual harassment, and manipulation of women (Pinel, 1994).

Anzaldúa (1987, 1999) in her book *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, provides her perception and analysis of the meaning of *machismo*:

The loss of a sense of dignity and respect in the ‘macho’ breeds a false *machismo* which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them. Coexisting with his sexist behavior is a love for the mother, which takes precedence over that of all others (p. 105).

Anzaldúa believed that Latino men established macho traits as a result of their own oppression, poverty, and low self-esteem from both the Spanish conquest and Anglos who shamed them in America (p. 105). As noted by Comas-Díaz (1987), men who followed the characteristic of *machismo* expected girls and women to follow traits of a *marianista*. The descriptors of the macho man in a *machista* society shed light on male social development. Although this stereotypic portrayal is negative and only highlights the faults of *machismo*, positive traits are also associated with this term. Not all Latino men embrace negative machismo ideals.

Caballerismo

Machista behavior has positive traits often overlooked and associated with *caballerismo*, a term defined as chivalry (Arciniega et al., 2008). Latino men follow the identity script of either machismo or *caballerismo* or a combination. Arciniega et al., found in their study positive traits termed, *caballerismo* a “Spanish word for...a knight [and] horseman...” (p. 20). *Caballerismo* describes Latinos as sensitive and protectors of “wife and family from danger” (Gil & Vazquez, 1996, p. 5). The term *hombre* (man) relates to “honor, respect, bravery, dignity and family responsibility (Gutmann, 1996; Neff, 2001)” (Kulis 2008, p. 260). To be told, “Ser un hombre” (being a gentleman) is a compliment. Other descriptors include, “hardworking, proud, and interested in the welfare and honor of

their loved ones” (Falicov, 1998, p. 198). This is a man depicted as having excellent manners (Arciniega et al., 2008, p. 20), thus the association to chivalry or knight in shining armor.

In another study to measure the dimensions of traditional *machismo* and *caballerismo* in male Mexican American behavior, Arciniega et al., (2008) found that “*caballerismo* was positively associated with affiliation, ethnic identity, problem-solving coping” (p. 19), and emotional connection. Although characteristics of traditional *machismo* behavior “are observable in other cultures of men...the term *machismo*...[is] specific to [Latinos]” (p. 21).

Gender Role Contradictions and Challenges

Latina women in the United States experience gender role conflicts in addition to social, educational and economic struggles. Santiago-Rivera (1998) states, “it is well documented that Hispanics in the United States are confronted with language barriers, poverty and discrimination in education and employment” (p. 12). Similarly, Garcia-Preto (1982) found that “conflict and anxiety are experienced when they [Latinas] confront a society that frowns on passivity and expects independent individualistic behavior” (p. 175). The date of the statement is also indicative of how Latinos have been characterized negatively.

Stress related issues occur with adaptation to American gender scripts. In addition, negative information about Latinas, as they are referred to as one group, can unfairly deem women as incapable (Marcano, 1997; Trujillo-Ball, 2003). For Latinas, going against a socially prescribed traditional gender role script in order to adapt to positively viewed traits such as assertiveness, competitiveness and independent thinking, in addition to dealing with discrimination in the United States, may cause anxieties. Bracero (1998), through

conversations with women in therapy, found that Latina women clients who were familiar “with the traditions expressive of *machismo* and *marianismo*” (p. 265) identified the emotion of “loneliness...emotional abuse or neglect” (p. 267), although this should not be generalized to all women.

In their book, *The Maria Paradox: How Latinas Can Merge Old World Traditions with New World Self Esteem*, Gil and Vazquez (1996), mental health professionals found that their clients, Latina women who held careers in high-ranking leadership, were familiar with *machismo* and *marianismo* social constructs. These women experienced clashes with family members and their partners, as the women lived independently having the same freedoms as men. These family members expected Latina leaders to maintain cultural values and the traditional restrictive roles scripted for them, not ones found in non-Latinas. The contemporary Latina women in therapy with Gil and Vazquez disclosed emotions similar to those stated by Bracero (1998).

In a society where women are encouraged to suppress individualistic goals and to identify with dependent, submissive and passive traits (Comas-Días, 1987), women tend to limit or sacrifice “education, careers and a social life outside the family” (Martin, 1989; as cited in Schmitz & Diefentahaler, 1998, p. 140). Liberal-minded countries, such as the United States, encourage “liberal gender values...[that] tend to prompt both men and women to pursue a wider variety of educational and career aspirations” (Schmitz & Diefentahaler, 1998, p. 139). This is attributed to America’s “strongly individualistic culture” (Kulis et al., 2008, p. 265). This is an example of female gender contradictions for many Latinas living in the United States and socialized with traditional cultural value scripts. As generations continue to be born in the United States, intermarriage occurs and different cultural conflicts

will be experienced. Another example of gender conflict and stress comes in relation to family members who may still value *marianismo*. They may remind Latina women of their unfulfilled role. Identity crises between family and professional life can occur as the American gender role values push the Latina women in opposition to the *marianismo* ideals (Gil & Vazquez, 1996).

As cited in Schmitz and Diefentahaler (1998), Long's (1989) study, *Gender Role Conditioning and Women's Self-Concept*, found that "society believed that women who possess traditional feminine traits were incapable of success" (p. 139). This could cause a negative stereotypic portrayal of women when categorized as one group adhering to traditional feminine beliefs. An understanding of Latina women and how they may use or not use cultural values in professional positions is essential to continue their emergence in positions of leadership such as high school principals.

Acculturation and Assimilation

In a comprehensive look at Latina women overcoming the anxieties of some aspect of gender roles, Gil and Vazquez (1996) contended that women's integration and prosperity in the United States might be achieved through acculturation and incorporating North American customs along with cultural values.

Acculturation is a term explaining the process of gaining a new culture. It is "an adjustment that takes place when individuals from different cultures come into continuous and direct contact with and learn from one another [as they] embrace the new culture...[it] is experienced in a series of changes and choices which include new norms of how to live..." (Berry, 1990, as cited in Gil & Vazquez, 1996, p. 11). It is a "process of cultural and psychological change that follows intercultural contact" (Berry 2003; Berry 2006, p. 305).

Martin et al. (2007) added that the acculturation process includes, “changes in language use, cognitive style, personality, identity, attitude and stress level” (p. 1290). To explore the nature of how one comes into the context of having to acculturate, Marín (1992) defined it as “a process of attitudinal and behavior change undergone by individuals who reside in multicultural societies...or who come in contact with a new culture due to colonization, invasion or other important political changes” (p. 239). Acculturation is a gradual change for anyone needing to adapt to a new culture.

When Latinas are not able to embrace gender role behaviors in North America such as independence, they may experience acculturative stress:

negative aspects of adjusting to a new life [in which one can] experience self-identity crises, [not knowing] how you’re supposed to act, [and having] deep seated confusion...This can cause depression and frustration [without acknowledging] that this is a collective process (Berry, 1990, as cited in Gil & Vasquez, 1996, p. 14).

This occurs as a result of, “the psychological changes that accompany the acculturation process [that] are complex because acculturation poses a significant influence on psychological functioning” (Miranda, et al., 2006, p. 269).

Assimilation is different from acculturation. It is a rapid adaptation to the host country “disregarding all aspects of a [person’s] native culture...” (Berry, 1990, as cited in Gil & Vasquez, 1996, p. 12). However, attempting assimilation too quickly can result in negative consequences, such as low self-esteem and enhanced *marianista* behaviors Gil & Vasquez, 1996). Acculturation and assimilation are two processes of change that vary for immigrant and non-immigrant Latina women.

Dispelling Portrayals of *Marianismo*

Cultural gender roles are changing. It is time to challenge deficit cultural portrayals about Latina women who have learned to select positive traits that empower them in leadership. The negative stereotypical portrayals of women living with *machista* values are nationalized with statements that hold true for some. Delays in career success could prevail as Latinas experience value conflicts of “family and community expectations and individual needs and desires” (Gil & Vazquez, 1996, p. 3). Further, Latinas holding strong ties to traditional gender scripts are typecast as having restrictive lifestyles (Gil & Vazquez, 1996, p. 4), such as “disempower[ment], oppression and marginalization” (Bracero, 1998, p. 275). Similarly, Arredondo (2002) stated, “for Latinas caught in the perpetual wild zone, the right to be different has been either regulated or punished, a consequence of patriarchy in Latino culture” (p. 311). Although these descriptors are daunting, life for Latina women in the United States, women in Mexico and women in other countries is changing due to education, socioeconomics, urban lifestyles (Gutmann, 2003; as cited in Kulis et al., 2008, p. 266), networking, and women supporting each other.

González and Ortiz (2009), Trujillo-Ball (2003), Torres (2004) have noted the successes of Latina women in educational leadership as well as in higher education (Arredondo, 2011). In her presidential speech to the *American Psychological Association Division 45, Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues*, Arredondo (2002) spoke about literature by Latina women in the 20th and 21st century “who give voice to the struggles of acculturated and self-empowered women” (p. 308) in the United States. These contemporary and educated women have succeeded despite the lack of available role models

that preceded them. Kulis et al., (2008) believed the change in gender role expectations is a result of several factors:

Globalization, consumerism, migration and economic hardships are transforming traditional Mexican notions of family responsibilities and the influence of traditional conceptions of *machismo* and *marianismo* on Mexican gender roles... [as well as] dramatic increases in women's entry into the workforce and pursuit of higher education, their increasing representation within business, government and the professions, and a rise in women's emigration (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). These educational and occupational advances for women have helped to de-polarize gender role expectation, especially among younger cohorts and those with higher education (p. 266).

By breaking through negative stereotypes, contemporary Latina women are portraying a new set of gender role behaviors as they attain leadership in professional roles. Acosta-Belén and Bose (2000) also believe the increased gendered labor force in the United States is changing the role of all women (p. 1117).

Summary

The history of education administration representation has been generally preserved for White males. Few historical developments related to women in administration have been revealed, with the exception of their struggles to attain the position of administrator. Even less historical evidence has represented people of color who are in education administration. When breaking down the category of the people of color by ethnicity who have attained education administration, some categories are almost non-existent. Thus, the historical representation of Latina/o school administrators does not find its way into the major forms of literature in the education field. Organizations of Latina/o administrators in the United States are an avenue, along with dissertation studies, to begin to build a historical representation of

Latinas/os in education administration coupled with the minimal research already investigated by Dr. Ida Ortiz and others. Latina women are reported to have increase academic achievement, decrease violence in the schools, and increase parental involvement. One might wonder if the attributes of Latina values and assets provide foundation for academic achievement for all students as high school principals in public education. This dissertation on career development of Latina women attaining high school principalship in public education will add to the literature.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The public high school principalship is the gateway to the superintendency. It is unclear how Latina women successfully attained public high school principal positions. The disproportionate percentage of Latina women public high school principals is likely to impede their advancement into district high-ranking superintendent positions. Therefore, it is important to study Latina women who have successfully acquired public high school principal positions in order to increase their representation in these crucial leadership roles.

In this chapter, the purpose of the study and research questions was reiterated and the design of the study will be described. The presentation of the research methods will include definitions of terms used, a description of the population and sample selection, the interview protocol, data collection procedures, and an explanation of the data analysis procedure.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the personal and professional ‘lived-experiences’ of Latina women navigating their career paths into a public high school principal position. This study explored how Latina women high school principals made meaning of their experiences and significant influences while progressing through their career paths.

Research Questions

The central question guiding this study was: How do Latina women describe their ‘lived-experiences’ in navigating their career paths into public high school principal positions? The following subsequent questions provided an in-depth understanding of the experiences of Latina women public high school principals:

1. What was most significant about their principalship career path experiences?

2. What meaning did they make of their experiences as they related to their
principalship career paths?

Design and Methodology

This qualitative study used a narrative inquiry to collect its primary data source of story-telling narratives developed through semi-structured interviews conducted with Latina women high school principals willing to share their career path journeys. These reflective ‘lived-experience’ narratives shed light on, and provide an understanding of the perceptions of Latina women regarding their unique experiences that afforded them successful attainment of the public high school principalship positions. Narrative inquiry provided opportunities to learn about the Latina women’s educational and career journeys, their support systems, challenges, and family experiences they encountered along the way. A semi-structured guide was developed to yield an in-depth qualitative interviewing approach. This allowed the investigator to insure that relevant subjects were covered, and that the investigator could “explore, probe, and ask questions that [would] elucidate and illuminate [a] particular subject...[and] establish a conversational style...” (Patton, 2002, p. 343).

A second data source used to develop the women’s narratives came from critical self-reporting surveys written by each participant. These were intended to yield commentaries regarding significant events related to their career paths. The data gathered through interviews and personal writings were interwoven so that all layers of data are intertwined (Patton, 2002, p. 297-298). Based on premises of qualitative inquiry, the focus was placed in a naturalistic setting to reveal a story of emerging unique perspectives on “issues of gender, culture, and marginalized groups” (Creswell, 1998, p. 19). The data collected illuminated the

detailed shared knowledge of Latina women experiences, and understandings of how they navigated their career path experiences into the public high school principal positions.

Qualitative Methodology

Creswell (2005) identified the characteristics of qualitative research as “the best studies that set out to explore variables not yet known or understood” (p. 44). The characteristics of qualitative research are explained in the following section. The literature review played a minor role, however, justification for the research study was required. The problem statement was established and a purpose statement for the research was identified. In regard to the data collection, it typically emerged from a small number of individuals or sites, text, or image data. The analyses and interpretation of the data were derived from “text, analysis; description, analysis, and thematic development; [and underlying] the larger meaning of the findings” (p. 44). All reports and evaluations of the data used “flexible, emerging structure and evaluative criteria” (p. 49). In addition, the investigator took a subjective or reflective position, which explained her “role... biases, values, and assumptions...” (p. 50), and disclosed them within the research. The investigator hoped to uncover the impactful influences and meaningful variables that existed for Latina women who successfully secured a high school principal position in public education.

Qualitative methodology, such as a narrative inquiry, allowed the investigator to experience and interpret the process of the phenomenon under research. This is something that could not be accomplished in a quantitative study where “interpretation consists of comparing results with prior predictions and past research” (Creswell, 2005, p. 48). In the following two paragraphs, the investigator defines the characteristics of qualitative methodology from her perspective.

In this study, I hope to describe and “represent what [I] have come to know through [language]...[to] create in text a different world” (Eisner, 1991, p. 27). I was intrigued by being able to present my “own mind of the analysis and interpretation of the data” (Janesick, 1994a, p. 390). With qualitative methodology, I was able to “take a subjective (reflexive) and biased approach” (Creswell, 2005, p. 49), and choose my particular framework (e.g., feminist, LatCrit), which guided my attention, focus, and experience when exploring an educational phenomenon through my own lens. Using qualitative methodology, I was not limited to one approach as I investigated “the complexity of any given social setting” (Janesick, 1994a, p. 379). I looked forward to telling my story in a way that “describes the setting [which] conveys the content of human experiences” (Eisner, 1991, p. 28). In addition, I hoped to express the meaning of the experience rather than state numerical data seen in quantitative research.

In this study, I had the freedom to interpret the participants’ experiences using “thick description; inquiry in-depth; interviews that capture direct quotations about people’s perspectives and experiences” (Patton, 2002, p. 40). I captured this through the “study with real persons in mind” (Janesick, 1994a, p. 382) in an educational and social setting. Since my curiosity provided me with inquiries on how one might experience an educational setting, visiting with real people provided me with an understanding, which I was able to express on paper. Using qualitative methodology, I was able to pay attention to detail and “record field notes [which] provide[d] critical reflection and interviews” (Janesick, 1994a, p. 389) to develop understanding and report findings. I based the findings on “direct quotes from notes and interviews” (Janesick, 1994a, p. 389). Qualitative methodology offered several options of inquiry. I chose narrative inquiry as my methodological choice.

This narrative inquiry is devoted to study and understand unique career paths of practicing Latina women high school principals in public education settings. There are a few Latina women successfully holding career positions as public high school principals. In addition, few studies in the literature exist regarding Latina women high school principals' in-depth experiences. The narrative inquiry used allowed Latina women high school principals to "tell their stories" and their "personal experiences in ...[the public] school settings" (Creswell, 2005, p. 474). The participants' responses and stories revealed how they have developed and the "world from which [they] came" (p. 115). The Latina women principals shared their life stories, family stories, cultural, and social patterns from their perspectives. Their narratives were interpreted so that an in-depth picture was created to understand and reveal the women, their personal life experiences and "culture that created it" (Patton, 2002, p. 115).

The idea of narrative personal stories centers on "reveal[ing] cultural and social patterns through the lens of individual experiences" (Patton, 2002, p. 115). This differs from case studies, as participants may be asked to share their stories of a process or evaluation of a program, but not necessarily "being asked to participate in case studies" (Patton, 2002, p. 116).

The investigator selected a qualitative design to study the Latina women's career advancement experiences, for reasons as stated by Creswell (2005), its ability to gain the participants' perceptions, "seeing how they experience, live, and display the phenomenon; and looking for the meaning of the participants' experiences" (p. 31). Latina women public high school principals give voice, as they perceived their 'lived-experiences' navigating their career paths. The investigator's intent was to understand how the principalship position was

achieved, and what it is like to be a Latina woman serving as public high school principal in the United States.

Research Questions

The research questions emanated from the literature review. I recognized gaps of career development and how individuals experienced their career paths into the principalship positions. Questions were generated of a phenomenon that should be investigated. My curiosity led me to gain an understanding of Latina women principals, and from where they came. The central research question was: How do Latina women describe their ‘lived-experiences’ navigating their career paths into public high school principalship positions?

Subsequent Questions

1. What was most significant about their principalship career paths experiences?
2. What meaning did they make of their experiences as it related to their public high school principalship career paths?

Using a narrative inquiry provided the ability to gain the participants’ perceptions regarding how they experienced, lived, and perceived their life-experiences, and career paths. It explored how individuals reflect, and made meaning of their ‘lived-experiences’ as principal (Patton, 2002, p. 104).

Interview Protocol

Interview research questions for this study were prepared in advance. They were open-ended questions, and yielded “in-depth qualitative interviewing” (Patton, 2002, p. 402). The first question focused on learning about the participants’ career paths from a “grand tour” (Creswell, 1998, p. 99) perspective followed with more specific questions. Some questions followed up with *issue subquestions* to “address the major concerns and perplexities to be

resolved” (Creswell, 1998, p. 101). The usefulness of the issue-oriented questions as documented by Stake (1995), as cited in Creswell (1998), intended to pull-out human concerns that can be tied to “political, social, and historical context” (p. 101). Since the study sought to understand how Latina women high school principals broke through political, social, and cultural barriers in a career once dominated by White protestant males, issue-oriented sub-questions were asked of these women.

The interview question protocol guided the participants to openly talk about their ‘lived-experiences’, significant events, the meanings they derived from their ‘lived-experiences’ as principals (Appendix A). The one-on-one interviews collected data regarding personal backgrounds and ‘lived-experiences’ navigating a career path. Because these women experienced challenges attributed to their ethnicity, the completed interviews presented career advice to women, Latinas in particular, who aspire to the principal position. Additionally, high school principals described their heritage, cultural values, strengths, leadership, historic leaders, philosophies, roles, future career aspirations, and commented on issues thought valuable from their perspectives.

Selection of Participants

The investigator intended to find participants using central States’ Departments of Public Education websites. Using this method, the investigator contacted several possible participants by phone; however, only one female responded. As a second method used to locate participants, the investigator sought out organizations associated with high school principalship in public education. The investigator used the Internet, and used the search terms/keywords, “Latino Administrators and Superintendents Public Education Membership.” A list of membership organizations matching the Google search terms with

specific characteristics appeared. Some organization listings gave reference to others of the same likeness that were newly created.

Participants met the following criteria: 1) their membership was in one of the several organizations listed or State Department directories; 2) their ethnicity and gender as Latina women, regardless of ethnicity was confirmed; and 3) their current status serving as a public high school principal was confirmed for seven women; one woman was currently removed from a principal position as the district was experiencing an overhaul in leadership change. Demographic data collected were not considered a criterion for participant selection. It was used to further understand the profile of Latina women public high school principals.

Since the investigator sought to understand the participants' 'lived-experience' in their career paths ascending to the high school principalship role, the number of years specified as maintaining the position was not a criterion. The researcher did not believe the number of years maintained as principal would discredit the integrity of the journey. The participants for this research were eight Latina women principals serving in public high schools.

The investigator contacted the five identified membership organizations by email or phone to request a directory of current Latina women public high school principals. Directories were not provided. The investigator identified herself as a doctoral student embarking on a dissertation study. She supplied a recruitment letter explaining the purpose and scope of the study. Three membership organizations responded, and agreed to email the recruitment letter to its members; however, none of the principals who responded met the predetermined criterion provided in the letter. After further inquiry, and several months later, two more membership listings responded favorably. One organization advertised the recruitment letter and the researcher's photograph on their website. The other membership

listing distributed a mass email of the recruitment letter to more than 4,000 of its members. In total, about ten administrators from the latter two organizations responded; however, only two satisfied the selection participant criteria. The remaining eight respondents agreed to forward the recruitment letter to Latina women who currently served as high school principals. Networking played a big role in the recruitment of the participants. Of the qualified ten participants, one was recruited from the State Department of Public Education, two from membership listings, and seven from networking. Five of the seven principals from networking participated, and two principals were unable to reschedule a time suitable to complete the interview process. Of the ten, eight agreed to participate.

The participants consisted of eight Latina women high school principals. Some of the participants served high schools in California, Texas, Florida, and in one other state (the remaining state will not be disclosed as it would compromised the identity of the participant). The females were five Mexicans, one Puerto Rican, one Cuban, and one Brazilian serving as high school principals between one and eleven years. Four serve in suburban school districts and four serve in urban school districts. Seven are fluent in Spanish- and English- speaking and one is fluent in English- and less fluent in Spanish speaking; all professionals are between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-five; five earned doctoral degrees, and one is currently pursuing a doctoral degree; one earned an Education Specialist degree, and one earned a Masters degree; all completed majors in Administrative Leadership; six are married, and two are divorced.

Each participant received a recruitment correspondence by email that identified the investigator and explained the purpose of the study (Appendix D). All research participants received a consent form (Appendix E) when they agreed to participate. The participants were

informed that pseudonyms would be used throughout the study and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. A follow-up phone call was made and email message sent to each participant to schedule an interview time and date. An initial interview schedule was then set. Two interviews did not need to be rescheduled, and six interviews were rescheduled several times. Participants were reminded of confidentiality.

Instrumentation Protocol

An interview protocol (Appendix A) designed to elicit responses was used to assist in answering the central question guiding this study and the two subsequent questions. A recruitment correspondence was created to identify the investigator and explain the purpose of the study (Appendix D). The consent form gained the participants' permission to be interviewed (Appendix E). The interview protocol contained 16 open-ended questions to understand the phenomenon being investigated. In addition, two critical incident reports contained questions relating to a positive and a negative experience encountered as she aspired to a high school principal position. It was a self-reported major event of importance that impacted her role as high school principal (Appendices F and G). A personal demographic survey of fourteen questions, (Appendix C), was completed by each study participant at the time of her scheduled personal interview. All interview protocol questions, incident reports, and surveys were intended to elicit significant responses to the central question and the two subsequent questions. Using three sources of elicited data from fieldwork layered and combined was used to verify comprehensive findings (Patton, 2002).

Data Collection Procedures

This research followed a narrative qualitative research design. One semi-structured, in-depth, personal, individual interview protocol (Creswell, 1998) was conducted (Appendix A),

and two critical incident surveys were completed to construct the narratives. Data sources were collected between May 2012 and September 2012.

The interview questions were open-ended (Patton, 2002, p. 227). The initial questions elicited the participants' stories about their educational journey, career paths, and about memories growing up with parents and siblings. Questions about their family provided a portrait of where participants came from, and it helped to illuminate issues of support, gender, cultural values, diverse paths, and opportunities.

The investigator conducted an informal conversational interview "so as not to be intrusive or predictable..." (Patton, 2002, p. 286). The open-ended questions were essential. They provided the participants an opportunity to voice and describe their experiences that led them to acquire the role of high school principal in public schools. Their personal stories of significant events offered rich data on support systems, leadership development, achievements, and political challenges to overcome. These personal interviews offered depth, as it had the ability to uncover details and context of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002, p. 227). The latter questions were more direct and elicited the participants' perspectives about leaders, philosophy, problem-resolution, role of principal, advice to future principals, aspirations, and commented on issues not raised by the investigator.

Interviews were conducted one-on-one by telephone. The date and time of each interview were scheduled at the participants' availability and convenience in a private setting either at their office, in their car, or at their home. Some interviews were conducted in the morning, in the evening, and sometimes on Saturday. The length of the interviews ranged from 90 minutes to two hours. The interviews were digitally voice recorded, and computer recorded for back-up, in order to capture all quoted information from the participants.

The investigator took field notes during each participant's interview to further probe for deeper understanding throughout the interview. The field notes taken reflected the participants' ideas, concepts, or direct quotations (Patton, 2002). The investigator used these field notes to gain the participants' significance or "personal meaning" (Patton, 2002, p. 203) about their stories. Field notes were used as member checks asking the participants to repeat, or explain further topics unfamiliar to the investigator. It was vital for clarification when faced with new concepts. At times, curiosity led the investigator to generate more questions related to the participants' stories in order to gain a more detailed description of the event. The names of the participants were changed to initials to protect their identity.

The investigator emphasized openness and having the desire to learn of life mysteries (Creswell, 1998, p. 31), allowing Latina women participants to openly share their direct 'lived-experiences' as public high school principals. It was important, as a Latina woman, to hear their perspectives of "meaningful and knowing experiences" (Patton, 2002, p. 340), and not to make assumptions. I believe that my Latina ethnicity made the participants comfortable in sharing their stories. As each interview progressed, I noticed that trust levels increased as the participants stated phrases in Spanish and shared more of their family home life experiences resulting from their long hours of commitment serving schools as principals.

The participants completed two separate Critical Incident reports about experiences that were significant to them (Appendices D & E) in either a positive or negative way. The two Critical Incident Surveys asked participants to identify: (1) a **positive event** involving a personal experience related with aspiring to the position of high school principal and/or acquiring of public high school principal position; and (2) a **negative event** involving a personal experience as it related with aspiring to the position of high school principal and/or

acquiring of public high school principal position. The critical incident reports about significant events in their career journey revealed barriers and accomplishments. The two critical self-reporting incident surveys were completed by three of the eight women.

All participants completed a personal demographic survey. Personal demographic questions illuminated a school setting in public education for each participant. In this study, collecting two or more of data sources served as a form of data triangulation utilized to bring together strength and validity in a study (Patton, 2002, p. 247).

Data Analysis

The participants' narratives provided data in order to conduct the data analysis. The data analysis process was conducted to generally describe Latina principals' lived-experiences revealing how they achieved an administrative role as high school principal in public education. The interview questions focused on career path, educational journey, and family background. The investigator transcribed all the interviews in detail. This activity allowed the investigator "an opportunity to get immersed in the data..." (Patton, 2002, p. 440).

For the analysis of the narratives, the researcher completed the data analysis using a series of steps in order to find commonalities, themes, and subthemes. The series of steps were organized around statements, themes, and meanings resulting in "the reader understanding better the essential, invariant structure (or essence) of the experience..." (Creswell, 1998, p. 54). The investigator read all the interview transcripts, stories, descriptions, and then, extracted significant statements to formulate statements into categories and meanings before clustering them into common themes. Finally, the researcher integrated themes into a narrative description (p. 32). Creswell (1998) stated:

...protocols are divided into statements of *horixonalixation*...units are transformed into *clusters of meanings* expressed in psychological phenomenological concepts...transformations are tied together to make a general description of the experience, the *textual descriptions* of what it was experienced and the *structural description* of how it was experienced (p. 55).

In the narrative writing, the investigator provided her interpretation.

The participants' narratives generated hundreds of pages of data. The investigator was overwhelmed. The data were organized in two ways: (1) The transcripts of each interview were read. Microsoft Word was used to organize and dissect the quoted statements from the participants. The word document was organized with three columns. The transcription was inserted in the first column, and quoted statements that had meaning were highlighted. The second column secured codes or emerging themes or the meaning of the quote. The third column highlighted pull-out words, themes, and quotes. The investigator completed data analysis on three interviews and emailed them to the methodology professor to insure the data analysis was correctly organized. Upon the professor's approval, the investigator completed data analysis for the remainder of the interview transcripts. Once the interview data were organized into the three columns, the investigator further organized the data into meaningful thematic clusters. (2) Using Microsoft Word, the 16 interview questions were typed on a new document. The investigator used a copy and paste method. The participants' stories and responses to question one in the transcripts were copied, and placed under *question one* heading. This was repeated for all 16 questions of all eight participant stories. This allowed the investigator to visualize each question with all its eight responses. This helped to clearly illuminate commonalities, and themes emerged.

At the completion of the coding documentation, the investigator synthesized, or made clusters, of meanings of the experiences for each individual described. This step was repeated for all participants. The investigator met with the Methods professor and provided stories of the same likeness moving from one participant story to the next giving a retrospective narrative. As the investigator delivered the retrospective narrative, themes begin to emerge. The investigator returned to the coding process and deleted the investigators words from the transcripts. The Participants narratives were edited and relevant quotes were better illuminated.

Next, the investigator intertwined the data from all data sources and combined the meaningful clusters, once more. This allowed the investigator to strengthen the themes. A concept map was used as a way to clearly visualize a holistic view of the synthesize meanings. A biographical chart was developed for each participant. It was a way to describe their identities. Finally, the investigator reread and reflected upon the final analysis and made revisions needed. The investigator constructed a narrative of the description of meanings and the essence of the participants' experiences.

As a Latina woman, I was careful not to incorporate my story or prejudgments into the narratives. I documented of my feelings and thoughts about stories I heard as a way to biases. I considered all stories from the participants distinct from each other with some similarities.

Triangulation and Quality Control

To gather the most solid knowledge base, I employed triangulation to produce the different "similar or dissimilar results" (Creswell, 2005, p. 514) of Latina voices to be interwoven into the research. Triangulation relates to multiple methods or data employed to

reveal different aspects of empirical reality (Denzin, 1978b, p. 28; as cited by Patton, 2002, p. 247). It is an “attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2; as cited in Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2003, p. 188). It is a process to corroborate “different evidence from different sources” (Creswell, 1998, p. 202) to gain a validated and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Denzin (1978b), as cited in Patton (2002), has identified four basic types of triangulation:

(1) *data triangulation*, the use of a variety of data sources in a study; (2) *Investigator triangulation*, the use of several different researchers or evaluators; (3) *theory triangulation*, the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data, and (4) *methodological triangulation*, the use of multiple methods to study a single problem or program. (p. 247)

As stated earlier, the investigator selected the use of *data triangulation* to strengthen the study. The investigator would like to reiterate the data sources specified previously to be used: (1) individual interviews; (2) Critical Incident Surveys; and (3) Personal Demographic Surveys. As stated by Patton (2000), “different types of data provided cross-data validity checks” (p. 248) and lessens the errors in the study. This made the study stronger.

Credibility

As a Latina woman, my experiences growing-up with Latino cultural values in my parents’ home, teaching in the education setting K – 12 in a suburban town, and pursuing a doctoral degree are unique and should not, but may, bias this study. For the reader, my reported bias is based on the premise that most Latina females experience an upbringing with Latino traditional cultural values. As a Latina woman researching Latina females, and having lived with Latino traditional cultural values, I do believe that Latino traditional

cultural values still make a difference in lives of Latina women. I am inclined to believe that all Latina women have experienced or are familiar with Latino traditional cultural values. Several strategies were utilized to ensure this study did not show my bias, and that the quality and credibility were enhanced, but I will conclude with my own interpretation. The three main concerns related to the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis were distinct but related, see the following:

- ◆ *Rigorous methods* for doing fieldwork that yield high-quality data that are systematically analyzed with attention to issues of credibility
- ◆ *The credibility of the researcher*, which is dependent on training, experience, track record, status, and presentation of self
- ◆ *Philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry*, that is, a fundamental appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis, purposeful sampling, and holistic thinking (Patton, 2002, 584).

In order for the investigator to withhold personal biases out of the grand findings, multiple steps were employed to capture ‘high-quality’ data to maintain the validity in this qualitative study. Patton (2002) states that the “differences in data from divergent sources can contribute significantly to the overall credibility of findings” (p. 560). In addition, each participant was invited to review the transcripts of their interview to check for “the credibility of the findings and interpretations” (Creswell, 1998, p. 202). The investigator sought to gain their feedback to clarify or elaborate on quoted data, called *member checks*. Finally, the investigator used rich, thick descriptions to describe the participants’ setting (Creswell, 1998, p. 203).

The investigator completed multiple steps to gain ‘*the credibility of the researcher*’ status by way of training and experience. The investigator successfully completed qualitative research methods training in her Leadership Administrative Academic Program, and

completed a research study required for one class. The investigator employed *peer review*, as she sought the advice of her dissertation committee members, to externally check the research process by questioning the methods, meanings, interpretations, and listened “to the researcher’s feelings” (Creswell, 1998, p. 203). This allowed for the investigator to make clarifications and to remain honest.

The investigator’s “*belief in the value of qualitative inquiry*, that is, a fundamental appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis, purposeful sampling, and holistic thinking” (Patton, 2002, 584), was able to clearly articulate her belief in the value of qualitative inquiry earlier in this chapter.

Generalizability

The findings for this study were limited to the participants involved with this study. It is impossible to generalize the findings of this study to the majority population for the following reasons:

- (1) The study participants do not represent all Latina women principals in the United States. For instance, Latina women school principals selected may have different experiences when compared to Latina women school principals in other regions of the United States.
- (2) The small sample size identified as Latina women high school principals involved should not be generalized to majority (White) or other minority women high school principals.
- (3) The participants were participating Latina women leaders who should not be generalized to all Latina women.
- (4) The investigator exploring the study of Latina women school principals is Latina. She set aside any “preconceptions to best understand the phenomenon as experienced by the participants” (Creswell, 1998, p. 31). For example, she set aside her childhood

experiences growing up in a home where her parents emphasized traditional cultural beliefs. She did not generalize her childhood experiences to all Latina women.

Rather than treating the findings as generalizations, Guba (1978), as cited in Patton (2002), stated that conclusions should be treated “as hypotheses for future applicability and testing rather than as definitive” (p. 583).

Summary

Narrative inquiry was selected to study the ‘lived-experiences’ for reasons as stated by Creswell (2005), its ability to gain the participants’ perceptions “seeing how they experience, live, and display the phenomenon; and looking for the meaning of the participants’ experiences” (p. 31). This study attempted to gain an in-depth knowledge of Latina women principals as they advanced into the role of high school principal in public education. The analysis was constructed using the narratives of emerging themes such as early influences, diverse paths, high achieving teachers, professional initiatives, and aspirations beyond the principalship. Gender issues were also revealed. The investigator intended to understand what it was like to be a Latina woman serving as school principal in public high school education settings in the United States.

CHAPTER IV: PARTICIPANT PROFILES

This chapter describes the participant profiles of the Latina school principals who graciously accepted to interview for this study. A personal demographic profile of the principals and the description of schools they have worked in is provided. Caution was taken so that the participants' identities were not revealed.

Profile of Principals and Description of Schools

The eight participants in this study were public high school principals from across the United States (see Table 4.1). The average age of the principals was thirty-six (36). All eight principals have advanced degrees in Administrative Leadership. Five of the principals earned a Ph.D in Education Administration. One principal was completing her Doctorate in Education Leadership. One principal earned an Education Specialist Degree and plans to earn a Ph.D in the near future. One principal held a Master's Degree in Education Administration and does not plan to earn a Ph.D. There were five Latina principals of Mexican decent, one principal was Brazilian, one principal was Puerto Rican and one principal was of Cuban decent. Seven (7) principals speak fluent Spanish and one Mexican American principal does not. Two (2) participants were single and six (6) participants were married with children when they ascended into the principal position; however, one (1) married participant has since divorced. The participants held positions in suburban or urban areas (see Table 4.2). Several principals spent their entire educational career in one school district. Three (3) principals reported that they were the first Latina women high school principals to serve in their school building. Each participant had over ten years of educational experience holding various positions such as: teacher, assistant principal, counselor, staff development, curriculum development and middle school principal. The

student enrollment in the schools ranged from 1,000 and 4,000 students. The student population was mainly Hispanics in four out of eight schools. Five principals served in schools with a high percent (71%-95%) of students enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch. Two principals served high schools with a 39% and 65% student population of African American majority students. Two principals served in high schools with a 33% and 36% White majority student population. One principal stated that she worked in education for 19 years before ever working with White students.

A personal profile for each of the eight participants, Mrs. Ava Vestes, Ms. Tina Reyes, Dr. Ana Oscar, Dr. Marie Palacio, Dr. Diane Martina, Dr. Tish Maldon, Dr. Pat Alonzo and Dr. Liz Ramirez, is provided. Each interviewee provided her own perspective on her rise to the high school principal position. This allowed me to gain a deep understanding of the participants' background, leadership and career path experiences. A short biographical narrative is provided for the eight Latina women high school principals and their school building. So their identity is not compromised, pseudo names were used to identify each participant, school and school district (Appendices H School Make-up; and K Experiences)

Table 4.1: States and Number of Latina Women High School Principal Interviewed

| State | Number Interviewed |
|---|--------------------|
| California | 4 |
| Florida | 1 |
| Texas | 2 |
| <i>Note: The researcher felt that if the state of the remaining one high school principal was identified, it would compromise the identity of the participant. At the time of this study, there was only one Latina woman high school principal in the remaining state.</i> | |

Table 4.2: School Type and Number of High School Principals

| Type of School District | Number of High School Principals |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Urban | 4 |
| Suburban | 4 |

Mrs. Ava Vestes

Mrs. Ava Vestes is a 50-year-old married Mexican American high school principal with two children. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Education Administration. Mrs. Vestes has worked in education for over twenty-five (25) years. She served in the following educational positions before serving in her current role as high school principal: middle school principal (7 years), high school principal (2 years), high school assistant principal (1 year), technology supervisor (1 year), program administrator of technology support (1 year), curriculum development and professional development (1 year), district liaison (1 year), counselor (12 years), teacher (1.5 years) and teacher's assistant (2 years). Mrs. Vestes served as a high school principal of a large suburban comprehensive public high school in the west coast of the United States for the past two years. The school enrollment consists of 3,000 students with a demographic breakdown of 39% White, 28% Asian, 20% Hispanic, 5% Black, 4% Filipino, 2% Native American and 1% Pacific Islander. Student enrollment in free and reduced Lunch is 13%. Mrs. Vestes earned a salary of \$135,000.

Ms. Tina Reyes

Ms. Tina Reyes is a 47-year-old first generation Brazilian American female. She recently completed her first year as high school principal. Ms. Reyes is employed in an urban school district in the southeastern part of the United States. She is divorced with one

child. Ms. Reyes worked in finance management in private industry for four years prior to serving in public education for 20 years. Ms. Reyes attended a Secretary school prior to earning a Bachelor's degree in Business Marketing, a Master's degree in Business Administration (M.B.A), and a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership (Ed.S). Ms. Reyes worked in both junior high and high schools before serving as high school principal in the following capacities: high school assistant principal (7 years), middle school principal (2 years), middle school teacher (10 years). She also worked as a resource teacher for ESL (English Language Learners) programs and taught in drop-out prevention programs. Ms. Reyes served a student body of 5,300 with 51% minority student enrollment in a suburban school district as assistant principal for seven years before assuming the principal role. Ms. Reyes currently serves as principal with a high school student enrollment of 1,500. The demographic breakdown is 65% Black, 22% White and 13% Hispanic. Student enrollment in free and reduced Lunch is 71%. Ms. Reyes earns annually \$100,000.

Dr. Ana Oscar

Dr. Ana Oscar is a 40-year-old fifth generation Mexican American high school principal. She is married with two children. She began her education career upon college graduation. Dr. Oscar entered the teaching profession at a Catholic high school before serving as principal in public high schools. She works on the west coast of the United States. Dr. Oscar served in the role of high school principal for eight years. Her administrative career path is traditional. She worked in the following capacities: Principal (8 years), Assistant Principal of Guidance and Counseling – Discipline and Attendance (1 year), Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction (3 years) and teacher (3 years). Dr. Oscar has earned a Bachelor's degree in History, a Master's degree in Education and completed a

Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Dr. Oscar served as principal in a large high school of 3,000 students for five years before assuming her current position. She presently works as a principal with a high school student enrollment of 1,500 students. The demographic breakdown is 93% Hispanic, 12% White, <1% Black and <1% Asian. She works in a suburban district. It is a bedroom community to a very large metropolitan city. Student enrollment in free and reduced Lunch is 85%. Dr. Oscar earns approximately \$145,000 annually.

Dr. Marie Palacio

Dr. Marie Palacio is a 37-year-old divorced first generation Mexican American female high school principal serving on the west coast of the United States. Dr. Palacio recently completed her first year as principal in a suburban school district. She and her siblings attended the same college and all earned a Bachelor's degree and later all earned doctoral degrees. Dr. Palacio began her education career of 15 years immediately following college graduation. Dr. Palacio earned a Bachelor's degree in Biology, a Master's degree in Administration and a Doctorate of Education Leadership. Prior to her current post as high school principal, Dr. Palacio served in the following capacities: assistant principal (2 years), district curriculum coordinator (2 years), high school assistant principal of curriculum (3 years), strategy coach (1 year), support provider (several years), special assignment teacher - staff development in science (3 years), high school biology teacher (5 years) and elementary migrant education teacher (1 year). Dr. Palacio serves a high school with a student enrollment of 3,000. The demographic break down is 36% Hispanic, 36% White, 13% Asian and 7% Black. The school serves free and reduced lunch to a student enrollment of 18%. The annual salary for the high school principal is \$115,000.

Dr. Diane Martina

Dr. Diane Martina is a 50-year-old married Puerto Rican-born with two sons serving a school with a student enrollment of 1,000 in a suburban school district. She recently completed her first year as principal in Texas. Dr. Martina spent 20 years in the military with her husband immediately following college graduation. She taught adults in college for 18 years prior to her career in the education field k-12. Dr. Martina worked both in the catholic and public school districts. She has served only in high schools. Dr. Martina earned an Associate's degree in Secretary Administration, a Bachelor's degree in Spanish, a Master's in Education Administration and a Doctorate degree in Adult and Post Secondary Education. She moved quickly into the role of assistant principal. Dr. Martina served in the following education capacities before assuming her role as high school principal: assistant principal of curriculum and discipline (2 years), assistant principal of discipline (1 year), assistant principal of curriculum (2 years), assistant principal of discipline (2 years), and teacher (1). The demographic break down is 83% Hispanic, 15% Black, 2% Asian and 2% White. The percentage of free and reduced lunch in the school is 95%. She earned an annual salary of \$80,000.

Dr. Trish Maldon

Dr. Trish Maldon is a 50-year-old Cuban-born American female high school principal with two sons serving a high school of 1,500 students in an urban school district in the midwestern part of the United States. Dr. Maldon accumulated 20 years in the education field with 16 years in administration. She worked in multiple states and served as high school principal for five (5) years. Dr. Maldon is the first Latina in the state to serve as principal in a comprehensive public high school. She earned a Bachelor's degree in

Sociology, a Master's in Special Education and a Doctorate degree in Education

Administration. Dr. Maldon served in the following educational capacities prior to assuming her post as high school principal: middle school principal (5 years), assistant principal (5 years), teacher (5 years). Dr. Maldon served as department chair in her second year of teaching. The high school demographic break down is 39% Black, 37% Hispanic, 15% White and 7% Asian. The school serves free and reduced lunch to a student enrollment of 81% where the principal earns \$130,000 annually.

Dr. Pat Alonzo

Dr. Pat Alonzo is a 51-year-old married Mexican American female with three daughters who recently accepted the role as Director of Curriculum and Instruction after serving as high school principal of four (4) years. Dr. Alonzo worked in private industry for 13 years in research and technology before pursuing a career in the education field of 22 years. Dr. Alonzo dropped out of high school at 16-years-old and later earned a Bachelor's degree in Business, a Master's degree in Education and a Doctorate degree in Administrative Leadership. Previously, Dr. Alonzo served as principal on assignment (3 years), assistant principal (3 years), counselor (1 year) and teacher (11 years). In addition to the previous capacities served, other assignments include: department chair, district committee lead, grant writer, and staff coach for the district. Upon her first high school principal assignment, Dr. Alonzo represented to the school two new demographic categories for principal: female and Mexican American. She was first to serve as a Latina high school principal at the 50-year-old school with a staff of 99% White. The annual salary for the principal was \$130,000.

Dr. Liz Ramirez

Dr. Liz Ramirez is a 35-year-old married Mexican American female. In her third year as high school principal, Mrs. Ramirez was recruited to assume the new position of Chief Academic Officer. She relocated to the west coast of the United States. Although both parents are of Mexican decent, one parent was born in Mexico. Mrs. Ramirez served in the military for one year after college graduation, before entering public education. She maintained a career in high school facilities only. At the time of the interview, she served as a high school principal for approximately three (3) years. Mrs. Ramirez worked in an urban school district for ten (10) years before relocating. She served in the following positions before serving as principal of her current school: principal (3 years), assistant principal (3 years), interim assistant principal Duties (6 months) and teacher (4 years). She also served as coordinator of academy and department head. Dr Ramirez has earned a Bachelor's degree. Her Master's degree is in Education Leadership. She recently completed a Doctorate's degree in Administration Leadership and is awaiting graduation. As high school principal, she served a school with a school enrollment of 1,000 students with a demographic breakdown of 94% Hispanic, 4% Caucasian, 4% Asian and 1% Black. Student enrollment in free and reduced lunch is 74%. She earned \$85,000 in her last year as principal.

Summary

Each of the profiled participants listed in Chapter 4 shared her own unique demographic description about the positions held in her career path as she ascended into the position of high school principal. Although there are some differences and similarities within the principal profiles, each principal was pleasant and seemed happy to share her narrative. Chapter 5 illuminates the emergent themes and the narratives provided by each participant.

CHAPTER V: DATA ANALYSIS

The findings presented in this chapter were organized as they aligned with the research question that guided the study. The following question provided an increased depth in understanding of the experiences of Latina women public high school principals. The central research question was:

- How do Latina women describe their lived-experiences while navigating their career paths into public high school principalship?

As a result of the data analysis, the participants' responses revealed that despite having diverse career backgrounds, they shared cultural values and deep seeded core values of having high expectations and aspirations for children's education, which compelled them to ensure that students succeeded in the classroom and resulted in their rise to the ranks of high school principal. Five major themes emerged.

Emergent Themes

Five themes emerged from the analysis of participant data answering the central research question. The primary themes were:

1. Latina women high school principals benefited from early influence related to family and cultural traditions.
2. Latina women participants experienced diverse career backgrounds as they entered the career path of principalship regarding professional careers and opportunities into education profession.
3. Latina women participants were high achieving teachers committed to responsibilities beyond teaching and included initiatives and advancement.

4. Each Latina woman principal in each education position they occupied directed professional leadership initiatives including data management, accomplishments, challenges, and support systems.
5. Latina women participants experienced sponsorship for professional upward mobility. They included: leadership style, supervisor encouragement and opening doors to the principalship, and aspirations beyond principalship.

Through an analysis of data in this study evidence shows that there were contributing factors to the representation of Latina women high school principals in public schools.

Early Influence

In response to the central research question guiding this study, How do Latina women describe their ‘lived-experiences’ while navigating their career paths into a public high school principalship position? The first theme, Early Influence, or lessons learned or observed from family emerged from the data as the foundational factor in shaping their career paths to high school principalship. Early influences were described as families raising their children (participants) with core values of family beliefs, cultural values, and about identity, and how one should behave in society. These ingrained beliefs are the characteristics, which made a difference in the lives of and influenced Latina participants’ later decisions to enter into the principalship.

The sub-themes were:

- Family holds the power to influence decision making for Latina women ascending into the role of high school principal.
- Traditional cultural values are prescribed life functions dictated to women that may prevent participants from ascending to high school principalship.

During the interviews, participants revealed experiences that led them into positions as high school principals. Conversations divulged information about the principals' individual decision making as they traveled their career paths. The women participants indicated that early influences contributed to their career paths to the principalship.

Family Influence

The first sub-theme was family structure. Latina participants experienced family structure that influenced their way of thinking and decision making in their career paths to high school principalship. Principals were able to articulate personal experiences of family structure and how it influenced their decision making. They included: family structure, core values and education support.

Data from the current study supports the assertion that family structure influenced Latina women participants seeking high school principalship. Latina participants were raised with both mother and father in the home. Most fathers worked as skilled laborers. Mothers stayed home to care for their children until the children got older or graduated from high school, before returning to work. Latina principals spoke about the values of family structure and described a humble home environment as influences to their later decisions to seek the principalship. One principal explained how her parents discouraged her from having the fate of humble beginnings. Principal Ramirez, youngest of six, stated:

My mother was 40 and my father was 58 when I was born. My father completed the seventh (7th) grade and my mother completed the third (3rd) grade and they struggled... They did not want that [fate] for us... I had a lot of freedom, but it came with a lot of responsibility. We spoke Spanish in our home, my mother did not speak English and I had to translate... mother did not visit the school because she did not feel comfortable.

Mom said, “they looked at me funny when they spoke to me.” As a result, she never went to my softball games, band concerts [or] to see me get an award, but she did go to graduation.

Principal Ramirez described specific examples at home and at school, the challenges presented, and how odd it was to live in two worlds. Talk of independence or goals was not encouraged or expressed at home. Life in school provided an avenue to express self-worth. Having choices to have a better life was a benefit of being a U.S. citizen.

It was important to mom that we were U.S. citizens. At the same time, she used to tell us it was disrespectful to speak English in our house because she couldn’t understand it. That happened throughout the years. I was Anhelica at home an Angelica at school... It was very different the way we communicated outside and in our home. At home, I was quiet and I took care of my [older] brother. At school, I could be outspoken and talk about my dreams and desires. My mom was so proud of the fact that I could do that and have choices that she didn’t have.

Similarly, Principal Vestes spoke about humble beginnings; however, she spoke of having a happy, positive childhood.

My parents certainly struggled, but they owned their own house. My dad always worked. He was a skilled laborer... My sisters, we all got along very well. We spent a lot of our time together obviously because it was not a big house. I shared a room with two sisters all my life. So not a lot of privacy, not like the life style I enjoy now. That was life... I had a really good [and] positive childhood.

Another family value noted was seeing both parents dialogue about decision making. Some principals observed strong communication with both parents. Principal Oscar was influenced

to take on decision making by way of negotiating or dialoguing. Principal Oscar described a family structure of parents' communication with one another.

I would say that my mom deferred to my father, but by no means was she meek. They definitely had discussions.

Principal Maldon shared that she had an outspoken mother. She spoke about her mother having a loud voice in the family. As a result, she considered her mother a strong lady while her father was more analytic.

Another family value was the importance of parents raising their children with a stay-at-home-mom. All principals grew up with a stay-at-home mother for several years.

Principal Reyes described the family structure living at home. Her mother worked before having children; after having children, she stayed home to raise the children.

My mom worked as a secretary for an airline then stayed home for a while. She loved being a homemaker. Our house was spic and span clean and she sewed and she cooked and she did everything. When she was 50 or 60, she went back to work and became the number one sales representative. She is a real go-getter.

And, Principal Oscar noted a similar circumstance about her mother staying home to raise kids indicating, "she did not start work until my senior year in high school." Principal Vestes, similarly, spoke about her mother's dedication to stay home to raise six children before seeking employment. Principal Vestes stated,

After I grew up a little bit... My mom got a teaching assistant job. That brought a lot of comfort because we got health insurance from my mom's job. That was huge. She felt like she could take care of us if she needed to for health care.

Another important family value was giving voice to their children. Principal Palacio recalled family practices of how her parents paid attention to her, as well as having a supportive father figure. Principal Palacio stated,

My parents did a lot of listening. My dad was certainly a decision maker in his role.

We had a very respectful male model, a positive male model in my dad. I viewed my dad as a very supportive husband to my mom. In regard to the family decision-making power and communication in the home... my parents always made joint decisions and communicated with us. We always saw both figures as being dominant.

Likewise, Principal Maldon described her family as encouraging independent thinking.

We have always been able to express our feelings. Mom and dad thought you are important... They were always there to hear our opinions. I believe they made a huge difference in my life.

Principals shared their experiences about family values passed down from their parents regarding putting families' first. Principals were highly influenced by the importance of family and often created a family environment with the notion of demonstrating this value and a welcoming environment for students in school. Principals incorporated these values in their schools as well as within their own families. Principal Maldon explained the importance of family spirit in the home structure that was passed down to her generation.

We have a close family. It is a tradition to have Sunday dinners with my aunts and uncles, my kids and my grandchildren, and my brother's family.

Similarly, Principal Vestes spoke about her strict, but nurturing mother and family ties.

Everything... was a family get together... Growing up, my mom would make our lunches for school and lined them up on the counter... she made breakfast every

morning... We had dinner at 5:30pm every night... Even when we were older in high school and beyond you know, kind of had a part-time job in high school... - if you were home, you had to be at the dinner table. It was not an option. You couldn't say I'm going to my friend's house. That was not acceptable.

Several principals spoke about the topic of family care and depending on each other. Some principals spoke about creating a family environment in their classrooms. Principal Martina described the family relationship that was ingrained in her upbringing:

We are very close [and] care for each other. I believe we have a type of strength [that keeps us connected] as a family. We are here to take care of one another.

Similarly, Principal Ramirez disclosed how family was clearly denoted as important.

... Family first is number one. When there was a family outing or a family cookout that was number one on the agenda.

Additionally, parents gave the same family importance to extended family living out of the country where close ties were still eminent. Principal Ramirez recalled how her family visited family in Mexico several times a year throughout her youth and how it supported her ascension to the principalship. While visiting Spanish-speaking family out of the country the principal created opportunities to play school and teach English to her relatives. Principal Ramirez stated:

We spent every summer in Mexico. The minute we got out of school, we were in Mexico. This also happened in December. For two weeks in December, we would all go to Mexico. I used to gather up all my younger cousins who did not speak English and teach them the alphabet. For two months, I taught them English. That's where my teaching [began].

Most principals revealed their strengths in leadership come from family influences. Some principals spoke about their leadership styles as being characterized by empowerment, non-avoidance, relational-based, collaboration, analytical, and directive. Principal Maldon articulated a family structure that influenced her leadership style as forthcoming and strong willed, she stated, “I grew up with people who were strong willed [and] who were leaders.”

Another core value was collaboration. Many principals spoke about working together as a team with their siblings to complete housework or other tasks. Principal Martina reported how her family influenced her collaborative leadership style.

I also developed [those interpersonal relationships] with my own family, my two kids and my husband. I always tell my children, wherever we go, we are together and we become [a force of] strength for one another. I [believe my family] have influenced who I am and my leadership style. I am very collaborative.

Similarly, Principal Reyes warmly described family and reasons why family is first, she stated, “Family is everything, loves unconditionally, and always there for each other”

In terms of family influence about faith rooted in spirituality, religion played a big part in the lives of families and guided the family with values such as integrity and proper ways of living. Some of these values influenced principals to be conservative in their role as principals. A great deal of faith was seen with parents. Many principals spoke about being grounded in faith and how they prayed about situations that were perceived as challenges. Two principals attended private Catholic schools growing up. Principal Vestes described a family structure with religion at home and in school.

My mother was very religious and wanted us to have a Catholic education. Except for one brother, we all went to the Catholic school. When I look back on it, it was a really

good thing... We were well known in the community. I started school in kindergarten with about the same 40 kids that I graduated with in the 8th grade. It was a very close net community... It was in the context of a large urban setting.

Likewise, Principal Oscar spoke about the influence of being Catholic. She believes the family value of religion has influenced her to be conservative in the way she presents self.

We are Catholic and that was very important. I would say that leading a good moral life was important, but not necessarily the tenets of the faith were important... I do not have tattoos. My ears are pierced once. With those things, I am very traditional. I got married, then, I had my children. Those types of things were clearly delineated to me as behaviors that my parents expected of me.

Core Values

Participants in the current study also revealed how having core values were an important part of their character as they ascended into the principalship. Latina participants recognized core values as strength in their career paths to high school principalship positions. Core values included: Confidence and assertiveness; aspiration for career goals and success; fairness; valuing people; work ethics; work in people-serving professions; collectiveness; perseverance; pride in one's presentation and communication; and educational aspirations for children. As reported from the eight Latina women participants in this study, core values played a role in their decision making.

The participants were able to articulate meaningful examples of family influences that at some point guided them in their career paths into education. Principal Maldon spoke about how she was encouraged to speak out and to be assertive. Principal Vestes expressed how her confidence and independent thinking probably comes from both her mother and

grandmother. Principal Alonso spoke about how her father placed her in situations that would broaden her knowledge of worldly behaviors. Principal Palacio spoke of confidence and assertiveness in the following way,

My dad has always pulled my sister and I aside and said, “you know what, you girls can do way better than boys.” He always told us we were “better at doing things, and we were stronger than men.” So there was a lot of support...

In terms of careers and goals, Principals Maldon and Ramirez spoke about how their parents encouraged and expected them to succeed in career goals. Principal Reyes revealed that if her mother was able to earn a \$100,000 working in sales at age 60, then she can expect to do more than just teach. Principal Reyes made goals to seek the principalship. Principal Oscar revealed how her parents always spoke to her in terms of values of career aspirations and how that influenced her ascension to the principalship. Principal Oscar stated, “My parents always wanted me to be a professional.” Similarly, Principal Palacio articulated:

My parents knew that we all had to go to college to be successful. My parents set really high expectations for us... It was my family structure of non-negotiable. You have to be successful... I was going to be a success; failure was not an option.

Another core value was fairness. Some principals spoke about fairness as advocating for the less fortunate or for their parents. Many principals advocated for the fairness of their student body who did not have voice or who did not have equal educational services. In fact, all principals shared experiences of advocating for their students. Principal Maldon provided a description about fairness taught by her parents. She indicated how it influenced her ascension to the principalship. She recollected how her parents spoke about fairness at home

as a core value. She revealed that her parents always stated, “Just fight for what you believe in.”

Another way to look at core values was along the lines of valuing people (Latino *personalismo*). Many principals spoke about caring for individuals whether they were family or extended family. Principal Maldon provided a description about the value of people and how it influenced her ascension to the principalship. She described how her parents made a point to treat people with dignity, “...you have to be very careful how you treat people. I think that is a value that my mom and dad displayed in the way they treated people.”

In terms of work ethics, all principals had more than one experience to share. Parents in their employment and home chores displayed work ethics. Parents also spoke about work ethics all the time. Their parents were proud to display dedication to work, doing quality work, etc. Participants described experiences about work ethics and how they influenced their ascension to the principalship. Principal Oscar stated:

The number one value [learned] is the job worth doing is worth doing right. So that work ethic piece has been very important... My dad is very stoic, and... I watched him be very organized, very methodical, and results-oriented... My father was a police officer for a large urban district for almost 30 years and high up in the department.

Similarly, Principal Vestes articulated an experience about how her father was firm about his belief to stay busy working, even at home. Principal Vestes recollected:

You couldn't sit around. My parents were like work people! You know, on Saturday mornings, I'm from the generation of American Band Stand and Soul Train. They were not happy if you were sitting and watching TV during the day. My dad would walk in from whatever chore he was doing and he looked at us like, “you better get off that

couch and do something.” You know, you had to be active. I come from that, even on the weekends - you should be doing projects – there are things you could be doing around the house and you need to be busy.

Likewise, Principal Alonso spoke about an experience of learning hard labor at a young age.

My dad worked 30 plus years as a laborer in construction. Hard work has been instilled in me at a very young age. When I say hard work, I’m talking back breaking labor.

My father didn’t have a son. I was the oldest daughter. So, I used to go to work with him on the weekends... My dad taught me skills of his industry... It provided me the opportunity to value what hard work is, the physical, and mental hard work.

Similarly, Principal Ramirez revealed, “My parents always taught us to have a good work ethic [and] to work hard.”

In terms of a people-helping profession, some parents encouraged their children (participants) to work in industries serving people. This was another important core value for many principals. Principal Maldon revealed how her parents wanted to see her working in a field to help people. Similarly, Principal Palacio spoke about values her parents instilled in her about people-serving professions and how it influenced her ascension to the principalship,

They wanted me to do something worthy for a greater cause... Both my brother and sister... We are all doing well in people helping professions.

Another way to look at core values along the lines of collectiveness, many principals spoke about working together as family to accomplish tasks. Principal Martina provided a description about collectiveness and how it influenced her rise to the principalship. She spoke about relationship building:

I am a relationship builder because that's what my family instilled in me. [For example] my parents treat each other as if they are girlfriend and boyfriend and after so many years! So there is a lot of love in my family, brothers and sisters.

Similarly, Principal Vestes spoke about how she was not an individual doing things alone and that her parents spoke in terms of each person has only a piece of a puzzle to contribute. Everyone works together to complete one large task.

Another core value is perseverance. Participants provided examples of seeing parents moving forward in the face of adversity. Principal Ramirez described perseverance as an ingrained core value and how it influenced her ascension to the role of high school principal.

... persevere no matter what. That was always ingrained in us...Mom said all the time, "you just keep moving forward and eventually you are going to get to a place where things are getting good..." Just being resilient, never giving up and moving forward...

On the other hand, some principals spoke about presentation of self and their communication. Principal Maldon was expected to communicate well and professionally. Principal Martina's upbringing influenced her to be very assertive about dressing conservatively and she displays this in her role as principal. Principal Oscar described the value of presentation of self and communication and how that influenced her ascension to the principalship. Principal Oscar spoke about how she presents herself in her everyday life as defined by her mother. She stated:

My mom used to say, "you always be classy in the way that you dress and in the way that you communicate." That was very important to her... That to me was always very important that I would represent myself in a very classy way.

In terms of independence, data from the current study supports the assertion that the idea of independence influenced Latina women participants seeking high school principalship.

Several principals spoke about independence. Principal Maldon was encouraged to promote independent thinking. Principal Ramirez had lots of independence as a child, as did Principal Vestes. Although, at times they thought it was because they were the youngest of six children. On the other hand, Principal Palacio clearly stated, “My parents instilled in me the value of independence.”

Another core value noted was educational aspiration for children. Seven participants indicated that their parents stressed the value of educational aspirations for their children. Data from the current study support the assertion that educational aspirations influenced Latina women participants seeking high school principalship positions. Latina principals spoke about the values of education and described how parents constantly encouraged education, which later influenced the participants in their decisions to seek the principalship. The participants’ parents’ role emphasized college-going aspirations. Principal Palacio explained college graduation was non-negotiable.

Mom graduated from high school in the United States. My dad did not formally go to high school... Both parents attended all of our school events. My dad modeled good work ethics. He was a mechanic. He went to night school to get his community college credentials to teach automotive technologies. Watching dad attend night classes and work to make sure we had what we needed, made us value education... From an early age, my parents really instilled in me the non-negotiable of going to college. At an early age, I knew from the get go, I was not going to be allowed to stay

home after graduating from high school. I was going to have to go to college. I was going to have to move somewhere to attend college and... get A's, A's and B's.

Similarly, Principal Maldon spoke about the value of education:

My parents wanted my brother and me to have freedom, opportunity and education... the value that they both have in education was always stated to my brother and myself. They were always there making sure that we were doing homework and that we had [resources].

Likewise, Principal Oscar stated:

The expectation that I would always go to college was always clear. Which college I was to go to was up to me, but that was certainly an expectation... My father is educated [Bachelor's degree] and my mother has her AA (Associate) degree... [and] they were both finished with school by the time I can remember.

Principal Reyes, similarly, recalled watching her father attend college and go to work. She indicated how much that influenced the importance of education. She proudly stated:

I watched my dad go to school when I was growing up. I watched him work eight (8) hours, come home at 10 pm or 11 pm and study. On Saturdays, we could not make a sound in the house. He took 15 credits and worked fulltime. He graduated as an engineer...and was cum laude...

Likewise, Principal Ramirez articulated how her parents constantly encouraged education:

They constantly reminded us, "*educación, educación!* There is nothing more important than getting ahead through school." ...My dad used to say that, "people can take anything away from you, but they can't take away your diploma. That is always yours.

You may need to find another job or you may need to find another home, but that is always yours.”

Additionally, Principal Ramirez discussed a critical moment that centered on wanting to put off college. She thought it best to delay college, but her mother believed otherwise.

While in high school, I approached my mom about going into the navy after graduating high school. She cried and then told me, “absolutely not. You need to go to college first [and] that it was very important...” I was the only college graduate from my family and extended family.

In contrast, Principal Vestes provided a different route to college growing up. She divulged information during our interview session that credits her older sister about a college going influence. Principal Vestes recalled an epiphany one time visiting her sister in college.

I have to credit going to college to my older sister. She was probably in high school when I was about 12... She was a really bright girl and just really successful in school. When she was in high school, I did not really pay much attention to her. I was just a kid. She was recognized for being successful in school. When she was a senior, [she] started applying for college. Anything related to college was a mystery to me. She [attended] college in [our state] on a full scholarship. When she went, it was not a big deal to me. She was now out of the house. You know, one less person taking up space that is how I thought of it.

...

It was visiting her at the college that was stunning. It was amazing to me to be in a place that was so manicured and beautiful and clean. [It was] kind of like pristine. We walked around [the] college...and it was a new... liberal arts college. Well of course it

was the 1960s, trendy, hip environment. It was really cool. It was so exciting to watch. It was influential to visit that college, and to visit her and see there was another way of living. I thought, I've got to have this! She was independent [and] she was doing her own thing living in the dorm. It was all-amazing to me that it was possible. I never would have dreamed it.

...

I think that it is what made me feel like okay this is the path that I will take. I am going to do it...It also gave me the freedom to just kind of think about "yeah I could do different stuff in my future." I think my sister's influence was really important in making the decision that college is what I would do.

Dissimilarly, Principal Alonso was not encouraged by her parents to seek academics,

I was a high school dropout. My personal story is that college was not something discussed in the home... Education was not valued very high. My mother married at age fifteen (15) and had a 7th grade education. She received her education from this particular school district where I am working now, as a matter of fact!... Many of my aunts and uncles went to this district and school system; not one of them graduated high school.

Interview data from the current study supports the assertion that the participants received different kinds of educational support for college. Some participants received partial financial support from parents while others received emotional support from parents. Additionally, others had full financial support from family. Principal Reyes stated:

My dad paid for my school, education. Yes, that was very important. He paid for my Specialist degree. If I want my doctorate... my dad said, "That's my job. I will pay for whatever school you go to."

Similarly, Principal Oscar was supported with educational funds for graduate degrees. Her graduate degrees were paid for through the support of her mother's employment tuition remission as her mother worked as an administrative assistant at a college.

On the other hand, Principal Ramirez was encouraged by both her mother and father to continue a high school and college education; however, they did not pay for her education. Principal Ramirez attended school on grants, scholarships, loans and military funding.

... the military [had its benefits]. When I spoke to my recruiter, he indicated they would pay for my school loans.

Similarly, Principal Palacio confirmed a lack of resources but received lots of encouragement from family:

I was on 'free and reduced lunch' and my parents did not make a lot of money. They were blue collar. However, they [partially] paid for all of us to go to school. In addition to scholarships and grants, they covered the rest of the costs for school. So in doing that, they were absolutely supportive... My family has supported all my academic achievements.

Traditional Cultural Values

Traditional cultural values included roles that women are to assume in life. Women are geared to live a certain life style that would support their husbands and children. They learn to take a role submissive to husbands. Some principals observed this in their homes and others saw this behavior with close extended family. Some participants were discouraged

from adhering to traditional cultural values. Some Latina participants experienced traditional cultural values as a strength and other Latina participants in their career paths to high school principalship experienced them as challenges. As reported from the eight Latina women participants in this study, traditional cultural values played a role in their decision making. Some participants articulated meaningful examples of families who influenced traditional cultural values that at some point guided them in their career paths into education. For this current study the researcher focused on the term *Marianismo*. Participants indicated the term delineated strict code of behaviors for women.

Marianismo is a traditional cultural value prescribed for Latina women, which binds them to domestic duties first serving their husbands and raising their children rather than seeking first careers and independence. *Marianismo* matters today as it is represented in the data reported by the Latina women participants. Principals were familiar with characteristics of *marianismo* witnessed in their families and extended families. Although not all Latina women participants reported having lived or experienced facets of *marianismo* as significant in their career paths into the high school principal position, two participants articulated the significance that involved *marianismo*.

Latina women participants were asked during the semi-structured interview process to describe primary attributes of family values significant as they ascended to the high school principal. The participants described their experiences of either living or observing family with characteristics of *marianismo* while in high school, attending family gatherings, during their career paths, and at times serving in the role of principal.

To serve a man is taught by mothers

The data from the current study revealed that the traits of *Marianismo* are a mother's teaching. Principal Ramirez described how she was instructed to live the traditional life of *Marianismo*. Although Principal Ramirez was expected to achieve in school and have opportunities to work, it was ingrained in her to serve male loved ones such as her brother and father and later, spouse. This included: taking over her brother's chores, to freshen his beverage with fresh ice, make his bed and clean his room even as she entered high school, played sports, and worked a part-time job. Principal Ramirez did not like serving her brother or the prescribed duties spelled out for her because she was female, and questioned her mother about such responsibilities. She stated:

I make my bed, [why can't he make his?]. "*por que hombre*, [because he is a man]," my mother would say... When my brother started middle school, my parents sat us down. She blessed him the night before going to middle school. She explained to me that because he was at middle school, I was going to start taking some of his chores... when I started middle school, I asked her if there would be responsibilities taken away from me, she sat me down in my room and explained to me that being a woman is difficult. Being a women means, there are some responsibilities at home no matter what you do outside the home. She said, I needed to understand that so that I would be prepared... I just thought it was not fair. When I started high school, I asked if chores could be taken away from me, she said, "Absolutely not, same reason, because brother now had a job." Well, now I have a job! "Ok, you have school, you have a job, you have duties when you get home." This all was really ingrained in me.

Similarly, Principal Martina described family influences that centered on family and on her role as a woman. She needed to live a particular way of life and should strive for it in her adult life. Principal Martina indicated that she is in support of her family's influences about a woman's duties. She stated, "My mother raised us with the notion that women were there to serve the men and to raise the family."

In another way, Principal Ramirez recalled her responsibilities as a teenager to serve her father when he became ill in health,

My grades dropped significantly one semester when I stayed home to care for him.

Culturally, I was supposed to be home [to provide for his care]... The family depended on me to grocery shop, cook, tend house and act as nurse to my father when he had a stroke and became disabled... I dropped out of high school twice before graduating... I had to be subservient [to men] because I was a girl.

Principal Ramirez also observed *Marianista* traits of women in her extended family and community. She provided a specific example of an outside gathering:

I definitely learned those [women duties], that, I am a woman and I was supposed to serve a man. I don't know if it was ever said out loud, but I saw it. I saw it in my home. I saw it with our extended family at those events almost every weekend (i.e., birthday celebration, etc.) The folks always serving were always female and the males were always sitting and ordering the females what to do.

Confessions of a Father With Historical Traditional Cultural Beliefs

Principal Reyes did not observe her mother taking on a subservient role to her father and believes her mother is assertive. She believed her mother took on some traditional duties

like raising the children and managing the home. Her father believed he encouraged a traditional culture script for the mother but regrets it. Principal Reyes emotionally recalled:

He said, “you know, if I hadn’t held your mother back, she would have been the president of a company. She would have been anything, but I was insecure and I did not want her to realize, you know.” I think he kind of was like, - I want more for my daughter.

Male Perception of Marianismo

Principal Ramirez provided an earlier experience while she attended high school and how a male guidance counselor viewed her with stereotypical perceptions assuming her future life living as a “Mexican” woman. The counselor preconceived her future as domestic living and her brother’s life as earning wages “to take care of his family.” As a result of the counselor’s perception, he discouraged Principal Ramirez from going to college by not providing her resources for college entry or funding. He did provide such resources to her brother. Principal Ramirez at the time was a 4.0 student taking pre-college course work while her brother did not. Stereotypes of *marianismo* directed the counselor’s views and refusal to support Principal Ramirez. She stated:

I went to my guidance counselor to find out about college. It was not the first, nor the last episode I ever had... I distinctly remember him asking me, “Aren’t you all Mexican [not are you Mexican, but are you all Mexican] and I said, “Yes sir.” “And, don’t you have a boyfriend?” [I said,] “Yes, sir.” “Well aren’t you just going to get married?” I was so embarrassed. At age 16 or 17, I did not feel the confidence to say anything back. We had been taught not to talk back to adults. Honestly, he made me feel worthless... The same counselor... helped and geared [my brother] to go to college.

He had a conversation with him about how every young man was probably going to have to provide for a family some day.

Principal Ramirez found a way around barriers from the male educator who pigeon holed her as having life without a college education. She always wanted to be a teacher and knew she needed a bachelor's degree. She did not allow him to keep her from a career path, and found a way around the barrier.

For about three or four days I thought maybe, college was not really for me. I just kind of toughened up myself. I had a really good friend. The two of us talked about it and said, "you know what? If no one is going to help us, then we are going to do it ourselves."

Awareness of Marianismo Influences to Serve Men

Principal Ramirez further described how she was made aware of how she overly catered to her boyfriend, now her husband of twenty years. At the time, her boyfriend was uncomfortable with the constant catering to his every need. She recalled how he, who is African American, discouraged her from serving him, as it was not necessary. She described the incident:

[My subservient role] was pointed out to me by my husband. At the time, he was my boyfriend. I think I was taken aback, when he said, "What are you doing?" He said, "Do you realize that when I move here, you follow me to here, and you make sure that I have this, etc. I'm fine. I don't need that." He actually hurt my feelings. He didn't mean to hurt my feelings, but he said, "I've lived 24 years just fine. I was able to eat and breathe." You know, that kind of thing. It hurt me. I am like, "What do you mean? I'm only doing what I should be doing."

Marianismo Influenced One Participant in Role of Vice Principal

Decision making at times is influenced unconsciously by *marianismo* traits according to Principal Ramirez. She described the existence of how *marianismo* influenced her interactions serving a male supervisor, but did not allow it to keep her from a career path. She recalled the experience in high school:

Dr. Jesus, my principal, and I always sat with one another [at leadership meetings served with meals]... We know each other well. I typically give him the food that I know he would want from my plate... I don't want the bacon. I don't want the cookies... But when I went up to get myself something to drink, I know he likes Diet Coke, so I brought back Diet Coke and water.

Principal Ramirez further stated that when visiting her brother, who married a non-Latina, she still serves him by ironing his clothes for work.

In my family, I always had to break out of the mold of - I needed to be subservient because I was the girl. It is so easy [to fall back on prescribed duties]... I had to sit back and think about it. Getting over it, I am not exactly sure I've gotten over it. I got better at home. I've gotten better at work. I don't think I've actually gotten over it... I don't think I'm 100% over it because it is something that I feel compelled to do.

Acculturation: Breaking From Traditional Values to achieve Principalship

Latina participants experienced acculturation, such as breaking away from traditional values, as a strength in their career paths to high school principalship positions. As reported from the Latina women participants in this study, acculturation played a major role in their ascension to the principalship. Participants were able to articulate meaningful experiences of acculturation in their rise to high school principal. Principal Martina stated:

I have changed over the years as a result of having to learn the American way where the mentality is 50/50 [responsibilities for husband and wife], [although] I still don't believe in the 50/50 mentality.

She further stated:

My husband is also Puerto Rican... [he is] very traditional and [was] raised in a traditional family. He and I have a very good understanding of what our personal and professional goals are... I think it is hard [work], but my husband and I have been able to mold our lives like a bridge between the Hispanic culture and the American libertarian type of life. I have had an easier time managing men and women because I have been able to find that balance.

One strategy to acculturate involved compromising with a spouse. Principal Martinez spoke about learning to acculturate in the American way. Through compromise, the principal and her husband have come to an understanding that since the children are raised and his career in the military has ended, time for her career was available.

Principal Reyes revealed her belief that if she married a Latino male, the Latino would become jealous of her career and would require her to spend more time with him and less time at work. The Principal has experienced the previous scenario. Since the principal considers her job as her second home because of the 12+ hour days, she believed it would not be possible to cater to the demands of a Latino man holding traditional beliefs.

Principal Vestes articulated how she believed she married well as her husband supported her desire to have a professional career. She indicated that if she had a husband who challenged her long hours at work she would be unable to work as a principal.

I think I chose well. He accepts who I am that is a clear important key. If I had to battle at home over the late nights or the long days or being away from home, I don't think I could do it. It's really hard. I work 14-hour days.

Non-traditional Matriarchs and Patriarchs

Data from the current study supports the assertion that non-traditional culture scripts for women are a strategy for accessing the principalship. Latina participants recalled experiences of non-traditional matriarch role models as strengths in their paths to high school principal positions. As reported by some Latina women participants, non-traditional matriarchs and patriarchs played a major role in their ascension to the principalship. Participants believed they were lucky to have strong women role models in their families. Principals were able to articulate examples of influential women role models that lived non-traditional lives. They included: grandmothers and mothers. Principal Oscar spoke about how her family influenced assertive females. Principal Oscar's mother role modeled non-traditional scripts. She stated:

Even though they had traditional gender roles, it is not like she – she was not the type of mom who served everybody dinner and stood behind while everybody else ate and she catered to everyone. That was not the type of parents that mine were. Even though both my parents are Mexican American, my father and my mother have been raised in the United States. So they are traditional middle class.

Similarly, Principal Maldon recollected how her mother and grandmother behaved as strong women who were opinionated and assertive.

Likewise, Principal Vestes articulated:

I had a grandmother, my mom's mom, very strong. A very strong woman, who actually brought my mom and my brother from Mexico by herself and never had a man, never had a partner. She took care of business. She bought her own home in the 1940s. She worked as a seamstress. She handled herself. She was kind of a tough lady, too. She did not take anything from anyone. She was independent. Being in charge of yourself was positive. I had a model. Yes, I was lucky!

In contrast, Principal Palacio spoke about her father's encouragement regarding her independence and career and referred to him as a non-traditional patriarch:

My parents migrated from Mexico. My mom when she was 8 and my dad when he was 18...My dad is unlike the very traditional Mexican man... He is much more of the renaissance Mexican man [and supported my independence].

Summary of Early Influence

An analysis of the current research data demonstrated that there were early influence factors that led to Latina women principals ascending to the high school principalship. The Latina participants experienced an upbringing on the belief system of family and traditional cultural values. All principals experienced positive family structure and core values that supported their ascension to the role of principal. Some principals experienced challenges with some beliefs of traditional culture values. Some participants developed strategies to work with some traditional values in their ascension to the position of high school principal. The data did not suggest that all Latina women were ingrained with the same level of traditional cultural values nor did it suggest that the participants experienced the same issues with traditional cultural values. The data also suggested that Latina women utilized non-characteristics of *marianismo* (independence and career) in their pursuit to the principalship.

Diverse Career Background

In response to the central research question guiding this study, How do Latina women describe their ‘lived-experiences’ while navigating their career paths into public high school principalship?, the second theme, Diverse Career Background, emerged from the data, as Latina participants described lived experiences as they navigated a career path to the position of high school principal. The principals experienced diverse professional careers that influenced them in their later decisions to enter the principalship.

There were two sub-themes:

- Professional careers provided skill sets experienced prior to Latina women ascending into high school principalship.
- Opportunities in education profession were experiences Latina women participants shared as they entered a career path to the high school principalship.

During the interviews, Latina women participants divulged unique opportunities that led them into positions as high school principals. Conversations revealed information regarding the principals’ individual professional experiences that led them to a path in education. Many Participants indicated their diverse career backgrounds contributed to their ascension to the high principal positions. Diverse career backgrounds are experiences Latina women have with professional careers and opportunities entering into the education field.

Professional Careers

The first sub-theme that emerged from the category of Diverse Background is Professional Careers. Several participants experienced professional careers not related to education as strengths in their ascension to the high school principalship. Latina women in this study revealed that their different professional career skill sets were assets in their career

paths to the principalship. They included: business skills, technology/data management, and military.

Some participants experienced diverse professional careers from private industry prior to entering education. Other participants left teaching to work in non-education industries and gained new skills before returning to education. Latina women spoke about being prepared by their previous professional skills in their pursuit to the principalship. One participant gave a specific example of developing ‘thick skin’ and how that was helpful in her pursuit to the principalship. Principal Alonzo reported:

I worked in construction for two years. I earned journeyman’s wages just like the guy next to me. It was back breaking labor. Women were not in that field. I have the skill set and I know the value of hard work. That was taught to me. Being the only woman on the construction site, I learned to develop very thick skin. Not only did I get the cat-calls, but... it felt very threatening... I probably wouldn’t have had the thick skin that I have now, had I not worked side by side with these men. My thick skin [also] comes from having to live on my own as a 16 year-old, raising kids, working, going to school, and supporting my family.

Principal Alonso stated that thick skin is needed, in particular if you are a person of color, when pursuing the principalship. Principal Alonso provided a recommendation:

As a Latina first and foremost, you have got to have some thick skin because you are going to be bombarded with stuff that other folks [non Latina] would not come into contact [in pursuit of principalship].

Principals described other careers outside education. Principal Alonzo left construction and experienced a business profession in private industry for several years. The principal

spoke about how the new work experience afforded an opportunity to learn about long-term planning, becoming results-oriented, and having a business perspective of data management. The philosophy to do what is needed for the bottom line was ingrained. Principal Alonso reported how the business accountability mentality aided in her ascension to the principalship. Principal Alonso stated:

My background in private industry taught... me about accountability. Taught me about if you do not adapt – you will die. I’ve carried those values and beliefs from my past and look at that when it comes to kids... Accountability has always been at the forefront of my mind maybe even [when I was] a lot younger when I started working. When you are accountable for other people i.e. children you understand that word pretty well. I’m really glad that I walked down my path. It afforded me a different lens to look through... In an organization, I am a really strong believer that when asked to fill a hole, gap, or need; then, you do [that].

Additionally, some principals spoke about their careers that afforded them opportunities to work with *number crunching*. Principal Reyes completed a secretary certification program and worked as a secretary at a private company. Dissatisfied and having the desire to be the boss, Principal Reyes returned to school to earn a Marketing degree and found employment in finance management. She recalled:

I got an MBA when I finished my degree in marketing. I got a job with a private [international] company [working] in the Latin American Branch. I worked in the finance department. This company helped finance my MBA.

Another participant held a position in technology and data management. Principal Alonzo’s business experience centered within the technology industry, research and

development. The principal's data analysis, technology, and computer software skills supported her efforts to pursue the principalship. Principal Alonso divulged:

There is a technical strength that I bring [into the education field]. I have the technical piece of knowing how to gather information... I've worked with researchers and scientists in the research and development area and computers...

Another first career position was held as teacher's aid, teacher, and in the banking industry, Principal Vestes worked as a high school teacher's aide while in college, then worked as a full-time teacher for two years. She left teaching and re-entered the banking industry. She also worked as a bank teller managing large quantities of funds while in college. Principal Vestes described her "path as a little curvy to get there [principal]"

I have a degree in psychology...my career goal was to be a therapist. After graduating and teaching for two more years I left [the district]... I went back into the banking industry and worked as a technical writer for [two years].

After two years working as a technical writer in the banking industry, Principal Vestes re-entered the public education and worked at a school counselor for 12 years.

Other first careers took place in the military. Principal Martina experienced a career in teaching adults prior to entering the education field K-12. The participant served as a faculty adjunct at a university teaching Spanish and traveled the world with her husband who has since retired from the military. Principal Martina spoke about the special project opportunity and volunteer experiences in the military that aided her pursuit to the principalship. She described the experience:

In the military, members become a family. Whenever you move to a different place, you do not have time to cry about it. If you got to go, you got to go running. It

becomes a community-involved project. I always volunteered and was involved with many things. So for me getting involved with school activities, and not getting paid for school duties other than teaching, is part of who I am for the previous 20 years.

Additionally, Principal Martina described her military role as a core instructor:

I have had such tremendous opportunities [in my life] to be involved with people at different levels. I have done so many exciting things that really helped me [to develop an identity]. For example, I had the opportunity to be selected for the Army Family Team Building Program. I became a core instructor at the DC level in the Department of Defense. I traveled all over the world giving seminars and working with foreign dignitaries and foreign armies and developed programs. The program that was developed for the United States allowed me to travel with The Department of State. I mean, some really neat stuff that happens once in a lifetime. All of those experiences helped to prepare me for what I am doing today.

Similarly, Principal Ramirez articulated a short stay in the military:

I made a deal with my mom; I would go to college, but when I finished I would go into the military... When she went into hospice, I left the military early. I was a *Specialty*, that's what I did, as chapel, I [escorted] people out of the military.

Principal Reyes, like Martina, traveled and was exposed to both international (Latin America and Brazil) and the United States culture. Principal Reyes speaks three languages Spanish, Portuguese, and English and experienced urban, immigrant, and middle class culture social interactions. Principal Reyes spoke about the diverse social interactions and how they supported her ascension to the principalship.

My parents are [immigrants] from another country... They are children from immigrants... I am first generation in the United States. I was born here, but I also lived in another country. I attended school [off shore and] in the United States [urban community]. My ex-husband is from a country [other than from my family's or mine]. I spent quite a lot of time in his country for several years... I am able to understand American culture. I can understand Latin culture. I can understand immigrant culture. I can understand minority culture. You know, I can be anywhere. Help anyone.

Additionally, Principal Vestes revealed that the desire to gain a broader knowledge of educational skills opened up opportunities to gain employment outside of the school district. Principal Vestes articulated how her desire to gain new employment came about:

I believed I maxed out the potential of guidance and counseling influencing students and their college going. It was clear to me that a group of students could not make that jump [graduate H.S. and enter college]. There was failure in the classroom. Their academic preparation was dependent on other factors with things I could not influence anymore. For example, like services, programs, and support systems. It was going back into the classrooms to figure out what was happening there that resulted in the grade that would not be enough for a college going option...the shift for me [changed].

Principal Vestes was recruited to work for a university in the department of Technology. This position provided training in technology, staff training, and data analysis. She worked with 23 projects experimenting with technology in the classroom. She stated:

My university job put me in a department at the district called Curriculum Improvement and Professional Development (VIDP). It was the nucleus for all of curriculum change

and the professional development of teachers... In four years, I had four different job titles each one a little bit more responsibility than the prior.

Principal Palacio left the school district when she was recruited into private industry. She revealed her experiences in private industry as strategy coach. Principal Palacio stated:

The company approached me to come on board with them and work as a strategy coach... I left the district and moved on to work with a private consulting company in education... I believed that would give me great experience. However, I told the company that as soon as I was done with my doctorate, I would seek Administrative positions. It was good experience for me to be a trainer and to work with teachers... When I look at my resume... it just goes to show my long-term vision to becoming a superintendent.

Opportunities into The Education Profession

The second sub-theme discovered through data analysis was the participants' entry into the education field. Participants in the current study believed that their skills from private industry aided and provided for them visibility in their ascension to principalship. They included: Recruitment into teaching, dissatisfaction of previous career, and dreams to teach.

Several participants divulged that their recruitment into the education profession was important, as it reaffirmed their professional attributes were valuable in their ascension to the principalship. One principal spoke about an experience that led to a career in education. Principal Alonzo continued education while working full-time. During one college course, the principal volunteered to teach a weekend workshop for the professor. Principal Alonzo was MAC certified and was experienced at teaching adults computer skills at her place of employment. She recalls:

A month or two later I received a phone call... “You know, I think you need to come and talk to the principal here, there’s a job opening up for a high school teacher. I think you’d be great at it!” I chatted with the principal... a four-hour interview!... She said, “you didn’t graduate from high school. You are going to have to get a GED. You will have five years to complete teacher courses. You will need to work on your Bachelor’s degree. There will be a lot of hoops that you will have to jump through. Are you willing to do that?” I said, “Sure.”... Little did I know back then that I would have continued... to complete my Ph.D

Participants found their way into education through self-initiative and utilized their professional skills in their pursuit to the principalship. Principal Reyes explained,

I was miserable [at my job]. My mom said, “ Well, what do you think you’ll do? When you were little you always played school. I think you should do what you loved as a child.” I said, “Okay, that is a good idea.”... someone... said, “you can do this -- you can take a test if you get hired. They will let you do an alternative certification [while you work].” I said, ‘That sounds interesting as long as I am working.’... I began calling the schools in the phone book, A through Z. This is not the way you are supposed to do it. You are supposed to go to the district; and put in your application. I just did what I thought was right. I called the schools.

...

I believed I could [teach] English or Math in middle school. I called middle schools [and asked about] ‘... openings in English or Math?’ They said, “No. What do you have? What can you teach?” I said, “I called to see what you have openings [in]”

...[They asked] “What do you teach? “ I said, “English or Math.” She said, “Well no.”

I said, “Well, what do you have an opening in?” They said, “We are going to have someone retiring... but she is a business teacher.” I said, “Oh my gosh. This is me! You need me at this school because I have a Business degree.”... I [interviewed with]... seven people and they thought I was perfect. They called downtown, “Clear her. We want her here.” I got the job. It was amazing. It was the greatest job ever.

A concerted effort was made, Principal Vestes articulated her return to the education field:

I knew being with youth was definitely for me... [I returned to my home state]... I spent the summer there, knowing I was going to make my way up [north]... When I got there, it took me about 6-8 months... to get back into education... I just took a bunch of part-time jobs... I got my first job as a high school counselor when I was 26... It was a really needy school... a tough area and I loved it... It was a place where you... had opportunity to make a change to impact the lives of young people.

In regards to childhood dreams, two participants found their way into the education field by following girlhood dreams. Principal Martina revealed that after her husband retired, she sought a career path. By then she had many years teaching Spanish to adults at the university level. She described her experience entering education K-12:

I always knew I wanted to be a teacher since I was a little girl. I had imaginary students, crazy right? That was very clear to me from the get go. I belonged in the [education field] – as a teacher... I enrolled in summer school, and I had nothing [else] to do. I was reading the paper [one day], and I [saw] an advertisement for a position as a high school teacher in a Catholic high school... So, I applied for it. To my surprise, I was offered the job. The school also [offered me the position of] Department Chair for the Language Department... I taught Spanish for one year at the school.

Similarly, Principal Ramirez revealed she wanted to serve as teacher and that her parents encouraged the profession. The Principal described her exit from military in search of educational pursuits and researched schools impacting Latino kids. She recalled:

I researched on line [schools impacting Latino kids] and learned of two ladies... doing wonderful things with ESL kids. They had an extremely high graduation rate and low dropout rate compared to the rest of the country. They had a graduation rate of 89%! That was unheard of. I really honed in on it. I wanted to be where people were doing good things. I didn't exactly know why they were doing well. I just wanted to be there... I started looking for a place to live in that city. I didn't have a job. I just decided to go for it. My mom and dad had passed away. For the first time in my life, I felt like I was making decisions for me...I don't want to say that they held me back because that is not what I mean. I didn't have a reason not to just look out for me. I moved there. I had saved money.

...

I went to a Kinkos and spent the whole day typing up some resumes. I started driving around town looking at an old school map. I went to the schools where I thought there were openings. I definitely went to the high school where those two ladies worked. I don't know if it was luck. I don't know if it was destiny, but I got there May 31st, and by June 6th, I had a letter of intent. That is how fast the turn around was. I immediately received calls from an elementary school, two middle schools and a high school.

Three principals entered into the education field as college students while working part-time as teacher assistants, which led into fulltime jobs. Principal Palacio reported:

I had a part-time job tutoring at a high school. I really liked the age group. I liked

these kids. I liked those interactions... [However], my brother was a force and suggested I had to do what he wanted me to do, but I realized that I wanted to teach and work with students. I graduated and earned my degree in Biology, but I did not pursue medical school...I drove down to see my parents...I said, “Mom... I don’t want to disappoint you, but I don’t want to go to medical school. I think I want to teach... do something in education.”

Likewise, Principal Vestes described how she first entered public education.

I was working at a bank and attending college. My hours at the bank were not enough to [pay for] a college trip [to Europe]. So I applied for a job as an instructional assistant. That is where I had a shift. I moved over to be a night student [and worked] at the high school during the day... That is what put me into high school education for the first time...I was helping in the Algebra class and I really loved it... It was right then that I [thought] this is potentially something for me. It took year to make a decision... to switch over to become a teacher...

Dissimilarly, Principal Oscar articulated:

Did I ever think about being a teacher? No. In fact, I went to college and wanted to become a doctor. Until I got into the higher level of science, I realized I couldn’t handle it. I found History as a major and I loved all those courses. I thought teaching would be a good profession.... I literally graduated from college on a Sunday and had my first interview and got the job on Monday. Yes, I’ve been lucky.

Summary of Diverse Career Background

The current research data analyzed demonstrated that there were factors that led to the representation of Latina women high school principals. The participants experienced

professional careers and opportunities into the education profession. Most principals experienced a second career in their late twenties entering the education field. The data did not suggest that the geographical location of the participants prevented them from having the same experiences entering education as a second career. The data suggested that most Latina participants did not pursue the role of principal upon entry into the education field. The Latina women were well received into the education field by supervisors and no barriers encountered. Their experiences aided their ascension to the principalship.

High Achieving Teachers

In response to the central research question guiding this study, How do Latina women describe their ‘lived-experiences’ while navigating their career paths into public high school principalship?, a third theme , High Achieving Teachers, emerged from the data as Latina principals navigated a career path to the principalship. Each Latina woman held high expectations for students and self and took on more responsibilities, which influenced their ascension to high school principalship.

The three sub-themes were:

- Teaching approaches are strategies used in the classroom to ensure students received a good education employed by Latina women ascending into high school principalship.
- Advancement is mobility into a leadership position or positions that require increased responsibilities compared to teacher responsibilities.

During the interviews, Latina women participants described unique experiences as teachers having high achievement that led them into positions as high school principals.

Conversations divulged information regarding the principals’ motivation to effectively learn

teaching strategies. In addition, the Participants spoke on their advancement into teacher lead positions that led them to a path of high school principal. Participants also described their desire to see students succeed attributed to their rise to principalship.

Participants spoke about wanting to do the best and having high expectations for children. Participants believed it was important for them to represent children in this way in order to become a high school principal. Conversations revealed information about the principals' teaching approaches that led them to a path of high school principal. Data support the claim that high achieving teachers aided in their ascension to the role of principal.

Latina women participants described experiences of measuring student outcomes with data management, having high expectation for their students, and teaching Core-curriculum was initiated in the classroom by many of the Latina women participants. The participants spoke about their desire for students to meet state standard benchmarks. One participant gave specific information about how her college education trained her to ensure student-learning progress through data analysis. Principal Maldon stated:

I believe that [my skills] come from [my college education]... It was a program that was very data driven. They relied on research-based strategies for perspective to make sure that students were making progress.

Similarly, Principal Oscar described experiences of how good teaching was displayed using core curriculum with components to research-based strategies. Principal Oscar was known as an effective teacher and was encouraged to share her seven components of good teaching.

Learning objectives: Are the learning objectives very clear to students? ...I ask kids, "What are you learning?" They have to be able to articulate to me what they are learning and how they know it, not what they're doing. They can tell me they are

working on a worksheet or we are taking notes about, regarding the content that they are learning. I make sure that it states all of our standards for our state. The standards for the grade determine the level that the kids are in. (2) I look at the instructional strategy that teachers are using for that work. I look at Marzano's – all of his instructional practices...I also look at our AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) strategies...(3) I look at the level of rigor – the higher level thinking that's happening...Is it analysis thinking evaluation, or is it more application, or is it knowledge comprehension? (4) I also look at the different checking [points] for understanding assessment strategy that teachers use. Are they frequently checking for understanding? Are they moving through the room checking for understanding? Are they asking non-volunteers? Are they always just asking questions to whoever wants to respond – your professional participants in the classroom? (5) I look at the learning environment - physically and emotionally. Is it a safe place to learn physically and emotionally? Is it free from ridicule – free from sarcasm? That is like a total non-negotiable... (6) Are the walls demonstrating what the teacher is teaching - what the students are learning. Is it validating student work efforts by posting the students' work? (7) Student Engagement. Is the teacher doing most of the talking or is the teacher giving a little bit of the information? Is the student processing the information? Is it student centered? Are there cooperative learning opportunities? Are there collaborative partner opportunities...?

Principal Alonzo revealed in conversation about the teaching strategy she believed was effective in her classroom when teaching technology to high school students. Principal

Alonzo spoke about the experiences of transferring skills from adult teaching to student teaching bringing real life stories into the classroom.

[Students] had to understand circuitry... That part was not a foreign concept to me.

The notion of training adults and transferring those skills to high school students was...

[not a] difficult transition as most people thought it would be. It was very different

from adults, but I think it was the way I approached it... The layout [was to]

continuously relate and make the classroom meaningful to what is expected out there in

the [world]. I had [real life] stories to share about what was expected in the work place.

I brought that into the classroom. I think the [kids] appreciated that. The transition for

me was easy. I just fell in love with teaching.

Principal Oscar spoke about experiences of high expectations for self, students, teachers.

My expectation for myself as a teacher was always, if I hold my kids for high

expectations and do a really good job of teaching and supporting their success, they will

be successful... I am very clear with what teaching looks like; and I expect that of all

teachers and support that. Then our students will be successful.

Principal Oscar further stated expectations held for teachers who teach English learners.

I do not like teachers who are sarcastic in class, especially with our school being high

economically disadvantage [with] lots of long-term English Learners who don't get

sarcasm. I can't stand it...

Principal Alonzo revealed experiences about her motivation to learn lesson plan designs and instructional theory while working as a first year teacher. She was open to learn lesson plan strategies to maximize student learning. Although established teachers opposed the

training intrusion, Principal Alonzo was eager to receive critical teacher training to better serve the needs of her students. Principal Alonzo recalled:

Madeline Hunter is famous for lesson plan designs, instructional theory, and what closer is... I was from the private industry [and] didn't know [her]. She came out to visit my principal... during my first year as a teacher... [The principal] brought her into my classroom and introduced her...[and said,] "...She would like to observe your classroom for the next week... If you don't mind, she can give you pointers." I said, "Sure!" I didn't know that [teachers] were opposed to having people videotape... or observe you as a teacher... I truly thought of it as support.

Principal Reyes spoke about an experience as a first year teacher in her first full-time permanent position. The teaching position was not traditional and required a two-year contract to work with the same set of students. The first year was discouraging, but she maintained her teaching responsibilities and served to act as role model for the betterment of the students. Principal Reyes served unmotivated male teenagers. She recalled:

I worked with dropout prevention boys between the ages 13-16 in 7th and 8th grade. It was a monstrosity of an assignment for a first year teacher. I was frustrated. I wrote a contract. I made them sign the contract and I signed it. I said, "as your teacher, I am going to give you this [teaching]. As my students, you are suppose to do this." There was this boy, who was the worst, most misbehaved, most belligerent. He would lie on the floor, would not turn in work. Three weeks into the year, I'm like, "I'm out of here. I am so way gone, thank you so very much. This has been the worst." The boy said to me, "But, Ms., you signed a contract, you're supposed to be our teacher all year." In tears, I called the other school that I loved... , and I say, "I have a responsibility [and

unable to accept the position]. I have to be a role model. I have to stay at this site.” I stayed at the site for 6 years.

Participants in the current study revealed how advancing into other positions within their education career was essential for becoming a high school principal. Advancement into a leader position that required increased responsibilities was a process for succeeding a position as high school principal. They included positions as department chair, curriculum instruction, counselor, and vice principal.

Principal Ramirez articulated experiences being recruited to take on additional responsibilities while maintaining role of teacher. Principal Ramirez stated:

My second year of teaching, the assistant principal said, “... you are a leader.” I became the Department Head my third year of teaching. In my 4th year, I became the Coordinator of Academy.

Prior to being recruited as an Education Coach Consultant with a private company, Principal Palacio spoke about experiences of setting goals to become a principal and how that led the mobility from teacher to teacher trainer. Principal Palacio stated:

I had been teaching one year before I started the administrator’s program... I thought about being a principal [while] teaching... I taught honors biology, regular biology, and biology for English learners. I always liked interactions with kids [and] wanted to make school life changes. I... worked with the [curriculum] development piece in the district. That’s how I began working with the teacher of Special Assignments. When I started the doctorate program..., that’s when I absolutely knew... I wanted to be a principal.

Principal Alonzo illuminated experiences of motivated efforts to bring computer resources into her classroom, which resulted in a partnership with a computer company. In the second year as teacher, Principal Alonzo organized a business venture for technology used in her classroom. Eventually, the partnership grew district-wide to provide a technology infrastructure for all schools in the district. As a result, Principal Alonzo was recruited to a district-wide committee while serving as teacher.

Company X, at that time, was located... close enough where I could join ranks with them. Having my background knowledge and the people I knew in the technology sector, I made some phone calls and formed a partnership. My superintendent heard about [it]. [and] she said, "We have to do something district wide... to bring to the schools... infrastructure and technological planning for teachers." The next thing you know, I was a part of a committee. There were about a dozen of us... to... plan [for] technology in the classes. Within those five years I was part of that team... I helped co-author a grant... to bring technology into the classrooms and the infrastructure that was needed. I was there for five years [and] was asked to present at different conferences.

Similarly, Principal Oscar described experiences serving in teacher lead positions in curriculum while working as teacher. These roles offered opportunities to share her teaching strategies to other teachers. In these roles, she also learned different facets of education. Principal Oscar wanted to further impact student learning outside of her classroom. She wanted to interact with staff beyond her department. Principal Oscar recalled:

Some positions [in our district] are pay assignments. One of them is called Curriculum Coordinator. It's an Assistant to the Assistant Principal of Curriculum. I served in that

role for two years. I helped them support teachers who were teaching honors. In the 90s, we did some work when the standards were new and developed curriculum and curriculum writing for projects between English and Social Studies teachers. I took a lead role in that work. I also served as a Roster Accreditation Sub Study Coordinator. That gave me the opportunity to have a better sense in what happens in other teachers' classes as we got ready for that accreditation process. Those are two key teacher leader roles that I had before I became an Assistant Principal. I wanted to have more impact outside of just what was happening inside of my classroom. It allowed me to share what I was doing, but also have interaction with the people beyond my department.

Likewise, Principal Alonzo divulged experiences about being recruited into another position.

The Department Chair [and principal] approached me during a conference I attended... and wanted to know if I was interested in being recruited... to their brand new school to create [a technology] lab set up in the classroom... They wanted... a freshman transition class and wanted to add other components. At [that] point, I could do that. I was recruited. Stayed for six years before I went into counseling and administration... I became the Department Chair... I was still a tech teacher...

Also encouraged to take a lead role, Principal Maldon stated that her assistant principal:

Wanted me to be the Administration Chair. After two years, I became Department Chair... The faculty asked me if I wanted to pursue my Doctorate degree. At that time, I said, 'Yes.'

Principal Maldon received her administrative credentials and Doctorate, then, moved out of state. At a new teaching job, Principal Maldon described how a supervisor recruited her to the role of assistant principal. She commented:

My family moved back to our home state. I taught Special Education for a month when I was asked by the principal to serve as [AP]... I worked as an Assistant Principal until he promoted me to the Assistant Principal position [officially] that year... [After serving as AP]...it was easy for me to get these positions.

Similarly, Principal Ramirez articulated an experience of serving as principal before formally earning the title. She recalled:

[Our new interim principal] came to me and said, “You know, you helped me a tremendous amount. [Now] I come to you. Would you be willing to be an assistant principal paid at a teacher’s salary to work in the office with administrative duties until you take your test?” That summer, I was promoted into that assistant principalship position at that same campus. [Later] I was [recruited] to be part of a restructuring team [to reorganize a school that] was in stage two year two AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress).

Likewise, Principal Alonzo described the encouragement and recruitment received to apply for the role of assistant principal. The Principal believed that her educational path was not as common as most other people. She revealed:

A principal was looking for an assistant principal. He was methodical about the team he was putting together. My principal said, “You need to go do [this]...you’ve done a great job here. You can move on now.” This is what he told me.... I was recruited as an AP and was part of a brand new team. I was there for three years.

Principal Alonzo further spoke about experiences as vice principal for the district working with teachers at different schools. Principal Alonzo described how she assisted teachers with accountability measures and core academics. She stated:

I began educating [teachers with strategies on how to] delve into their curriculum, view the current standards, know what standards aligned to the core academics, and how [to] utilize their classes to support the core academics.

Principal Oscar articulated her experiences, as she was encouraged to apply for the assistant principal position. Principal Oscar stated:

My principal thought I was very articulate. She thought I was smart. She liked what was happening in my classroom. I communicated well what our vision for our district was. I think that made her say, “I was a team player.” All of those factors resulted in her wanting to support my success... I definitely was encouraged by the site leadership here to apply for those [leadership] positions. [I recall] the principal and the assistant principal encouraged me to apply [for assistant principal position]. I was an assistant principal for four years.

Principal Martina echoed similar sentiments. Principal Martina described the experience of being recruited to a position of assistant principal. She stated:

[My career] kind of happened by accident. Somebody saw something in me [skills compatible to that of principal]... [One day] the principal called me into her office. She began telling me of all these accolades about my skills in leadership and in communication and how I build strong relationships [with] students and with their parents. She spoke about how involved I was in the community. After [providing] these accolades, she said, “The assistant principal position [discipline] is open... I would like for you to apply for it.”

In contrast, Principal Vestes was not recruited from teacher to assistant principal; she was recruited into a university position jointly working with multiple public schools. Principal

Vestes left her career that included much travel and believed her “career was really prepared well by a lot of strong women.” Principal Vestes believed she was experienced enough to work as an assistant principal and applied for that role at a public high school. Principal Vestes worked many years in high school as teacher, counselor, and in curriculum instruction and found it easy to gain the position of assistant principal. Principal Vestes was surprised to learn of her status as trailblazer. She stated:

I was the first Latina [assistant] principal at the High School [prestigious and predominantly White enrollment].

Principal Reyes described a similar circumstance. She was not recruited as assistant principal from a teaching position. When she completed the Specialist Degree, she applied for the position of assistant principal. She quickly landed four interviews. Principal Reyes commented:

I was lucky. I got four interviews. At the second interview, I got a position.

In contrast, Principal Palacio described a path that centered on personal initiative to the principal position. She applied multiple times to gain a position as assistant principal. After completing her teacher credential and Doctorate, she applied for many positions as high school principal. Principal Palacio stated:

Every step of the way I heard a lot of no’s before I reached all... positions [and it did not stop me from pursuing my goals].

Summary of High Achieving Teachers

An analysis of the current research data demonstrated that the participants were teachers who focused on demonstrating high achievement (i.e. managing additional responsibilities in curriculum instruction) that lead to their ascension to the principalship.

The participants experienced teaching approaches and advancement in their career paths. Some Latina women principals incorporated professional skills from previous experiences into the classroom in their ascension to the position of principal. Participants accepted leadership positions that required increased responsibilities to improve students' academic achievements beyond their classrooms. The data suggested that the participants pursued advance mobility for the purpose of gaining increased skills and understanding of other education facets to better educate children. The data suggested that the participants demonstrated high achievement as teachers, which led to the role of vice principal, and then the principalship.

Professional Leadership Initiatives

In response to the central research question guiding this study, How do Latina women describe their 'lived-experiences' while navigating their career paths into public high school principalship?, the data revealed a fourth theme, Professional Leadership Initiatives. During the interviews, Latina women participants described unique experiences that led them into positions as high school principals. Conversations divulged information about the principals' professional leadership initiatives that illuminated Latina women's capabilities, responsibilities, capacities and data management skills in their rise to high school principal positions.

The sub-themes were:

- Data management is a tool used by Latina participants to improve student achievement and to illuminate other issues needing attention.
- Accomplishments were programs, school or district wide initiatives, lead by Latina women ascending into high school principalship.

- Challenges were experiences with school or family that prevented a smooth path to high school principalship for Latina women participants.
- Support systems were mentors, professional membership, and family experienced by Latina women participants in their rise to the principalship.

Data Analysis

All but one participant spoke about experiences with data analysis as a strength and strategy in their ascension to the principalship. The participants disclosed experiences of being engaged with the learning of and usage of data analysis with their supervisors in their pursuit of the principalship. The participants saw the data tool as an aide in their rise to principal leadership. Principals described the importance of data management and the ability to analyze the data utilized for school improvement, student achievement, and test score improvement. Principal Maldon stated how she used data tools for accountability:

The consistency that I have with accountability and research-based methodology is key to the success of my leadership... In tough times, I saw that through implementing what I had learned was an effective way of managing data. I believe that is the reason I have turned around four different schools and why the superintendent recruited me to the high school.

Similarly, Principal Oscar articulated how the AVID program helped her to understand data management for accountability measures and decision-making. Principal Oscar commented:

It has really helped me unpack our data a lot more and to make decisions based on that... I have high expectations [of] the teachers and I measure it. Making sure that teachers know each year what those measurements are. Getting rid of barriers, like

science classes for all 9th graders that were not college prep, and... [enrolling] nearly all except the most at-risk, into a biology class as freshman.

Principal Oscar further spoke about her ability to easily interpret data with multiple parts and identify problems in order to bring about change:

I am very driven. I can look at a problem that has multiple parts... and identify the key areas right away - where we can address the problem; find the solution; implement the solution; and bring about change.

Similarly, Principal Reyes spoke about instead of attending cohort monthly meetings to gain a principalship position; she learned how to read data. Principal Reyes used data for leadership decision-making. She stated:

I look at the data and try to figure out which teachers are doing the best jobs; what are the right questions to ask when we get information on the course exams; how do we look at these as bench-mark points; how do we grow from that; what do we spend our resources on; what's working what's not... I enjoy the data part.

Likewise, Principal Vestes relied heavily on data tools. She disseminated data to teachers for learning, accountability, and decision-making.

Accomplishments

Participants in the current study revealed how soaring accomplishments were an important aspect of the process for reaching the position of high school principal. The Principals in the current study described the results of their accomplishments in their ascension to the position of high school principal. The accomplishments included: funding, graduation rate, college enrollment, state test scores, recognition, academic improvement,

exiting unproductive teachers, parent involvement, building business partnerships and changing school culture.

The data revealed that the principals' accomplishments benefited the school in many ways and defined Latina woman as capable in their capacity to lead in high schools as principals. Principal Vestes spoke about the experience of writing a grant for school technology funds.

I was involved in writing a [3 million dollar] grant for math, science, and technology. I was the technology lead [and managed] a third of the grant...[I was partly responsible for] developing a website that shared standard base.

Similarly, Principal Reyes articulated an experience of gaining funding for the school. The Principal took a slightly different approach and explained how she accomplished gaining government funds through marketing and recognition of school progress. Recognition of schools is dependent on requirements of data showing student test scores, teacher performance, and school improvement. Principal Reyes spoke about making application for the program, Inspiration Award from the College Board.

We won the Inspiration Award as a school. I can't take credit for it. I just looked at the data report. The administrators and teachers had done the work before I got there or I wouldn't have been able to report the data [on increased test scores and increased college going]. At the same time nobody had done the work [for the grant]. So, I am going to take a bit of credit for that for wanting to promote my school and show them off. I talked to my students before it happened. I went on the announcements and when we made it as the finalist, I told them, we are 1 of 6 in the nation. And you guys should be so proud. It's my first year there [as principal].

Likewise, Principal Alonzo, revealed an experience of grant writing. She stated:

I wrote a grant for \$300,000 [while serving as] a school counselor.

On another note, Principal Oscar spoke proudly about student academic achievement at her high school.

I will share...the academic [successes]... I want for my kids here at the school what I want for my own children. I want them to graduate from our high school, go to a four-year university, [and] meet the college prep requirement for a four-year university.

When I got here we were at just over 35% of students who were graduating from school and had met the requirements to go straight to a 4-year university... It's a huge measure for us – and right now, we are just under 53% of our seniors who graduate and are illegible. [They] have completed with Cs or better with the classes [needed] to go to a 4-year university.

Similarly, Principal Maldon commented:

I...coordinated the assessment that was given to the students to make sure that they were making the progress needed. I was an assistant principal [at the time]. The principal...made sure that [I had freedom to lead]...[when] I went to high school #1, and [when I went to] high school #2, state assessment scores went up 10-20 points at each subject area... I went to a middle school and the last year that I was there, test scores went up 13 and 14 points in math and reading... I am at High School #3 [currently], and reading scores jumped up 17 points on the State Knowledge Concepts Examination (SKCE), and almost 10 points in math, almost 10 points in science, and 7 points in language arts and social studies.

Principal Oscar also spoke about an experience preparing kids for college. She implemented the program AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) in her school and used the AVID strategies as tools to increase academic achievement and college readiness. The Principal trained 4 or 5 of teacher leaders to train teachers on the AVID program. Principal Oscar is an advocate and supporter of the AVID Program. She stated:

AVID is a non-profit organization. They have been in existence for about 30 years. It started in San Diego and it is a class. It is an elective class in the student's day for all four years of high school. It is to prepare them to go to college. The writing, the inquiry, the collaboration, the reading, and the organization skills you need to be successful in college...

Principal Vestes articulated a similar academic success story about student outcome.

As I evolved as a counselor, I really started to hone in on college going and my principal gave me the role to do so. She really gave me free reign to develop a college going culture in that school as I thought [and] as I imagined it. We had really good success. Incredible success with college admissions with high numbers of kids going on to colleges across several years for city schools. It was pretty rewarding and wonderful.

Principal Maldon explained how she transferred knowledge of best practice teaching approaches to the teaching staff for improved instructional methods using the common core standards to increase test scores. She stated:

I directed the teachers to start looking at their state standards. We have the common core standards. I requested they do a pacing chart. They began teaching or re-teaching the standards. I had them work on common assessments. I had them look at and

analyze how the kids were doing on each assessment. I had them [review] their instructional methods that they were using. I had them work on classroom management skills. I had them basically look at the relationships they had with kids because that says a whole lot about teachers and how well the students are going to be in the classroom.

Principal Alonzo noted the recognition placed on her school derived from her efforts,

When we won, we had a big show in the auditorium...there were 800 students and community members in the auditorium. People came from New York and the College Board Organization. The superintendent said, "It's pretty amazing what you mean to these kids, and you have been here since July...the mayor of our city declared it, '(our city name) High School Day.' My first year was very exciting. If you go to CollegeBoard.com or org you can read about the prize, the school, and see the pictures and the staff... [Another program...] Nobody wanted to do *Kids of Character*. I turned it into a full program. We were on television. The school had the program before, but nobody did anything with it.

Principal Reyes continued, "I want my school to be recognized. I want my kids to be recognized." She further echoed a similar success with programs to prepare kids for college:

I met with the Hispanic kids. We did a Multicultural and International fair. I managed world languages. We created a club called, Promoting Relationships and Diversity Through Education. Part of our goal was to educate the recent immigrants on the educational system in America, since they didn't know about credit or GPA or any thing on how to get into college. It is very different in South American and Latin

America, the whole continent, that program did extremely well. We got written up [in city news papers]. My kids received wonderful scholarships based on those programs. Principal Reyes further spoke about meeting the academic needs for at-risk kids. Her favorite accomplishment as AP was filling a school need for an ignored population, at-risk Latino boys. Principal Palacio spoke about the rewarding experience:

Although I left at the end of the year, I made sure that everything was set up to be carried on by staff after I left. At the end of first semester in January, the staff emailed me the results of the kids' progress. That was just amazing to me. Those are just the experiences of why I like being a principal. I was an assistant principal [at the time]. That's what makes everything very rewarding... Similar to the question on the critical survey...we developed a program for at-risk Latino boys. We created an academy.

Principal Oscar described teaching approaches important for student academic improvement. As lead teacher, she assisted other teachers with improved teaching strategies. Principal Oscar revealed:

I helped support teachers who were teaching honors. Back in the 90s, we did some work when the standards were new in my state. We developed curriculum and curriculum writing for projects between the English and Social Studies teachers... I wanted to have more of an impact outside of just what was happening inside of my classroom. [My position as teacher leader] allowed me to share what I was doing, but also have interaction with the people beyond my department.

Another form of accomplishment, Principal Oscar spoke about an experience of removing unproductive teachers who did not provide good instruction. She stated, "I am super clear

about what good instruction looks like and what my expectations are in the classroom and out of the classroom.”

If teachers aren’t meeting those expectations, then I have no problem confronting that and supporting them or moving them out of our school. A couple [of teachers] have moved out – because they were not tenured in our district; some, I have moved into the ‘Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory Evaluation Process’, and they actually left our district; some have retired; and others have chosen to transfer to other schools thinking that it was just me, that I was just picking on them. Now they’re realizing at their new schools, it wasn’t just me.

Principal Reyes, like Principal Oscar, has high expectation of teachers. When teachers are not performing or fail to improve, they are asked to find a new profession and are exited out of the building. Principal Reyes reported that she was successful at moving out unproductive teachers throughout her years as assistant principal. Principal Alonso made similar sentiments and indicated that she gained the reputation as change agent because she was able to exit unproductive teachers from several schools.

Principal Oscar spoke about parent involvement in the school. The Principal supported and encouraged parent participation and provided a parent center. She explained:

Three years ago we created on campus, a parent center. We actually have a classroom dedicated for parent learning. We have computers in there with Rosetta Stone. One of our parents...is supported by a non-profit organization. She is here...to provide parents with information. We have parent socials and a variety of parent meetings to share information, hear from them, and to encourage them to participate in the instructional process... All of our meetings are held at night, late afternoon and late into the evening.

Similarly, Principal Alonzo revealed her advocacy for parental support. She stated:

Whatever they can give, you accept. When I started in September [as principal]... one of the first things I did was coordinate a parent night for ELLs...one that was separate from the regular parent night. I did that for my Special Ed students, as well. For the ELLs, we only had 8 parents. I launched a campaign to get the parents more involved... we had meetings every month. By the time I left, we had the meetings in the library rotunda because there was standing room only.

Likewise, Principal Vestes divulged in conversation the bilingual parent and student achievement event that she and staff members coordinated for the high school. It was the first time in the school and the community's history for this event. The event was well received by the parents. She stated:

This year we did a Latino achievement night last month and it was the first time even for this school... and... the first time in this community having a recognition for a student group [identified] by ethnicity.... What was reinforced is the work I need to do, and that is the family. Parents had a profound reaction. At the end of the evening, they were thanking me in Spanish and in English. They were expressing things like: "wow, I never knew there were so many Latinos in the school. I never knew there were this many folks who spoke Spanish. I want to be connected with these people. I see in your school there are people I can actually talk to."

Principal Ramirez articulated an experience about the recruitment of parent volunteers. She attributed the success of recruiting over 300 parent volunteers to her strengths of understanding diverse communities, having empathy for diversity and speaking to the parents in their native language. In the interest of kids, she stated:

I have a vested interest in making sure that all kids are successful... I am able to speak to parents in their native language [Spanish], make them feel comfortable, and I encourage them to come into the school willing to help us. That is a skill set I have that is offered to the majority of our parents who do not speak English.

Another form of accomplishment that extended outside of the classroom, Principal Vestes spoke about building relationships with the university and school districts in the city.

Principal Vestes noted how she was recognized as a person who gets things done by her principal, school, and the community. She said, “I was identified as somebody who kind of made things happen in high schools. I bridged professors and their [technology in the classroom] research with teachers who wanted to use the tools that these professors were developing.”

Principal Alonzo also articulated an experience about how she bridged the city’s school district with a technology company for technology services.

Changing school culture by changing teachers and students was another accomplishment. Principal Maldon shared an experience about changing her school culture and climate from out of control to manageable. She attributed part of her success to the passion, enjoyment and love she has for kids, teachers and parents. Principal Maldon spoke about the rewarding experience of changing school climate:

I first started [at a high school] that was totally out of control. There were riots in the school. The kids were very dangerous. The teachers’ effectiveness of being effective was very low. Parent involvement was very low. I had to do a lot of work to turn that school around. Within the five years, [as AP] in charge of the safety of the building... I was able to change the culture and the climate of the school. People [behaved] more

professionally with each other. Students were more respectful to the teachers and adults.... Crime in school decreased... The parents have become more involved at schools that I have been at... Graduation has gone up. The numbers of kids that have taken advance classes have gone up... It just does not happen over night. You have to have a plan.

In the same way, Principal Oscar described an experience about school culture and climate change. The principal was assigned to the school to change the current status and make improvements. She spoke about her favorite success in terms of physically cleaning the campus. It was described as filthy with gum and trash. Custodians worked hours to clean up trash after lunch breaks. The Principal believed teaching kids to have pride in their schools would transfer into the classroom. Principal Oscar stated:

We had a new administrative team. I bought...[for] the custodians – trash bags, trash pickers, and gum scrappers. Everyday at nutrition and lunch, part of our [administration] visibility was, we were out on the campus from the moment the kids were out at nutrition and lunch, throughout. We picked up trash. We were in conversation and we interacted with the kids. By the time the lunch was over [there was no trash]. Over the last four years, that process has become much better...By the end of lunch there is virtually no trash anywhere on the campus. That tells me that you have pride in your school and you have the culture of what we expect. That transfers into the classroom and the expectations we have for them in the classroom.

Principal Oscar further revealed a key problem about the students' lack of discipline and self-management. She provided an example of student management and how student behavior changed and how the problem was resolved with the help of the administrative team. She

stated, “I have a great administrative team who were all strong teachers. They helped monitor and manage our expectations.”

Principal Oscar continued:

There was passive-aggressive behaviors and disengagement in the classroom. For instance, there were students who had headphones in their ears and heads down in classrooms. There were some behavior issues... We recognized right away that this headphone issue was going to be a problem, and would be an opportunity to disengage. We made a rule, “no headphones on the campus” from the moment school starts until the end of the day. It basically renders their music. They can’t listen to it. At lunch-time if they want to play their music for their friends – that’s fine, but we don’t want them to be isolated and disengaged from each other. We want them to be at nutrition and lunch talking to one another and engaging in discourse not being isolated away from each other.

Principal Vestes also commented on how she influenced a change in school culture.

I encouraged people to recognize that White middle class kids do not populate schools; therefore, we must make change. Make change for those we are serving. The way that I approached it is... I took all the learning I had and applied them. I started with data, looked at it, presented, talked about these things that I saw or encouraged people to come up with their own conclusion about what they saw, so that we have this frame of reference that do not allow us to forget about the kids we serve. It’s constantly throwing out the information that forces us to deal with this conversation, then talking about or presenting the ideas like the RIE program, our advanced placement program. Is it enough? Who’s in it? What are we offering? How are we supporting students?

What do we think about after access and those types of questions? So throwing out a lot of different ideas that effect that kind of influence or reveal our culture and our belief system and getting more and more teachers over from small groups.

Challenges

Another sub-theme uncovered through an analysis of data was challenges. The participants spoke about challenging experiences they encountered during their pursuit of the high school principalship. Most experiences occurred prior to the ascension into the role of high school principal, but some challenges were experienced during the first year working as high school principal. They included: staff termination, staff questioning principals' credibility, and staff resistance.

In regard to staff termination, one participant wrote a critical incident survey about a challenge regarding staff member insubordination and the lack of support received from superiors. The principal felt betrayed and found the incident distressing and believed it eroded her authority as leader. Principal Martina divulged a specific example of how she experienced a challenge in route to the principalship regarding staff insubordination. She wrote a letter of reprimand to a staff member for answering a cell phone while proctoring a test. While serving the letter of reprimand, Principal Martina stated,

The person became... disrespectful and insubordinate [and] refused to talk to me and... met with the principal... She requested I not supervise her any longer, as she feared I would continue retaliating against her... She claimed I did not have credentials, training, or experience to supervise her... she would not acknowledge my authority.

Principal Martina explained it was tough dealing with the situation as a young assistant principal not having authority to reprimand, especially when having authority to manage other school responsibilities as a principal. A grievance was filed.

She immediately filed a grievance against me. My principal and Dean decided to honor her request, even though they claimed disagreement with her claims. As a remedy for her grievance, I was not allowed to take any action for her insubordination...I was directed to retract the letter of reprimand... the Dean did not want to deal with the aftermath... To me that was it! If they cannot have the integrity to uphold what is right, then “why should I work here!”

Principal Martina further stated how the incident was reason to quit as assistant principal:

I felt that I was not validated as an administrator. I believed that my authority was eroded in such a way that no matter what I was to do after that, I would not have been able to gain the respect that I was entitled to. I was not willing to compromise my integrity for that position, [regarding] my responsibilities...

Likewise, Principal Reyes recalled a challenge involving the removal of a long-time teacher due to the teacher's unwillingness to help students. In the ascension to the principalship, Principal Reyes removed teachers who were unproductive or unwilling to do what is best for students, but admits it is a difficult thing to do. Principal Reyes was committed to removing teachers, she considered unproductive, out of the education field rather than transferring teachers out to other schools, a philosophy adopted from the movie: *Waiting For Superman*. As an assistant principal, exiting teachers out of the profession every year was echoed. Principal Reyes provided an example of exiting a 20-year-veteran teacher.

[The teacher] ... never had a bad evaluation. Everybody knew she lacked, but for two years it was not working out. She said, "I am getting a lawyer." I said, "Listen, you do what you need to do, and I am going to do what I think is right for my students." I felt blessed because the day it went... to trial...she said, "I am going to retire"... I was able to say, "Listen, I think you are a lovely person. I wish you the best. It's not personal, you just can't do this job anymore [not] here." It was hard; [no] hard feelings; [not] ugly; I always try to keep the dignity.

Principal Reyes further explained that her Latina identity is not cause for staff or school issues in the ascension to the principalship. Her Latina friend believed differently.

She is the Department Chair of Languages... She said, "They did this because we are Latinos." I said, "I didn't notice that." If they put a barrier up, I am going to go around it... I would not be happy if I constantly felt that everything went wrong because I spoke Spanish or I... looked different.

Principals Palacio, Oscar, and Maldon articulated similar sentiments when they each experienced a challenge terminating a male teacher from duties or the school site. The principals indicated each incident received negative media attention. Principal Palacio described an experience regarding the termination of the band director who at the time was a probationary teacher. The principal indicated it was a big political decision because the school supported a big band program. The principal heavily weighed two options, one to allow the teacher to be tenured and serve as band director or to live with the personal conflict of removing him. Principal Palacio spent a lot of time discussing the political decision with her superintendent. Once the pros and cons were reviewed the superintendent supported the principal's decision to remove to tackle the band director. Principal Reyes stated:

The best thing for the kids and the school was for me to let him go. That caused a big uproar with the parents. This situation defined me in regard to taking a stand... The parents were furious with me for making this decision. It was a decision that needed to be made because of his [un] professional conduct here... After that came a lot of political uproar. It was in the newspaper. [After dialoging with the parents several times in the auditorium, the situation got better several months later] A board members said, “You know what? Principal Palacio you have a lot of CHUTZPAH (courage) to do this in your first year as principal.”

Principal Oscar echoed a similar sentiment while working as principal:

The largest challenge has been [replacing] the football coach. He was a great man, individual, and human being. He was not effective as the coach. We had multiple seasons of loss...all the key components that make a program successful were not in place. Two years ago, [I had a] conversation with him, [I said], “this is what my expectations are of what successful programs do. I don’t expect you to win the lead championship every year, but I expect to go to the playoff. Here are all the factors that contribute to that.” He did not meet those [goals] a year later. I had to release the coach.

Principal Oscar continued:

I think that probably has been the hardest thing I had to do. It has caused the most high school drama.... People knew he was not a good coach. There is a lot of nepotism on our campus. There are people who are friends with or related to him... When I released him... he chose not to resign. It required me to tell him, “Well, then I am letting you

go. We are going in a different direction.” I never used the words ‘your fired’, but... that is what it was.

She further stated:

His small group of friends... used social media to blast my decision... He is also an Athletic Director, which resulted in passive-aggressive behavior on his part towards the new coach. He was slow to schedule things, slow to order equipment, and did not make sure that our field was ready to go for our first game. He did a variety of different stuff like not making sure that athletes were cleared based on our process with the organization governing body...

Principal Maldon echoed a similar sentiment, however her high school principalship ended with a job transfer to work as middle school principal. She stated:

I wrote a misconduct report on [a well liked teacher] because he was leaving the building early. It brought out real political issues [and negative publicity]... The superintendent suggested that it was best for me to [leave] XYZ High School... It became very controversial and ugly, but I had to stand on what I thought was right for the students at XYZ High School... I knew that there might be some backlash... things that might happen to me that I knew would be ethically wrong...[as] principal you have to be a risk-taker.

Principal Alonzo divulged an incident regarding having to exit multiple teachers from one school one year with the support of district personnel. Principal Alonzo believed she would take a hit, but did not realize how it would affect her role as principal. The principal held the reputation of change agent experienced in moving out unproductive teachers at other sites.

Principal Alonzo recalled:

I do believe that moving some folks out of the school was the right thing to do... The teachers' union [instilled a political reorganization] at my school and at the district office. [There were a number of dissatisfied teachers who banded together with the school union to reorganize the distribution of principals and superintendents]... When [people] cannot attack professionally, they attack you personally. [There was circulated gossip about me], for example, "the only reason that you are still here at XYZ High School is because you've been sleeping with the superintendent."... [Eventually] I was removed from the school site and offered a position at the district office and reduced of my duties.

Other challenges included school staff that questioned the principals' credibility, effectiveness and leadership capabilities. Principals divulged experiences about challenges when teachers questioned the Latina women's credibility and, at times, projected undercurrent discrimination. Principal Palacio believed her youthful appearance could have caused some skepticism, as some teachers viewed her to be inexperienced based on her looks.

I don't think I am very young. The way people viewed me was a barrier when I was entering the principalship role. I was viewed as "is she experienced enough." I had to very explicitly demonstrate how effective I would be as an administrator. At first glance, people thought, well she's not an older or seasoned administrator. I really don't like using the term barrier, but I think that was just a factor.

...

Initially when I was at XYZ High School as a first time AP, I was working with teachers who were 50 plus and 60 years old. I facilitated the staff development. There

was a level of, and again this is my perception of skepticism, “who is she? She is a lot younger than I am.”... It was a primarily White staff and at the time there was an undercurrent. It’s hard to articulate very specific, I never experience very specific instances of discrimination. It always felt like an undercurrent... I think in some of the lines of questioning, I would say that it happened at XYZ High School#1 also in my initial meetings here at XYZ High School#2.

Principal Palacio further stated:

I think in terms of staff development, I got questioned about the validity of what we were doing and why we were doing it this way. I always had to be on my toes with making sure that I had the documentation, it was standard base and it was researched and vetted. I always knew I had to bring my A game. They will always question me on what I do. Even now, that is the way I feel that I always have to be in tip-top form professionally...about anything... they see.

Principal Palacio believed the challenges of being perceived as not having credibility were overcome by having education credentials, such as a Doctorate.

That gave me a piece of, “okay at least she has gone to school, so maybe she knows a little bit.” I think things would have been different if I did not have a doctorate. They are just seeing this Latina who is relatively articulate and coming in with a vision for what she wants in the classroom.

Likewise, Principal Maldon described a statement made by White male teachers and administrators who belittled her merits in the role of principal. Principal Maldon stated:

Some of the barriers that I had were individuals who thought that I was promoted too quickly. [Those individuals] had been in the [school] system for a while. They thought

their glitch might have been because I was a female and because [the district] needed more Hispanic females. [Negative] comments were made by those individuals, in regard to the fast pace that I was getting the promotions. I remember a couple of the administrators making remarks, such as “[because] I’m White and because I’m a male, I am not going to be promoted the way that you have been.” That was probably the biggest--factor that I have in regard to people making comments. When I look at those individuals, I saw that there was something lacking. It seems to me like they did not have a lot of the qualities that an effective administrator should have or they did not have the leadership qualities as teachers to become administrators. I saw it as being the bigger barrier for them. Not having the qualities one needs to be [an administrator] to be a factor.

Similarly facing staff resistance, Principal Maldon spoke about an experience regarding staff resistance as a newer high school principal. The principal had a reputation of motivating teachers and advancing student academic test scores. The principal divulged that she was able to guide teachers to revisit the core values and had them teach from that perspective. Principal Maldon disclosed that at one school staff resisted her direction.

The most challenging position that I had was at XYZ High School. The teachers thought they had [arrived at the best place with student academics]. They were comfortable [and] did not want to change. When I came in as principal, I [saw opportunity for] and wanted [academic improvement]. It was very difficult for [teachers]... [our expectations did not match] and it was very controversial.

Principal Alonzo articulated an experience about staff resistance as a new principal. She discussed how staff at the school blocked first generation students from the AVID program.

The teachers had low expectations of the first generation students and replaced them with junior and senior year students who did not qualify for the college-going program. The teachers enrolled unqualified students to promote exaggerated numbers for accountability. Staff became resistant to the principal's leadership.

[It] brought attention with leadership [and] provided backlash [when it was exposed and confirmed]... the struggle for me was to keep it on the [forefront of teachers' minds] the notion of having high expectations for the kids, having the belief that kids can do what we ask of them or set out to do.

Principal Alonzo further stated:

I think it is imperative for administrators not to let the schools [fail]. The district level [should] really keep an eye on what is going on and talk about the issues as they come rather than let them spiral [out of control]. That is what I see happen.

Principal Alonzo shared an experience about opposition from school staff upon her first day of her first assignment as high school principal. The principal indicated that bullied tactics against her began immediately. The principal met with the welcoming coalition the first day of school and they pointed out that they would not welcome her. A group of staff set out to ensure that the principal would not succeed in the school. The principal did not allow the issue to block her role and focused on leading the school. When the staff's tactics proved unsuccessful, personal attacks were made and complaints were filed to the superintendent.

Principal Alonzo stated:

A spokesperson of the welcoming committee said, "You know Dr. Alonzo we don't know you. We are just going to let you know that we don't like you, already. That is what you are up against."... [the superintendent] received reports [about me], such as: I

did not dress appropriately, I did not park my vehicle in the correct parking spot, etc...

[When reflecting on my experience], I would label it racist. They were bullied tactics.

Harassing. Absolutely. [I completed one year in the role of principal].

Similarly, Principal Vestes spoke about the difficulty of teachers who found it hard to believe in her ability as she ascended into the role of high school principal. She admitted that her approach to overcome issues of facing stereotypes was to not let stuff get her down.

Principal Vestes spoke about the first time she worked with White kids and being the only Latina administrator surrounded with few Latino teachers. She discussed comments received while holding positions as assistant principal and principal. Principal Vestes stated:

I got comments like, "I didn't know you could speak so well." There is no question the comments were stereotypical. I am often disregarded.

Principal Vestes continued:

There are stereotypes and I think people did not expect me to do [well]. For example, I talked to my head custodian last year... half way into the school year he said, "...I did not think you were going to be able to do this job. I looked at you and thought, you were too much like a woman. You were too Latina. You're kind of small... You didn't seem like the kind of person who could run the school and get people to do stuff."

Principal Vestes further stated:

I have a hard time wrapping my head around what reactions I'm getting based on the brown face vs. being a female... I think I have to kind of be open to acknowledging these communities for the staff and the parents and even the kids, I'm not something they are used to.

Principal Palacio divulged an experience about gender stereotypes provided by a Latino male mentor. The mentor was helpful guiding the principal in her ascension to the principalship. When the principal disclosed her goal to be a high school principal, the mentor discouraged it. Principal Palacio recalled:

He had been so helpful. Then he shot down my goal of becoming a high school principal. He said to me “that I would be much suited for a junior high school position, because that’s where women can be nurturing.”... I never did share with him how I felt about his comments, but I probably should have... He presented for me the perception out there what people think about female principals.

Principal Oscar revealed an experience about how teachers rumored her to have a lack of motherly duties with her own children as she displayed career aspirations.

I would say that the barrier was the preconceived notion of what a women’s role should be. There were numerous times when I would hear, “wow, she must not be a very good mom because she is more focused on her career [and] getting her doctorate...” When I was an assistant principal, there were teachers and the staff who made those kinds of comments. Never to me directly... It was a barrier in that they were influential. They were women on the campus who were connected to some of the district leadership.

Principal Oscar continued to share how her assertive and confident leadership would have been more accepted had she been male.

The other barrier I would say was the fact that I’m very assertive, very confident and so that in women tends to be taken as not necessarily good qualities to have. If you’re a man and you’re assertive that’s a good thing, but if you’re a woman and you’re

assertive then you're considered, you know... I tend to be very direct. I have to remember to build relationships first to staff.

Similarly, Principal Martina articulated an experience about how staff perceived her writing capabilities due to her language and accent,

I believe one of the issues... is [being] a Latina principal... our cultural make-up... I am a Latina.. not raised in American culture... let's put it bluntly, I have an accent when I speak. That is the first thing people notice when they hear me speak. When the teachers are submitting [my writing documents]... they often make the comment, "Well, I am going to have the teachers review it before I [return] to you. I don't know if they are implying that I am not capable...

She further stated:

I work hard, yet [when] people hear me speak, they think, "Well, she doesn't know." The stereotype is there. It is alive and is very prominent. Something that we have to learn is to develop a thick skin about it. [Stereotypes] can really hinder your opportunities... you receive from others [and] those you give yourself. It is like... your self-esteem. So what! I have an accent... That does not mean I think with an accent or that I fight with an accent. Those types of things are important for us Latina principals to deal with.

In regard to other challenges, Principals articulated the experience regarding the dress code in their ascension to the principalship. One principal spoke of an experience when her staff complained about her dress code to the superintendent. Another Principal provided a specific example regarding the dress code. Principal Vestes stated:

My White counterpart principals that I know... can get away with behavior that I could

never get away with doing. Like the way I dress. I've never dressed so informally as some of my [White] colleagues. They can go to school in tennis shoes and sweat shirts and everything is cool. I would totally not want to do that because... It wouldn't be received well... Certainly a man can dress informal... some things... for me are a little different...

Principal Martina articulated an experience,

My appearance—[can] be a little troublesome... when dealing with teenagers. I have to be very careful that they don't cross the lines. They like to make comments or look at you in a certain way. Teenagers now are bold. I have to be extra sensitive... [and be] conservative in the way I dress [professionally].

Principal Martina further stated:

Looking young and [being] an attractive Latina is also an obstacle for me, [in regard to women, parents, mothers, and teachers]... because, looking so young [parents think] that I don't know what I am talking about.

Principal Martina also spoke about an experience that delayed her ascension to high school principalship. Both the principal and her husband were raised with traditional cultural values. The principal attributes the delay to the way she was raised to first take care of her husband and raise her children. Once her husband retired and children were raised she entered a path to the principalship. She stated:

I have waited too long, [a result] of being raised... regarding family obligations... I could not be selfish about my career... I realized ...that if our marriage [and] family was to be successful, I needed to give up my career to take care of my family... And [because of] my husband's career, I had to put my career on hold for over 23 years to

raise and be there for my family.

Support Systems

Latina women participants in the current study divulged the importance of having a support system when pursuing a role as high school principal. Participants seeking the principalship described the importance of supportive systems that come in the form of mentor or professional organization membership. They also experienced support systems from family members in their ascension to the principalship. Support systems offered insight to leadership development, opportunities, training and exposure, and availability to lead without interruptions from family obligations.

Two principals benefited from statewide membership in educational leadership organizations. Principal Alonzo stated:

I am really proud and fortunate to be a part of California Association of Latino Superintendents & Administrators [CALSA]... part of their work is to groom us for a leadership role in education. We meet quarterly... and have meetings... [with] mentors and speakers. Whether it is superintendents or education law firm, we talk about current issues and how to deal with them from various perspectives.

Similarly Principal Palacio described experiences with a professional membership for leadership development. She revealed:

My support comes from the mentoring program, the professional affiliations, and relationships that I made through CALSA. They are all like-minded individuals. I developed my craft and I am able to make good decisions to be effective in what I do. I received tons of support in terms of the interview process and making good decisions in

my existing position to make sure I'm prepared for the next move. Professionally that was a huge support getting me to where I am...

Principal Ramirez articulated:

My support comes from the mentorship program... a teacher induction program in our school district that helped me a lot. One of the modules is on leadership. Some of it was reaching out and networking amongst us and helping one another. We do have an Assistant Principal Academy at the district and we meet monthly.

Likewise, Principal Palacio spoke about support from mentors:

I found in every district an informal mentor even when I was in XYZ High School. The principal and I became very close friends. ... I was able to surround myself with positive people that I could trust and bounce ideas back and forth. As I moved forward, I found individuals who were very supportive and very influential and probably pushed me, too. They made sure I made good decisions... All the superintendents are very supportive of me. It's just been a very conscious or unconscious to make sure I have positive people around me.

She continued:

I have other mentors. One in particular, he said, "I understand high school is a tough position." He gave lots of kudos and lots of encouragement. He said, "how can I support you, what do you need, even if you just need a phone call every now and then." I mean it's just so different than someone who said, "you know what, you need to stay where it is safe at a junior high school position..."

Similarly, Principal Ramirez and Principal Maldon gained most all their support from their principals and superintendents. Principal Ramirez stated:

The assistant principal and the principal were very supportive. I have a wonderful assistant superintendent and superintendent who are very supportive. The assistant superintendent is my go to [person]...

Similarly Principal Maldon stated:

I had numerous mentors. The assistant principal, he thought that I would be a good leader, and he supported all of my efforts in the school as Department Chair. My principal at XYZ High School was also a mentor. The staff that I worked with was also supportive and supported my initiatives. I found this true in all the schools that I was assigned to.

Principal Alonzo spoke about how her support began early in her career:

I have had an unprecedented [amount of] support from talented individuals from the moment I was recruited by my principal. She is a person I call mentor. We get together annually or bi-annually and stay in each other's lives. She afforded me an opportunity that I didn't know I was getting at the time, as a first-year teacher... I have an informal network of relationships I built along my years in education and in business. I continue to keep that network close.

Principal Vestes emphasized through email after checking her transcript,

Something crucially important... At every juncture in my career path, I have benefitted from the support of a strong female supervisor. Women have given me opportunities to advance, to engage in professional development, encouraged me. Throughout my career I have been fortunate to have female supervisors who have been excellent role models and provided an essential support system. Beyond the support of supervisors, I've always sought and appreciated the support of female colleagues. I maintain a circle

of friends/colleagues among other female school administrators and these friendships have been very meaningful and fulfilling. It's hard to navigate the challenge of maintaining a life away from school. Women truly understand and share that struggle.

Principal Reyes stated, "Support came from mentors [principals] who gave me opportunities."

Another kind of support comes from the family. Principal Maldon recalled how her family, mother, and father supported her career:

They supported my efforts when going into administration... They thought that advancing was important because I could serve the community. Second, I would have a rewarding career.

Principal Reyes and Principal Oscar had an enormous support system from family in regard to childcare. Principal Reyes spoke about how her parents provided care for her son:

I have never taken him to an orthodontist appointment. They have always picked him up and took him even though they live 45 minutes away.

Similarly, Principal Oscar spoke about family structure being the biggest support:

I have a tremendously supportive husband, in-laws and parents. All of who live in these areas, local vicinities of our school, and our home. They helped me to be an administrator because of their support of these long hours and doing my Doctorate at the same time. My children were very small at that time... Before my children actually started school, my in-laws were their caregivers. While I was working on my Doctorate homework, etc., my parents were there on the weekends and helped with childcare.

Principal Vestes commented on her husband's total support:

There has never been a juncture... that he gave me any kind of pressure to do things differently or to make different decisions as to not pursue the next step. It was absolutely the opposite.

Similarly, Principal Martina articulated experiences of husband support when she took her first role as high school principal several hours away from their home. Her husband supported her promotion to serve as leader. Principal Martina relocated temporarily for the new principal assignment.

I go home on the weekends and/or my husband comes here. It's tough to be separated from your husband because you are working on your career, but that's a choice that I have made. My husband supports me 100%, but at the same time, I wouldn't be able to do this job if my husband was waiting for me at home... I get here at 7:30 a.m. and I leave about 11 o'clock or midnight every day. I work many weekends... Being separated from my husband takes a huge weight off my shoulders, especially when I know he is not worrying about me.

Most Latina women principals articulated that there were many support systems in place for networking with educational leaders who sponsored them into principalship roles. The participants who did not encounter strong network with supervisors sought mentorship in education administration professional organizations. Participants experienced accomplishments, challenges and established a leadership reputation.

Summary of Leadership Professional Initiatives

The analysis of the current research data demonstrated that there were contributing factors that led to the representation of Latina women high school principals. The participants understood the value of learning and using data to analyze their schools and

student achievement on their way and within their principal positions. They experienced accomplishments and valued their support systems. The principals also experienced challenges in their rise to the position of high school principal. The data that emerged from the research study indicated that the Latina women participants were confident in themselves and about their skills. The data analysis also suggested that the Latina participants worked in collaboration with staff to accomplish initiatives through a guided process of data analysis. The Latina participants developed a reputation as change agents, having the ability to make change.

Professional Upward Mobility

In response to the central research question guiding this study, How do Latina women describe their ‘lived-experiences’ while navigating their career paths into public high school principalship?, the fifth theme, Professional Upward Mobility, emerged from the data as Latina principals navigated a career path to the principalship. The Latina participants shared professional upward mobility experiences that positioned them in the role of high school principal.

The sub-themes were:

- Leadership style is where one creates an environment to gain trust and collaboration to create change.
- Supervisors opening doors is encouraging Latina women participants into the role of high school principal.
- Aspirations beyond the principalship are high-ranking positions managing multiple schools aspired of Latina women principals.

Leadership Style

An analysis of the data indicated that the participants' leadership style was a strength in ascending to the high school principalship. The Latina women principals divulged information that described the way they inspired colleagues through collaborated efforts when leading projects to improve teacher performance, student academic achievement, and school culture change. The leadership style included: teamwork environment, teacher collaboration and sharing information. Principal Vestes articulated that her leadership style was a collaborative one. A leadership style that stems from family influence to be a collective of a group. Principal Vestes stated:

I keep in mind: students are my priority, addressing students' needs, political view around me, who's achieving, and who has access to what. I press my staff to think about these things... It's about... consciousness and pressing people to think about things new, new ways that may be different for them.

Principal Vestes further stated:

My approach to making change happen is setting the pace. This is the reason it is not just one...The data about every little thing [is shred]. This is why we have to talk about things, why this is important, and why we do not ignore it. We bring in a group of people together to work on ideas. I share these ideas with colleagues.

Principal Vestes articulated and provided an example of collaboration to make change.

I brought a team together invited staff members, Latino member students, and parents to be a planning group. We met a few times. We worked together on the idea of a celebration of student achievement, an opportunity to build a Latino community in the school...

Principal Vestes further spoke about sharing data and making change happen:

My theory of action is that you get a group of staff members together and run an idea, take a part to influence it, make a plan and share that with the rest of the staff and being able to teach your own. It's not an administrator telling you what to do. Get your colleagues to influence the idea. I try as much as possible to surround myself with teacher leaders and then shift it not just to the same group.

Principal Martina spoke about having a leadership style of relationship building and collaboration. She attributed her strength to building relationships with students and teachers to early family influence. About students, Principal Martina stated:

First you build relationships with kids when these kids are doing well; So when they are in trouble, or making the wrong choices, you can convince them otherwise. I am easy to get along with... I'm very nice and people like my smile.

She further stated:

Building relationships is a skill that you have or you don't [have]. That's what I believe. You cannot fake [being] a relationship builder. It's like being a teacher [who can build relationship with their students]. That's why you have teachers who have kids who love them and learn from them [teachers give their hearts].

Principal Martina spoke about how her relationship building leadership supported collaboration with co-workers. One district staff member recognized her leadership.

She told me that I am the most collaborative [person] she has ever [met]. I do not like to make any decisions unless I consult with other people. That doesn't mean that I will do what they say, but I have given [co-workers] the opportunity to share in my decision-making [and] to offer their opinions. I [believe] the power of building a family

in which each person's opinion... and respect [are given value] have really shaped my professional life.

Principals Maldon articulated how she defined her personality as personable, honest and ethical and spoke about fighting a good fight for the best interest of kids. She divulged the importance of having a personal connection with people is key to leadership and without relationships or plans there is nothing.

It is important to lead in the right path so that teachers can become more effective teachers. [Guide] the staff... through obstacles and lead them do the things that you want them to do in regard to your initiatives... [Implement a plan and be] strategic with the way that you [lead]... [my] consistency... with accountability and research-based methodology is key to the success of my leadership [teachers are part of decision-making and encouraged to lead initiatives].

Principal Oscar spoke about her leadership style as direct, but also exhibited an open policy. She disclosed how she provided her teachers and supervisor data reports daily so they were able to measure their success in the classroom and so they were informed about what was going on with students in the school. Principal Oscar explained one way she tackles a school issue by asking questions:

Okay, how do we fix that problem, and have clear rules and clear expectations, and clear implementation of that? And then look at what does good instruction looks like? What are the different components of that? And then clearly communicate that and monitor for that.

Principal Palacio articulated an experience of collaboration. She explained:

I was able to bring together teachers and staff members who were like-minded, very

passionate and concerned about an ignored population. Over the course of about six months, we met after hours, read some books together and looked at ways to devise a program that worked for kids in need. We devised a plan.

Supervisors Opening Doors to The Principalship

Another sub-theme emerged from data analysis was the support from higher ranked supervisors encouraging mobility into leadership. The Latina women principals recounted instances when their principals and superintendents encouraged and supported their rise to become high school principals. Principal Maldon spoke about entry into the principalship and why superiors supported the promotion of principal.

My principal at the high school... thought it would be a good idea for me to become a principal. He said to me, "that I had a vision of what I wanted to represent and accomplish [for the school]." He thought I had the organizational skills that I needed. He believed I had the personal qualifications I needed to... interact-- and have [positive] relationships with people. He also thought I was a very effective communicator and had [excellent] written communication skills. Further, he thought I had perseverance and the strength needed to be a leader.

Principal Maldon further spoke about continual recruitment.

With XYZ School, the Superintendent said, "You are going to XYZ School. The school is out of control. We need a strong principal. We want you to go there."

Likewise Principal Oscar was encouraged to apply for the first role as principal. Principal Oscar spoke about an experience of being recruited to a second high school.

I was a principal at high school #1 for 5 years. Then, our superintendent asked if I would come to high school #2... She asked me as the most experienced principal [in our

city], with only 5 years under my belt, to come to high school #2 [to make improvements]...this is my 4th year there.

Principal Alonzo described an experience about encouragement she received to enter the role of principal, as well as how she continued to be recruited as principal in other schools,

[After] three years [as AP], my principal told me ...he would leave to be a principal at another school. He said, "Okay, guys you're the first ones I want to tell. I am getting ready to leave. I am here to tell you, you guys are ready to leave and be principals now..."

Principal Alonzo further stated:

Three years later, I received a phone call from the superintendent. She said, "I've got an opening for a principal here and it has to happen really quick..."

Principal Alonzo worked as a principal at the superintendent's request and was labeled a change agent. She further indicated:

One year later [I was called again for services at another school], I became the principal there... I was encouraged by folks to apply for that position.

Principal Ramirez articulated an experience about how supervisors provided her opportunity into the role of principal:

They saw in me leadership capacity and they really groomed me. They allowed me to work internship hours before I attained an internship position. When I carried out my internship duties, it provided me with a lot of latitude.

Principal Ramirez further stated:

When our new superintendent came on board... He really wanted to work with us. He spoke to us one on one. He greeted me [and spoke about an opportunity]. He said,

“We are building a new high school. I need you. You’re ready. I want you to be [the principal].” The first time around I did not qualify because I had less than three years serving as an assistant principal... He interviewed [available candidates] and did not select any one in the group. He called me [back and]... said, “If you’re ready, I’m ready”...I opened a new high school in August of 2010.

Principal Vestes articulated an experience about serving as assistant principal for one year before being recruited to the role of principal,

After my first year [as AP] they asked me to be the principal after the [previous] principal left unexpectedly.

Principal Vestes further revealed an experience as being the first Latina principal at each school working as principal.

I am the first Latina principal at my current school. I was the first Latina principal at X [High School and] X Middle School [White majority].

Principal Reyes articulated a different experience to the high school principalship.

I was voted as the assistant principal for my state... The next day they [the district] gave me [the position of] middle school principal... [Several years later] they called and said, “We need you to come to XYZ High School [to be the principal].” I had already been there as an assistant... principal for seven years.

Principal Palacio spoke about an experience that lead to the high school principalship.

Principal Palacio applied for the position of high school principal and was reported to be the number two candidate. The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources informed the principal that the position was given to another candidate.

He let me know at that time, “you were candidate of first choice, but the superintendent

did not want a brand new principal for that site who never had any principal experience.” I’m like okay. I get that. That goes back to experience.

Principal Palacio further stated that while working as an assistant principal she continued to search the job publications and noticed the same principal position reposted. Principal Palacio decided to pursue the position and called the superintendent.

He said, “You interviewed well and we really liked you, but you know we didn’t pick you because the superintendent did not want an unseasoned principal.” So I called him and he called me back immediately... He said, “Ms. Palacio it just did not work out with that principal, but if you are still interested we would really like for you to apply.” I said, “Okay, I will do that.” This was the second time that I applied to the High School for the role of principal. I went through the interview process and got the job. That’s when the superintendent shared with me further that he and all the assistant sups really liked me. “They thought you were going to be a perfect fit. I thought you were just green and that I was just going to have to work with you a lot as a brand new principal that was my reluctance. It was a bad choice, and it did not work out with the other guy.”

Aspirations Beyond the Principalship

During the interviews, conversations moved to the principals’ individual future aspirations. Most participants spoke about their confidence about the ascension into the next leadership position of school superintendent. A superintendency is a typical next step after serving as high school principal. Latina women principals believed their resumes exhibited a track record of effective leadership in their ascension for principalship, which laid the groundwork for the next level of responsibilities.

Since the one-on-one interviews took place, two of the participants have acquired positions equal to assistant superintendent. Principal Alonzo faced barriers in the principalship and exited the role, upon perseverance she acquired a county level directorship of increased responsibilities several hours away from her hometown. At the time of the interview, she stated:

I am looking for a position as Executive Director... Latinas, women and [persons of color seeking educational] administrator [roles] [must] be mobile [to move] within the state even perhaps out of state. The jobs are far and few in between... [and] mobility is a part of that plan.

Similarly, Principal Ramirez has also moved into a position of advanced leadership. She recalled how she was recruited into the principalship and Chief Academic Officer.

I have been recruited to [the position] Chief Academic Officer at the county level. It is similar to assistant superintendent. To be honest, it isn't something that I sought out. Just like I didn't seek out the principalship position. It sought me out. Education [administration] found and chose me, not the other way around.

Three Participants anticipate moving into the next leadership position that would lead into the role of school superintendent. Principal Palacio stated:

My next career step will be a position as an assistant superintendent that would subway (lead) into a superintendent position... After five years as principal, moving into the role of assistant sup in educational services or curriculum and instruction for 4-5 years, I will secure a superintendent position.

Likewise, Principal Maldon spoke about considering the role of assistant superintendent:

I am never really looking [for the next career step]... [but] If asked to be superintendent, then I would have to consider it.

Equally, Principal Oscar revealed that she is focused on making the high school a great place and plans to continue improving student academic achievement, she stated:

I will consider finding an assistant superintendent position, but that is not in my initial plan. I have done enough groundwork that when I am ready to apply for it, I will be successful with that.

In contrast, Principal Martina spoke about a different professional goal:

I want to be a faculty member at a university in Education because I want to make sure [teachers are provided good training]. I have seen many [new] teachers come into the classroom with great potential. Future teachers taught by textbooks on how to be successful [are unsuccessful]. They come into the classroom and can't function. I want to make a difference in the education of future teachers.

Principal Martina further stated:

We are losing too many good teachers because they come with a textbook mentality as to how things work in the classroom. It's not like that anymore... There is a revolution in terms of how we are teaching kids. There needs to be a revolution on how we are teaching future teachers... I'm not pursuing it right now. Honestly, I believe if that's where God wants me, the opportunity will be presented to me by making a connection with somebody or I come across a job opening. Right now, I truly love... being a principal, although it is difficult.

Principals Vestes and Reyes are committed to the role of high school principal. They are willing to attain the next professional role when it is present. Principal Vestes stated:

I don't know what [the next step] is. I'm not that kind of a planner about my career. I'm happy with what I'm doing. I'll do it as long as I can. When I'm ready to make a change, I'll look around and see what's next. How do I plan to get there? I'll just keep doing a good job. I think that's the best way to ensure the next step. It is to do a good job where you are.

Principal Vestes further discussed the lack of encouragement for advanced positions:

No one ever encouraged me to apply for a principalship position. I think that's an important note, because I am not noticing it in my career, but in the careers of people I supervise... I have not been given a lot of encouragement about school administration at this time in my career. At some point, I would expect somebody might say to me "hey, you should consider the superintendent or you should consider the assistant superintendent or whatever it might be." Yet, people don't do that; and I'm really good at what I do. I find that kind of interesting. I don't know if that has anything to do with my race or not.

Likewise, Principal Reyes articulated her position on advancement:

I have never had a plan... If there is another step, it will find me... I really love what I am doing right now. At some point, I will want to play a bigger role in helping establish policy because I am very frustrated. I think that will be a part time role because the best job I have is being with the kids.

Summary of Professional Upward Mobility

An analysis of the data revealed that the participants experienced leadership development and supportive superiors encouraging their rise to principalship. The Latina participants in the current study were women who served as principals in high schools where

the majority student enrollments were White, Latina/o, or Minority. The data did not suggest that the student majority of the school prevented participants from experiencing the same support and opportunities upon entry to the principalship.

Summary

An analysis of data in this current study revealed evidence that there were contributing factors to the representation of Latina women to the high school principalship in public education. The Latina women principals experienced early influence, high achievement as teachers, professional leadership initiatives, and professional upward mobility. The Latina participants experienced both accomplishments and challenges as they navigated a career path to the high school principalship position in comprehensive public schools. The data also demonstrated that Latina women participants were well educated and overly experienced in multiple facets of school administration before attaining the role of as high school principal. Latina participants experienced comfort with their role in leadership and immediately made decision-making school changes upon the first day as high school principal. School improvement within the year was visibly tracked. The study participants were principals in urban and suburban school districts from across the United States. The data from the current study showed that most Latina women participants were recruited into their position of high school principal. The data that emerged from the study suggested that most Latina women participants experienced subtle personal attacks of gender and race. The data also suggested that Latina women participants aspired to pursue advanced positions.

The findings supported in Chapter 5 will be discussed in Chapter 6. It will also include recommendation for research, implications, and conclusions from the data analysis as it connects to research literature.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will discuss the study using the lens of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) in education where few studies exist, especially to investigate the representation and career paths of Latina women high school principals. I will discuss how the five themes (early influences, diverse career backgrounds, high achieving teachers, professional leadership initiatives, and professional leadership mobility) are interrelated. I will discuss the link between SCCT and the representation of Latina women high school principals. Further, I will discuss how the findings from this research compare to the findings in the literature review; make recommendations for further research based on the findings of this research, the implications for the leadership development of future Latina principals, and concluding remarks.

Five Themes Interrelated

All of the principals in this study grew up in two parent homes, experienced family bonding, and learned how to value people, relationships, collaboration, cultural values, and ethical core values. Most of the principals attended the urban community public school system. Each principal worked with Latino student body majority and diverse student body in urban communities. Most principals worked with White students. All principals worked with all White staff. Principals were intent on giving voice to Latino parents and students. They were sensitive to Latino students not acculturated to American culture, advocated for minority students, held high expectations for minority students' academic achievements, and emphasized a value in human resource and family environment. Further, the principals strategically used data tools to make school-wide changes and improved academic achievement. Finally, the principals

utilized data analysis systemic processes to make school policy. The principals indicated that early influences regarding their family and cultural values impacted their leadership development. Early influences emerge as a grand part of the participants' backgrounds. Principals were knowledgeable and sensitive to the cultural aspects of diverse students. All principals were able to use cultural diversity knowledge to serve more than one group of students who where of different backgrounds enrolled in public high schools. Principals were able to provide cultural impact. They were keenly aware of the importance of learning styles, teaching skills, and motivating students and staff. They brought into account culturally diverse students issues when facilitating core academic learning programs and other policies initiated with majority White colleagues.

Early Influences of family core values and cultural values influence the way principals' approach teaching, leading staff, and making policy. Principals were aware of their Latina identity, cultural norms, values, and perspectives. And, they were aware of the perspectives of how they were viewed by both White colleagues and minority colleagues. They were also aware of how they were viewed by the students. Their awareness of their perspectives affected everything they did as principals, from reorganizing curriculum and instruction, training staff, approaching staff, increasing parent involvement, removing stereotypes placed on minority students by White teachers, and facilitating teacher core academic training. The principals adapted their leadership to be inclusive of cultural sensitivity in everything they did. Principals customized curriculum to fit diverse students in order to achieve academic progress. They customized staff training to fit the needs of students with specific cultural and

diverse career backgrounds. Principals brought cultural wealth to meet the needs of students. They also met the needs of the teaching staff that served a culturally diverse student body. The principals attributed their early influences to their collaborative, motivational, hands-on, direct, and cultural sensitive leadership.

It was obvious to me, through an analysis of the data, that the principals' early influences had grounded them. The principals viewed most every thing they did in both their personal and professional lives through the lens of early influences. Early influences became the backdrop for the remaining four themes.

Next, most principals in this study experienced a first career in either banking, finance, technology, or in the military leading in professional environments and working with White colleagues. Principals were avid learners about their skills and in learning White cultural norms, business values, beliefs, and philosophies of those professional environments. The principals spoke about their experiences and how it prepared them for their current roles as principals. Having diverse experiences also emerged as a backdrop for their working experiences in education. The principals' diverse career backgrounds provided them with the knowledge of diverse industry environments and experiences. As a result, principals entered the education field from different routes. They were familiar with leading people of diverse cultures and diverse work environments in their current roles as principals. Some principals indicated that their leadership, ability to motivate teachers, facilitate reorganization processes, set goals for students to achieve academic advancement, and number crunching skills were elements used to effectively make change in all facets of education in the schools they

served. Principals tapped into their previous skills when working with teachers, students, parents, communities, and districts as they served as high school principals.

Having diverse career backgrounds influenced the way the principals approached the education industry and in the way they approached human resource interaction and administration. Diverse career backgrounds influenced the way principals educated, facilitated, and promoted research-based instructional materials and programs.

Principals were aware of themselves and how staff viewed them, in order to work with staff to improve academics for all students. The principals uncovered blockages that caused stumbling blocks for teachers who teach and students who learn. The principals increased efforts to make effective leeway to inform the intellectually minded teachers who aimed to produce results, and discarded unmotivated teachers who showed no effort, improvement, or who surrendered their desire to improve academic standing.

The diverse background affected much of what the principals did at all levels of leadership as their experiences complimented new skills that were learned in the education system. Their diverse career backgrounds also allowed the principals to have high expectations for self, staff, students, and maintain an expectation of result-oriented outcomes. Having diverse career backgrounds provided the principals with the acquired mentality of producing results, which aided their roles as principals.

Principals impressed upon the community that they brought a different set of skills to the education field.

Figure 1 presents a framework for understanding a career pathway to the role of high school principal. This diagram shows *early influences* and how the remaining four themes surface and interrelate to manifest a bold quest to the high school principal

position. Early experiences influenced the principals to be aware that culturally diverse students brought a different set of needs. Principals impressed upon the community, that students bring a different set of skills. Students have the capacity to achieve and are worthy of standing to high standards.

Because the participants experienced prior careers working in business environments requiring them to work with and train adults, principals gained experiences as adult educator and trainer. Principals were also aware of how they needed to be culturally sensitive to staff who needed to serve the learning needs of culturally diverse students in order to be effective teachers. Principals learned to be aware of the importance of explaining scholarly materials to teachers; training teachers on scholarly material, motivating staff; broadening the minds of teachers who fail to recognize cultural diversity; teaching staff to be culturally sensitive to students; and training teachers to utilize different teaching techniques to meet the needs of a culturally diverse student body.

Most principals educated their teachers on how to measure their own teaching results through the use of data analysis. Next, the framework presented how the remaining three themes interrelate with *diverse career backgrounds*. The remaining three themes (high achieving teachers, professional initiatives, and professional leadership mobility) surfaced within the theme *diverse background experiences*. The principals assumed a role and substantiated their education skills utilizing experiences previously learned from background experiences. The background knowledge also contributed to the principals' achievement of the high school principal role.

Career Pathway of Latina High School Principals

Early Influences

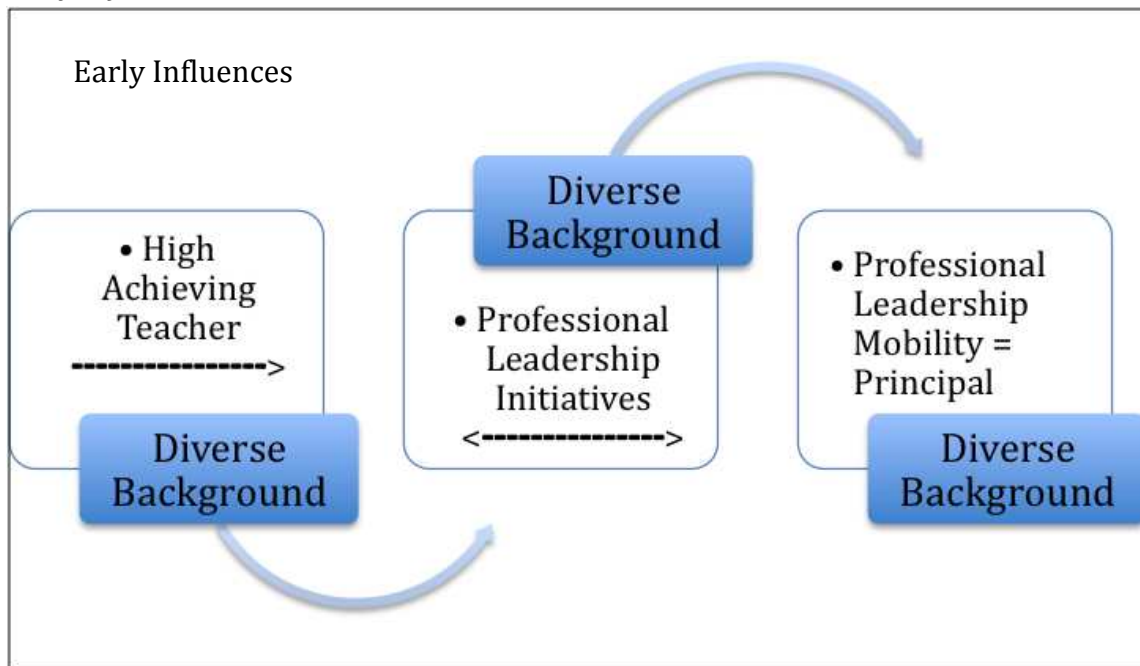


Figure 6.1. Framework for Understanding a career pathway to high school principal

Theme 1: Early Influence

Because of the principals' early influences, they stressed their intent to give voice to Latino parents and students, were sensitive to Latino students not acculturated to American culture, advocated for minority students, held high expectations for minority students' academic achievements, emphasized a value in human resource personnel and family environment, and education policy. All principals grew up learning about family values and Latino cultural values, and for other principals, traditional Latino cultural values. They were aware of cultural values such as language, food, religion, traditional customs and holidays, the need to visit extended families out of the country, barriers and opportunities students face, and how Latino students live in two worlds. All the principals maintained a perspective of early experiences in most everything they did. The principals' intent to give voice was

without effort. As teachers, principals could only make a difference in their classroom; however, as principals they were intentional about providing voice to a student body in a comprehensive campus. Latina principals influenced teachers to teach more effectively to improve student learning to diverse students. Principals trained teachers how to be culturally sensitive, how to incorporate new teaching strategies to produce increased knowledge, and how to measure their productivity. Principals also discouraged teachers from using sarcasm with culturally diverse students who do not understand the negative consequences of sarcasm. Early influences have been a factor in the principals' career path to attaining the principal position.

Theme 2: Diverse Background and Experiences

In addition to the overall backdrop of early influences that guided the principals' decision making were diverse career backgrounds and experiences brought to their role as principal. It is the second layer of the onion so to speak. Most principals entered into the education field as a second career. Principals acquired the role of high school principal in non-traditional ways compared to majority White male educators (Shakeshaft, 1987) [see pages 52-54]. Men take a direct career path to the principalship first serving as teacher, assistant principal, then principal (Shea, 1983). Most principal participants entered education in their mid-to-late twenties. They served as teachers, coordinators, and assistant principals, before acquiring the principalship positions. The participants were experienced in diverse business and technology employment occupations. Some principals began a first career with global industries working with the Latino communities or Latin countries where both languages of Spanish and English were spoken. Some principals entered a work industry that required difficult manual labor working with diverse cultures. Others took positions in

different countries working with individuals having different cultural values. Many worked next to men in male dominant industries. Because of their early influences of experiences from family upbringing, the principals were able to adapt to different work settings and cultural environments. The principals developed new skills, business ideas, number crunching, and an ability for producing results. They worked with a sense of urgency in their industry and developed a keen sense of business orientation. The principals also worked as trainers, educating adults, and conducting presentations to adult audiences. These skills became assets to the principals, were incorporated to manage education duties, and prepared them for leadership development in education. The principals examined their position, work elements, role, and the people they served and developed a sense of how, when, and where to incorporate their expert skills in their positions to lead teachers and students. The principals brought to education a diverse set of business skills and business strategies to facilitate teacher training and student learning for a diverse student body. The principals worked with majority White teachers and school staff and culturally diverse students. Latina women principals often served in their schools and were observed as trailblazers as they were often the only ethnic and female minority in a lead position. They often served as liaisons between teachers and students. Principals observed a sort of disconnect between White teachers and minority students, and they worked tirelessly to fix it.

Theme 3: High Achieving Teachers

In their career paths to the principalship, principals were required to serve as teachers for a minimum of three years. Principals desired to be effective teachers and created a learning environment that included non-traditional strategies to facilitate effective teaching. The principals' teaching methods, informed by their early influences and diverse

background, influenced them to use various strategies to accommodate the teaching and learning environments. Principals enjoyed learning and continued personal educational pursuits to become more effective in education.

With Latino students, principals spoke to them in both English and Spanish in the classroom. They set for their students, high expectations as they have experienced from early influences. The principals spoke to the students' parents in their native Spanish language to ensure student, teacher, and parent collaboration for the students' academic achievement. Principals provided narratives of real life work experiences to the students, and explained how classroom learning was connected to the job market. Some principals set up a hands-on approach to coursework to make it more meaningful to students. Other principals worked with unmotivated students until they were able to first present themselves as caring teachers, created a family environment celebrating holidays together, showing self as good role models, before capturing the students' trust, attention and desire to learn. Principals were able to meet the needs of students who had language barriers, who were unfamiliar with navigating an American education system. Some principals used a core values approach and used state benchmarks to measure their teaching effectiveness. Other principals used lesson plan designs and instructional theory for effective core academic teachings, compared to majority White teachers. Principals taught bilingual education and advanced science coursework in Spanish.

Once principals became aware of the student academic improvements they wanted to further impact students' academic acceleration outside their classrooms. They chose to volunteer in the curriculum and instruction departments in their schools, sought out part-time jobs in curriculum instruction within their school districts, etc. They represented themselves

as capable and results oriented teachers. One principal lacked technology resources in her classroom and, as first year teacher, developed a partnership with a technology company to receive updated technology resources.

The principals took great pride in teaching their students to be the best in school and in the work place. They placed high value with their students and promoted education acceleration. In their career paths, principals left the classrooms to serve in leadership roles that would allow them to impact a greater number of students. Principals' performing well as teachers eventually landed positions as high school assistant principals either through recruitment or self-initiatives. The principals often spoke about their dedication to improve the lives of all students by being the best teachers they could be. Principals had the desire to learn facets of education outside of their classrooms.

Theme 4: Professional Leadership Initiatives

Another theme that emanated from their early influences and diverse career backgrounds is how the principals' professional leadership initiatives projected creativity, capability, dedication, empowerment, ethics and fairness; and how it would eventually lead them to the positions of high school principals. Principals created and facilitated school improvement through collaboration, programs and problem-solving processes. They honed in on data management and data analysis skills to guide them with school improvement. The principals worked with research-based methodology and became loyal to the word *accountability*. They collaborated with teachers to improve teaching using established core values perspectives. They instituted school-wide programs to increase academic achievement and increased pre-college-readiness and college admissions. Principals wrote grants and successfully gained funding in the hundred of thousands to upgrade school and

district resources. Some principals promoted their school's academic achievements, school programs, and students to gain recognition for the purpose of motivating teachers and students and gaining a sense of pride for their schools. Most important of all, principals established strong partnerships with parents and increased parent volunteers in the schools by the hundreds. Principals found it important to develop a close network with district leadership. Principals also received lots of support as they strove to improve the schools, worked 12-hour days, or mentored incoming school leaders. They kept close ties with their network of personal and professional friends for support and guidance.

All principals faced challenges and staff resistance, especially when they spoke about all children as equal and deserving of equal education; when they spoke to teachers about adapting to different teaching styles to accommodate the changing demographics with student body; when they spoke about improving the school culture to be more culturally sensitive; or when they spoke about making teaching improvements to increase state test scores. Most principals were successful in overcoming staff resistant challenges using leadership skills influenced by early influences.

Although the principals were successful at making long-term changes through collaboration and teamwork, they faced challenges with some teachers who were unwilling or unmotivated to change. As a last resort and with the support of the superintendent, principals took a leadership role to exit teachers unwilling to improve or support students. Some challenges were highly visible in the media. Principals were guided by their early influences to fight a fair fight and to advocate for those students silent and on the sidelines. Principals also faced ridicule, credibility issues, racist remarks, and resistance from teachers who saw for the first time in their 20 years of service, a Latina woman in a role of authority

over them. Principals were aware of this cultural change with White teachers and they worked professionally to accommodate the teaching staff. Principals did not allow these issues to deter their goals or accomplishments. Because of the early influences, principals were grounded in their identity as Latina women and proud of their own identity. They are very confident about their skills to make improvements. They were prepared to challenge with research-based materials anyone who tried to discredit their motives, capabilities, or leadership. Their professional leadership initiatives established the principals as leaders and capable to take on the role as principals.

Theme 5: Professional Leadership Mobility

One of the last aspects to the career path ascending into the role of high school principal was getting hired as principal. In order for the principals to attain the role as principals, they needed to be mobile. In other words, they needed to be willing to move within or out of district. They also needed to be sponsored by their supervisors. Having early influences and diverse career backgrounds means that these principals were keenly aware of adaptability and mobility needed to reach the principalship. Although most principals did not enter education with the intention of becoming principals, they knew that working with good work ethics, working beyond what the position required, and performing quality work, that they would excel to a bright future in education. Principals and superintendents recognized the Latina women principals' leadership skills and eventually sponsored them into the role of high school principal. Principals received support and mentorship from their supervisors and educational leadership organizations. By the time the principals attained the principalship, most had experiences working as principals while serving in the roles of assistant principals. Principals, grounded in early influences, were

sensitive to the cultural wealth of diverse students as well as the lack of cultural wealth that teachers did not possess. The principals employed a friendly collaborating leadership style, even as they were direct, and empowered. They motivated teachers to take an active role with new initiatives in the schools. They provided opportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles, and gave voice to teachers when facilitating school leadership meetings. Most importantly, they trained teachers to understand data management and taught them how to use it within their classrooms to account for their own accountability and measure their own results in their classrooms. The principals' backgrounds in diverse settings industry influenced them to teach the staff about setting goals and producing results.

Principals were confident in skills as they ascended to the role of principal, and soon began setting new goals to attain the role of school superintendent. All principals spoke about how they loved working with teachers and students. Principals believed they could make a greater contribution in education by taking on the role of superintendent.

In summary, principals may inspire other women to consider future aspirations of becoming high school principals in public education. Principals were highly influenced by early experiences. They were groomed to be confident women, as mothers or career women, and had very clear values and boundaries. The principals valued their identities as Latinas and they used those cultural assets in an education career working with kids. Principals indicated multiple times that their priority was doing what was best for the kids. This philosophy seems to be the driving force in their career paths.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent, 2006) was selected as the theoretical framework for the current study because of how it applies contextual variables in career

development over time. It offers a self-efficacy theory that explains a women's under-representation in male-dominated occupations (Hackett's Social Cognitive Career Theory, 2013). In addition, "the application of the self-efficacy construct to women's career development" (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996) was indicated. The SCCT's "theoretical framework is a miniparadigm with its own internal logic and assumptions" (Patton, 2002, p. 134). I hope the reader is able to gain a meaningful conclusion with the guidance of the SCCT framework.

SCCT posits that background contextual variables exert and influence career self-efficacy, resulting in the influence of interests. This dissertation sought to understand how Latina women navigated a career path to the role of high school principal, a male dominated occupation. SCCT posits that individuals are active in shaping their lives. Individuals are able to think, observe, and reflect about self and their environmental surroundings. As a result, they are able to monitor the impact of their actions in their environments. Figure 6.2 is a model of the framework for Social Cognitive Career Theory (UMKC, February 2013).

Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994, 2000, 2002)

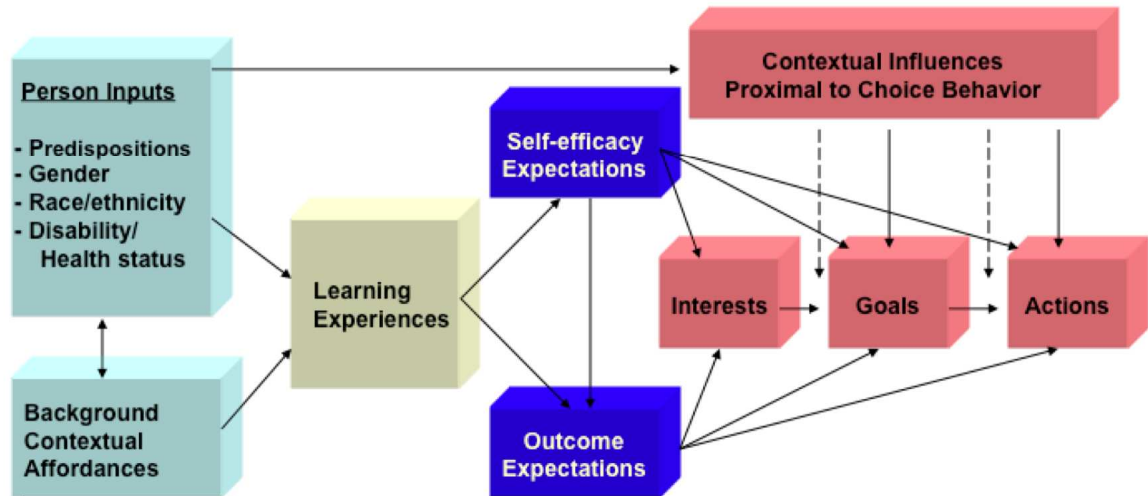


Figure 6.1. Framework for how basic career interests develop over time. The model highlights cognitive and behavior influences during childhood and adolescence. Resource Gail Hackett, Professor & Provost, University of Missouri-Kansas City

I will attempt to explain SCCT's connection and application to this study as it applies to women's career development. SCCT applications of self-efficacy theory can be used to explain "women's under-representation in male-dominated occupations" (Hackett, power point).

Findings

Distal Influences

Latina women principals' learning experiences came from both person inputs (i.e. gender, ethnicity, and abilities) and background context (i.e. family training, education, and job & training opportunities, especially working with technology). Each principal spoke about family values (as seen in Early Influences) as a strong influence in their personal and professional lives. Most principals' concern for having high expectations and high aspirations for children's education resembled the attributes from their families. As a result,

principals were compelled to ensure that students succeeded in the classroom. Their high expectations and high aspirations for children's education directly relates to their upbringing and how their parents' instilled the concept of putting children's needs first and working towards children's best interests. The impact of family core values played a role in the rise of Latina women principals. The impact of Latino cultural assets (i.e. *Familismo, Los hijos-Value of Children, Personalismo, Respecto, Simpatía, Spirituality, and cultural wealth*) also played a role in the rise of the principals. Many participants indicated that family impacted their leadership style and placed great value on human relations. With a great deal of emphasis, principals indicated that traditional Latino cultural values related to the concept of restricted life styles for women would not lend itself to leadership development. Principals gained a great deal of knowledge from their learning experiences.

The data collected from the principals' interviews presented strong evidence of their earlier career experiences (diverse career backgrounds), which contributed to their pursuits to become principals. The eight principals shared stories of their past work experiences and the skills learned regarding data, technology, and business strengths. Some women spoke about global experiences as well, which provided skills of understanding a diverse student body. Principals began developing leadership skills. They became skilled at their professional positions and experienced positive outcomes with projects that they led. Principals saw success with the connection of their work experiences. Principals were able to take their valuable skills and adapt them to the field of education to enhance their role in education. Principals noted how their demonstrated skills showcased their ability and capacity to lead in education administration.

Learning effects on efficacy and outcome expectations

Principals had strong belief in their “capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1986)” (Gail Hackett, Figure 6.2). Principals performed specific behaviors that were directed for future more advanced leadership positions. They were confident about what they were able to accomplish. Most Latina women high school principals voiced the concept of excelling or doing more than what was expected when working as teachers. Some participants were able to produce results of student academic achievement from students in their classrooms. Many participants felt confident to impact a grander group of students. And they found avenues in and out of their classrooms ways to showcase their education skills, which revealed their abilities to be more than teachers. For some participants, it was during this time they began to exam their career possibilities in a positive way advancing to leadership. Principals began seeking advanced degrees to help advance their quest for advanced positions. Supervisors began to notice the principals’ passion to impact kids and confidence to take on roles that offered increased responsibilities. Principals indicated they love teaching and working with students and parents and have great passion to see students succeed. The positive outcomes from the principals who care and aspire high accomplishments for children in their classroom gave rise to their goals to becoming high school principals. The principals were motivated and encouraged to move forward in their career. Principals actively chose activities that extended their efforts to attain the principalship. Latina women were persistent even as they faced obstacles.

A majority of principals voiced the concept of self-efficacy. For example they voiced their confidence and beliefs to perform great accomplishments. Principals shared stories of

their leadership initiatives that affected the whole school in a positive way or impacted the district in a positive way. Some opportunities were self-led; others were at the request of supervisors asking principals to manage a particular project. Principals indicated that these opportunities furthered their leadership development, which allowed for them to seek advanced leadership positions moving towards the role of principals. At this stage, all principals sought the role of principal. Supervisors continued to push more responsibilities on the principals. Some requested principals to represent them at district meetings. Other principals were asked to act as vice principals with a teacher's salary. Principals took this opportunity to further their advancement. It appears at this point, principals began self-regulating their actions. Now they were specific about what job positions they would apply to. Supervisors observed in principals' collectiveness, passion for kids, determination, persistence, the willingness to accept new responsibilities, and the ability to handle conflict issues with dignity. Principals began receiving invitations of recruitment to the role of assistant principals. Principals shared these experiences and indicated that they were able to weigh the positives and negatives of these roles before deciding whether to accept the position. Some principals left positions as assistant principals when they believed there were major challenges that would block their development further as leaders or as one principal voiced how she believed her authority was eroded and lost credibility. She would not let negative issues block her goal to ascent to the role of high school principal. She also commented on how some people think because she talks with an accent that she thinks with an accent. The principal clearly indicated no such concept exists, and she is very confident in her ability to lead a high school. Principals indicated that professional leadership initiative and even challenges have only developed their leadership more. Each principal at this stage

in their career held a role as vice principal. Most principals indicated it was easy to capture the role of high school principal after serving as vice principal.

Goal-directed

The Latina women were determined to engage in particular activities to gain the position of high school principal. Principals served in multiple positions while working as teacher. They were involved with school district programs. They continued in their education. The principals acted as assistant principals when they held the title and salary of teachers. Latina women set personal goals to attain the principalship. It became apparent from the open-ended interviews that principals gained reputations as transformers and were a testament to making positive change happen in the schools. Most principals carry the title of change agent. All principals were quickly hired as principals through recruitment, though the sponsorship of their principals or superintendents or by self-initiative as they applied for the position.

Model of Community Cultural Wealth

According to Yosso (2006), the social theory, Model of Community Cultural Wealth is a model made up of knowledge and skills that help Latinos navigate a system made for non-Latinos in the United States. This model particularly works for the educational system. I will attempt to explain the model's connection and application to this study, as it applies to women's career development within the educational system. The Model of Community Cultural Wealth has components defined as: aspirational capital, linguistic capital, navigational capital, social capital, familial capital, and resistant capital.

It was clear to me that Latina principals had articulated or provided narratives that were linked to Community Cultural Wealth. The components of community Cultural Wealth

grounded them and guided them in the way they navigated their education careers. The Latina women principals seemed to use the components with most every thing they did in both their personal and professional lives. The social theory model became another way for taking actions when traditional processes to secure a principalship used by non-Latinos did not work or was not productive for Latina women. The Latina women proved to use components of community cultural wealth to navigate both their education attainment and education career.

In regard to aspirational capital, Latina principals exercised the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even when they faced real or perceived barriers. This was noted when one principal was removed from her role as high school principal. For several years she served as middle school principal before returning to high school principal. Aspirational capital was also linked to another principal who started a family before the age of 21, then earned her GED in her twenties, and eventually completed a Ph.D and became a high school principal. There were many examples noted in the findings for the category of aspirational capital.

When speaking about linguistic capital, most Latina principals incorporated those intellectual and social skills learned through communication experiences in more than one language. One principal spoke about how she needed to fit in with the education staff at her school. Her school was located in an urban school district where many people spoke both English and Spanish. Many times the teachers and parents spoke *Spanglish* (half Spanish and half English). Because of her learned social skills, she was able to interact with those constituents. These social skills aided her in her pursuit to the principalship. Many Latina principals used their language capital and social skills to increase their children's

achievements and to enroll parent volunteers to help out in the school buildings. One principal who did not speak Spanish fluently reported that it was important to hire individuals in her school to effectively communicate with parents who were Spanish speakers only.

In terms of navigational capital, Latina principals used their intuition skills to maneuver through social institutions in the educational field. Most principals did not take a traditional path to the high school principalship, those processes followed by non-Latinos. Many of the Latina women entered into high school principalship coming from different occupations, maintaining an assistant principal position for a longer period of time, and taking more positions than required before attaining the role of principal. Many Latina women created their own paths to the role of high school principal. Many of them found positions in curriculum, then gained a doctoral degree before becoming a high school principal.

When making reference to social capital, Latina principals honed in on the many benefits by building a strong network of people (both personal and professionally) and community resources. This was noted when one principal called out to her professional friends to gain technology resources for her classroom and eventually for the school district. Another principal had strong ties to community resources that allowed her to build a bridge between universities and school districts. All Latina principals spoke about their networks of people and how important it was to have it in place for employment opportunities, resources, and a support system to help them manage a political situation in administration.

With regard to *familial* capital, Latina women principals were well informed and held close ties to their cultural knowledges, community history, memory, and cultural intuition. Familial capital was evident with all Latina women principals. Many principals shared narratives about how familial capital was ingrained in their background. Almost their entire

decision making was based on their core values nurtured among their families that held community history, memory, and cultural intuition in perspective.

Finally, the *resistance capital* played a role in the Latina women's aspirations to move forward in their ascension to a high school principalship position. All principals shared narratives in regard to facing challenges of inequality, experiencing resistance by teachers and other school staff, racism, and being told they were not capable of working as high school principals. The Latina women were able to resist oppression using knowledge and skills cultivated through behaviors taught from familial. In addition, the principals were very confident in their abilities, skills, and presented their data with clear communication about their knowledge of school related issues and provided strategic solutions to improve conditions of teaching and learning in their schools.

Although The Model of Community Cultural Wealth provided a means to resist oppression from the White man's education and career systemic process, it did not speak to the resistance of family pressure or old traditions that might become barriers. This theory could be further advance by adding how it benefits individuals by resisting family traditional expectations that do not work within White man's education and career systemic process. Principals shared narratives about their experiences having to go against the grains of some old traditions, for example staying at school working 12-14 hours a day to serve students and their welfare. All principals shared narratives of community cultural wealth.

How the Findings Differ From Findings Presented in the Literature Review

My research project was about the lived-experiences of Latina women's career paths to the high school principal position. I investigated how they navigated that career path and how they came to be high school principals. The challenges faced by Latina principals in the

workplace, the demographic data related to the school districts they typically work in, their accomplishments with school improvement, and numerical representation as principals in general is noted in the literature; however, there is minimal literature written about Latina women navigating a career path as high school principals.

The women that I studied came from a nontraditional route, whereas a traditional route is one where individuals generally progress from a teacher route on to the principalship position (Shakeshaft, 2007). The conclusions I draw are based on the evidence from my study. Most women did not have linear careers in education. They served other occupations and spoke about struggles of career dissatisfaction prior to entering education. Other participants spoke about social and cultural issues that were difficult to overcome such as stereotypes placed on them and for some, language barriers. These women believed that the challenges they faced growing up into young adulthood provided them with challenging experiences in overcoming obstacles, as painful as it was. The women in my study believed these experiences prepared them for the challenges they faced in education such as proving their ability, withstanding public outcry about teacher discipline, or not being allowed to use full authority as principal. Only two principals experienced deep controversies that set them off the track of high school principal paths. However, after some time both recovered their positions and one eventually took a position of assistant superintendent.

Most women spoke about how easy it was to reach the position of principal, especially as most women were recruited to the position and were given additional training and mentorship. This was after they displayed ability to communicate, motivate, and improve academic standing. Women, who found their careers in education, loved serving students

and bent over backwards to improve academic achievement and fought against what they perceived to be social injustice or inequalities among students served.

Qualifications:

All principals experienced educational and career paths that provided them with the qualifications needed to work as high school principals. The levels of education and work experiences were common among the principals. Overall, they exceeded the amount of education and work experiences required to achieve the principalship.

The participants were educated with advanced doctoral degrees by 80% prior to taking the post of the principalship. This is above the norm. Majority women principals (White) worked on their doctoral degrees while in the position of high school principal (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). The research findings in this study are in alignment with existing literature.

The participants I studied were employed in two to eight academic positions before attaining the role of high school principal. For example, two principals served in 7 - 8 positions, three principals served in 4 - 5 positions, and the remaining three principals served in 2 - 3 positions. All principals held other administrative positions (i.e. Department chair) while working as teachers or vice principals.

In addition, the participants worked for several years before earning the role of high school principal. Four principals worked from 14 to 21 years and the remaining four principals worked from 7 to 10 years. The principals' teaching experiences were differently distributed and ranged from 1 – 11 years. For example, three principals taught from 1 – 3 years; three principals taught from 4 – 6 years; and two principals taught from 10 – 11 years. The average years of teaching experience reported were: Whites, 13.2; Blacks, 13; and

Hispanics, 12.5 (Digest of Education Statistics, 2011). The data showed significantly that the participants in this study spent less time as teachers before becoming high school principals when compared to national data representing principals of the same ethnicity and non-Latina/o high school principals. Some principals were provided with short-term (approximately 5 months) opportunities to work as ‘assistant principal’ while holding the title of teacher.

The participants served as vice principal between six and ten years before serving as principal. This is longer than the average for majority principals. White male vice principals averaged 3 years before promotion to the role of principal (Shakeshaft, 2007). White women vice principals averaged 4-5 years.

Cultural Values:

All participants reported their familiarity and experiences about traditional cultural values with regard to gender scripts -- a code of behavior for men and women. Further, family cultural values such as *familismo*, *personalismo*, *respeto*, *simpatia*, *los hijos*, religion and spirituality were distinctive experiences that were expressed by the principals as positive.

Few principals grew up with the expectation to fulfill female gender role scripts specified by traditional cultural norms (i.e. to first care for husband and children before self). Participant Martina was groomed to first meet the needs of her husband and children before satisfying her own needs such as career needs. Ramirez was groomed to serve her spouse and children with domestic duties (i.e. cooking and cleaning) regardless of her career priorities (i.e. long hours). Other principals grew up watching their mothers live traditional roles as domestic engineers. Some participants were raised around female relatives who were restricted by their husbands who prioritized their lives around their spouses and

children as their first priority. Many principals were encouraged by their parents to leave behind traditional roles in order to achieve a college education and career.

The principals were aware of how living a restricted traditional life style could affect their choices about career and career commitment. Dedicating more time to domestic needs and less time for developing careers, as high school principals, was perceived as impossible by the principals. Some principals perceived they would face delays or lost opportunities to the role high school principal if they lived traditional cultural norms for women. For example, one principal reported how her career was put on hold for many years when her children were young. Her career began when her children were older and when her husband retired. She reported that when her husband retired, he gave enormous support and encouragement to build a career as high school principal. This allowed for 12-14 hour days serving as vice principal to focus her commitment on her career to attain the principalship. Other principals reported that they would not be able to serve as principals if their priority were domestic duties because their careers in the principalship journey required of them 12-14 hour days, evening meetings, and many weekends.

Leadership:

Principals experienced a number of problem-solving situations in their career paths that provided them with leadership development needed to work as high school principals. The use of strategies was common among the principals. The principals displayed their skills of leadership, planning, and cooperating at all levels in their educational career paths. Supervisors recognized the participants' leadership skills as those skills seen matching the role of high school principals.

The principals spoke about their leadership development that included optimal strategies to work with people. They included collaborative leadership, motivation as well as being direct, decisive, having goals, listening, and becoming culturally sensitive leaders. Further, the principals spoke about asserting themselves and advocating for policy change, children, staff, and self. Principals learned how to be politically savvy in an organizational cultural and became involved with leadership campaigns. One principal stated that she learned early on in her career that she needed to be visible to achieve the role of principal. All principals provided lived experiences about how their supervisors provided them with recognition in regard to their performances, achievements, and communication skills. These experiences and skills allowed principals to make changes through collaboration with their staff and superiors.

Change Agents:

Principal experienced educational career path opportunities to make school changes for parents, students, staff, and school policy. This was common among the participants.

The principals were able to connect Latina/o students and their parents to school staff and guided them through the education system for academic success while maintaining success for all students.

Participants were guided in their decision making by their use of data analysis using data tools provided by their superintendents and district office in order to improve student academic achievement and school-wide change.

It was commonplace for the principals to open the minds of teachers, assert and alert them of school data, and to teach teachers how to gather and use the data. The principals encouraged teachers to work from a data perspective outlook and core value standards.

Most principals supported their administrative decision making with the schools' data statistics and scientific researched school practices. The principals encouraged teachers to rely on school data to make changes. They also encouraged teachers to lead school projects to improve academic achievement. As a result of data management, the use of scholarly research, and promoting teacher leadership participation, principals were able to make school change. As a result of school improvement achievements, the principals gained a reputation and stood out in the district. Both men and women of different ethnicities encouraged or recruited Latina women to the role of high school principal in suburban and urban school districts.

Navigating and succeeding within a White cultural environment:

For some of the participants, it seems contradictory to what they were raised to think that they would be as women. Many of the women in my study went to more traditional subservient jobs to start with coming into these roles in education. They came into it after first having tried to or retired from holding together the whole family structure life style. Other participants grew up in traditional family structure with parents encouraging women to go beyond tradition to achieve higher education and seek careers in people serving professions.

All principals at one time in their career navigated a White cultural environment supervising mostly caucasian teachers. The participants also served children of multiple ethnicities. Many principals experienced their administrative role as the only individual represented as Latina. These experiences provided them with a wide array of experiences to achieve the principalship in urban and suburban districts.

In general, the principals had a background serving in high schools that where majority Latina/o student body. Most principals led high schools with more than a 50% White student body. This provided principals with qualifications needed to work as high school principals in very diverse settings. Different levels of school environment were common among the principals. They also worked in schools with White student majority, Black student majority, or served an equal percentage of students who were White, Black, and Latina/o.

Principals served in schools with majority White student body and majority White teacher ratio (90%). Some principals spoke about how their White staff identified them as having features such as Spanish looking, feminine, and petite. Many Latina women principals were trailblazers in their school district. They entered into school districts, cities, and states representing their role as first time Latina women high school principals traditionally represented by White men and White women.

Tough decisions to remove teachers:

All principals experienced the tasks of teacher discipline that provided them with the qualifications needed to make challenging decisions as high school principals. The levels of disciplinary experiences were common among most principals. Some decisions to remove teachers were challenging. Overall, principals were experienced at removing individuals that they viewed as dysfunctional teachers.

Most principals conducted teacher disciplinary actions prior to becoming high school principals. Although the principals removed men and women teachers, Latina women principals who disciplined or removed White male teachers were publically challenged in the media. This challenge usually played out in newspapers, Internet, board and central office

meetings, splitting teacher loyalty, and labored over several weeks. In the final of these conflicts, the principals' decisions were upheld.

More often than not, principals were aggressive with teachers who were in their perspective not of assistance to student achievement, unwilling to work with a changing demographic, unwilling to help the school or change, and failing to implement researched-based teaching strategies. Most principals conferred with their supervisors and were supported by their superintendents to remove dysfunctional teachers from the perspective of the study participants. Based on the participants' interviews, teachers did not see the school moving in the way the principals saw that it should be moving. I did not investigate this situation further. Removing dysfunction from the perspective of the participants interviewed is a strong leadership attribute. I believe this attribute was only one of many that allowed these women to stand out and gained the attention and support of their supervisor.

The principals in the study agreed that my research project was important because it gave voice to Latina women principals. Principals indicated that no one in academic research had ever asked them about what their career paths looked like or how they felt about it or what they experienced. The literature did not provide any guidelines on how Latina women could navigate a career path to serve as principals in high school. Some of the ways in which principals in this study developed a navigation course to the principalship was through decision-making and self-efficacy. It is important to note that the principals had developed a strong value of self-worth and identity as a result of early influences. They included self, their ethnic identity, their ability to provide positive outcomes, their voice and opinions. In addition, the principals acknowledged and valued their assets, identified core values and aligned those that served them well working with kids. The principals all spoke

about a job worth doing is a job worth doing right (i.e. advocacy, fairness, education achievements, high expectations, etc.). Another piece derives from the second theme diverse career backgrounds. Some of the ways in which principals in this study benefitted from their diverse professional backgrounds included the following:

- Being open to learn, read, and dialogue about a current career
- Learning about strategies, competitors, data analysis, and how their company fits within its industry
- Arranging for training and/or enrollment at local colleges to further their knowledge in their field
- Being familiar with hierarchy
- Developing a network of personal and professional individuals in their career
- Being an expert in their field and learning how to adapt those skills to other endeavors
- Being open to change
- Setting goals

Implications for the Study for Principal Career Pathway, Preparation, and Practice

This study found there was a specific career path, which Latina women public high school principals followed. Their early influences of family and cultural values impacted leadership styles. The principals' responses emphasized similarities and few differences regarding where their influences and decision-making derived. I cannot report that the research data collected from this study were consistent with the literature because there were few found on the experiences of a career path (i.e. number of positions held, number of years prior to serving as principal) to serve as principals in public high schools. There was such a small number of Latina women high school principals compared to White majority women

high school principals within school districts, cities, and states. However, comments expressed by the principals validated and were compared to the research presented in Chapter 2 regarding barriers/challenges (Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, & Ballenger, 2007; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2010; Hibbits, 2005, Magdaleno, 2007; Mendéz-Morse, 2004; Ortíz, 1982; Trujillo-Ball, 2003), contributions (Marcano, 1997; Ortíz, 1982; González & Ortíz, 2007), and the lack of numerical representation (NCES, 2010). The following findings are similar to the findings in the literature review:

Career orientation

In regard to career orientation, the participants in my study were go-getters and wanted to make contributions to their field of career. The Latina women participants may be few in number and appear to be overlooked by mainstream researchers. According to my study, many women reported that I was the first researcher to question or highlight their contributions to public education. My findings concurred with Marcano (1997) that Latina women high school principals seek leadership positions. These women, as was found in Magdaleno's (2004) work that Latina women principals have a positive professional and personal relationship with the school board and superintendents. Further, Latina women sought out mentoring programs to assist them in the field of education leadership. They found this to be a key to their success ascending to the principalship role, also found by Magdaleno, 2004).

Discrimination

Like other non-White public high school principals, Latina women also faced discrimination in the field of education. Latina women principals faced discrimination issues (Manual & Slate, 2003). For example, White staff did not believe Latina women were

capable of doing a principal's job and verbally expressed these sentiments to the principals. Latina women faced gender discrimination from Latino males (Magdaleno, 2004) as well. They spoke about being discouraged from applying for the principal positions or not allowing to have full authority in the role of being a principal. Further, Latina women principals are an understudied population in education literature (Trujillo-Ball 2003), due to "the few women of color in educational leadership positions" (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 21). However, from my research it appears that most literature providing details of Latina women principals come from Latina/o researchers. I did not further investigate why majority or White researchers chose not to provide highlights of Latina women public high school principals. Many Latina women principals reported that no one has sought them out to be a research participant.

Experience in education

All principals in this study were highly educated and were well rounded in the educational field. Latina women principals were experienced with more components of the education field in public education before serving as high school principals and these Latina principals held more advanced degrees than what is required for the position of high school principal (González & Ortiz, 2007; Grogan and Shakeshaft, 2011).

Students

As reported by other literature, some Latina women principals worked in schools with a large enrollment of Latino students and high poverty rate (Manual & Slate, 2003). Latina women reported how they were engaged in student interaction and deliberately wanted to be good role models for students. They, Latina women principals, were effective role models for minority students as found in other literature (Magdaleno, 2006).

Change agents

The participants in my study reported how they were labeled change agents. Latina women principals successfully lead schools and were hired to bring about change to fix schools that were in deteriorating conditions as other researchers found in their studies (Ortiz, 1982; González & Ortiz, 2007; Palacio, 2013, unpublished). These were schools that were heavily populated with minority students and majority Latina/o students. Latina women principals are now seen as change agents in schools that are equally diverse with White, Black, and Latino student enrollment. Some are change agents in schools where the majority of students are White. In addition, Latina women principals improved overall student test scores, lowered disciplinary issues, and increased parent involvement (González & Ortiz, 2007). Latinas hired as change agents had a higher percentage of doctoral degrees (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Therefore preparing future Latina women high school principals for the forthcoming changes, such as demographic student body changes, is preferred.

The argument for having Latina high school principals is important for students and personnel of public schools. Latina women principals have incorporated a different approach to analyzing data, problem solving, and resolving issues for fixing academic achievement gaps. This will provide and expand educational experiences for all individuals in schools, school districts, and communities. Principals involved in this study created an environment of academic acceleration, college-going, safe-keeping, respect for each other, advocacy for students, teachers, and parents. All of these contributions can positively affect the community and provide promising futures for future leaders. I hope that an increased number of Latina women will be groomed to develop leadership roles to serve in our public school system as high school principals in the near future. An organization like CALSA

(California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators) is providing training for the development and advancement of Latino public school principals and superintendents. I hope that more organizations follow suite and work within the same capacities.

Contributions for Further Research

The U.S. Census reported a trend that the increasing number of Latino students entering public high schools will continue to grow in the 21st century. The changing student body demographics in public schools is also expanding to the suburbs and different parts of the United States, typically not represented with Latino students. Latina women high school principals have an opportunity to meet the demands of a changing student population. More research needs to be conducted about the principals' responses about their experiences on the effectiveness of their leadership style, how they facilitate and motivate staff, how they dialogue and institute cultural awareness and sensitivity training, and how they use data management as a tool to improve student academic achievement and increased test scores. Further studies could focus on the family and cultural backgrounds of the principals and how those influence decision-making and or perception of principals. This may help to inform scholars and others who prepare or provide guidance to develop Latina women high school principals.

This study could be expanded by researching the similarities and differences between males and females (gender) within the same ethnicity and within their career path experiences. Further, this study could be expanded by researching the similarities and differences among racially diverse female principals about their perceptions of their career path experiences.

Public schools appear to be experiencing quick evolving changes in the way individuals are being sought out to work as high principals. As reported in the current study, women are making workplace and career changes. This could also warrant further investigation, as the pathway to the principalship may not look like they have in previous decades. Furthermore, individuals recruited to the principalship may be selected based on leadership characteristic traits. The current study could warrant further investigation regarding theories in leadership, gender identity, and identity development.

High school principals need to understand the characteristics about diverse students as well as the characteristics about White majority teachers and how the two sets of characteristics impede or enhance teaching and learning. This study would further be amplified in geographic locations where the Latino population is not the majority. This may impact the perceptions of student learning with diverse individuals in different regions.

Future studies could compare and contrast the perceptions of principals' career path experiences of those who work in suburban and urban districts in different regions of the United States, especially as Latino students of the minority (i.e. Black, Asian, Latino) group is increasingly residing in suburban districts. With the student population growing more multicultural, and as family influences emerging as a background for principals, one gap that could exist between the background of principals and the changing student body of the school could include training to work with diverse groups in a non-multicultural district.

Concluding Remarks

Based on the results of the study, Latina women principals value human relations. They value people resources, collaboration, and giving voice to their constituents. The findings from this study also confirm the contributions of other scholars in public education

and educational leadership literature about the contributions made by Latina women high school principals. The interviewed principals for this study provided new information regarding career path development that scholars may consider for their research. During the interview of this study, the findings of career paths were detailed about how the principals were raised, overcame challenges from outside their communities and from within their own communities in order to develop a career as principal. They also shared how they honed in on core values and data tools to guide successful school changes. The data that the principals shared during the interviews for this study provided a window view into how they ascended into their positions of high school principals and how they advocated, mentored, and advised others to follow in their footsteps with the same success.

This study captured an unrepresented group to be learned from regarding how we can increase the representation of the Latina women in the role of high school principals. Further, this study illustrated that Latina women high school principals have the attributes seen in strong leaders. In fact, the principals were promoted because their leaders had endorsed them. The Latina women in this study invoked many different strategies such as: engaging the community, getting superior support, taking on difficult challenging issues, working as principal without appropriate title or principal wages, highlighting core values, and engaging and volunteering for extra work responsibilities. Latina women were data driven in their decision making, many of whom had data analysis expertise and experiences in their prior professional backgrounds. The principals stated that they shared with teachers their use of research (i.e. data management, proven strategies, etc.) to demonstrate capability to manage their principalship responsibilities. For some, this was a way around skirting

issues of stereotyping and of other issues. The principals' ability to improve their school's performance for all students was due to their leadership attributes.

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APPENDIX (A)

Interview Questions (Protocol)

1. Tell me about your background?
2. Tell me about your educational and professional career thus far.
3. Tell me about your journey to becoming a public high school principal?
4. What were some of the supports that helped you advance into your professional career and what barriers did you face as you advanced into your career?
5. Tell me about your personal and professional interactions as you sought to become a public high school principal?
6. Think back over your career path into a principalship position, can you tell me a story of what was most rewarding? Most challenging?
7. Tell me about the strengths you believe you bring to the principalship position?
8. What are the primary attributes from your family values defined as (e.g., values described from the family, beliefs about families, how were values communicated to you, what were they)?
 - a. How were these values modeled or expressed?
 - i. Give examples
 - b. What of those values contributed to your professional career, if any?
 - i. Give examples
9. If you could be any one in history who would it be and what would be the reasons?
10. What philosophy or quote do you live by and why?
11. When you encounter adversity in life and work, how do you manage it?
12. Becoming a public high school principalship is like...?
13. How do you describe your role as public high school principal?
14. What was the best advice you have received, and what advice would you give to Latina women aspiring to your position?
15. Tell me about your next career step?
 - a. How do you plan to get there?

16. Is there anything that I did not ask, that you would like to comment about?

APPENDIX (B)

Organization Membership Listing

ALAS Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents

Tel: (508) 486 – 4536

Contact:

Hania Salameh. Email: hsalameh@alasedu.net

Dr. Agustin Orci, Ececutive Director. Email; aorci@alasedu.net

Raquel Perez Montenegro, Executive Assistant. Email: rpmontenegro@alasedu.net

AHSAA Arizona Hispanic School Administrators Association

P. O. Box 18271

Phoenix, Arizona 85005

OALA Oregon Association Latinos Administrators

Contact:

Dr. Perla Rodriquez, Email: prodriquez@gsd.k12.or.us

Dr. Verence Gutierrez, Email: vgutierr@pps.k12.or.us

CALSA California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators

1029 J Street, Suite 500

Sacramento, CA 95814

Contact:

Sal Villasenor, Email: svillasenor@calsa.org

Socorro Shields, Email: sochiels@yahoo.com

Tom Davis

Cell – 619-607-2876

Office – 858-490-0123

CLASE Colorado Latino Association of School Executives

APPENDIX (C)

Personal Demographics Survey

Directions

Please answer every question as completely as possible.

Personal Demographics

Name – pseudonym

1. What is your age? 25-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 +65
2. What is your highest education attained? (Write academic discipline)
 - a. BA/BS: _____ MS: _____ Ph.D: _____
3. What is your race/ethnicity?
4. What is your district type? Rural Small-Town Suburban Urban
5. Have you spent your entire educational career in one school district? Yes or No
6. How many years have you been a principal? ____ High school principal? ____
7. How many students enrolled in your school? 1-999 1,000-2,999 3,000-4,999
8. What is the percent of students enrolled in your school's free or reduce lunch?
9. What are student ratio demographics in your school?

Hispanic/Latino/a % ____ African American % ____ Asian% ____ White% ____
10. What are the students' family socio-economic demographics in your school?

Hispanic/Latina % ____ African American % ____ Asian% ____ White% ____
11. What is the percentage of ESL/ELL student demographics in your school?
12. What is the school's community race/ethnicity's demographics?
13. In which state is your school district located?
14. What is the public high school principal's salary?

APPENDIX (D)

Telephone, Email, and/or Recruitment Letter

Hello Ms. (High School Principal):

My name is Consuelo Palacio and I am a doctoral student in Urban Education with a concentration in Administration Leadership at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to be part of a research study designed to understand the 'lived-experiences' of Latina women navigating their career paths into public high school principalship.

As a member of the study, you will be asked to fill out a personal data form, participate in a 90 minute interview, and fill out two critical incident surveys. These data sources will allow me to collect your narrative stories of personal and professional 'lived-experiences.' I hope the research findings will be a resource for Latina women leading high schools and for those who will follow in their footsteps, the Latina/o community, principal preparations programs, Cultural Studies, Women Studies, Career Development, and update education literature.

This study is being supervised by Gail Schneider, dissertation committee Chair for this research study and faculty at the Graduate School of Urban Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; She can be reached at (414) 229 – 5253 or gts@uwm.edu. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. Your identity and information will be protected, as pseudonyms will be used to replace your name. Collected data will be stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home. Findings will be shared with the dissertation committee members: Dr. Gail Schneider, Dr. R. Antrop-Gonzales, Dr. L. Martin, Dr. R. Smith, and Dr. P. Arredondo. If you have any questions regarding the researcher or the findings of the research or wish to have a copy of the findings, you may contact the researcher at Consuelo@uwm.edu.

Participation in this study is voluntary; and you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

APPENDIX (E)

Consent Form

Dear Ms. (High School Principal):

My name is Consuelo Palacio and I am a doctoral student in Urban Education with a concentration in Administration Leadership at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to be part of a research study designed to understand the 'lived experiences' of self-identified Latina women navigating their career paths into public high school principalship.

If you agree to be in this study you will be asked to participate in one 90- minute interview related to your personal experiences and professional experiences navigating your career paths into public high school principalship. In addition, two Critical Incident Surveys will be provided to you, along with a personal data form to fill out. The personal data form should take 3-5 minutes to complete. The Critical Incident Surveys should take 10-12 minutes to respond to each of the questions. This study will seek to capture the experiences of ten Latina women high school principals located at school districts established in the west, mid-western, and southwestern states. These data sources will allow me to collect your narrative stories of personal and professional 'lived-experiences.' I hope the research findings will be a resource for Latina women leading high schools and for those who will follow in their footsteps, the Latino community, principalship preparation programs, and update education literature.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study. Possible benefits include adding to the literature in the fields of Administration Leadership, Urban Education, Cultural Studies, Women Studies, Career Development, and the Latino community regarding leadership development and contributing strategic factors for securing and maintaining the position as high school principal in secondary public education.

The critical incident survey and all interview information will be secured and stored away in a lock box, and will remain confidential. As a way of protecting your privacy, pseudonyms will replace your identity. Data from this study will be shared with my dissertation committee and may be published in professional journals. Participation in this study is voluntary; and you may withdraw at any time during the interviewing process or while filling out the Critical Incident Survey. Reasons for withdrawing from this study will be unquestioned and without penalty. Once the study is completed, I would be happy to email the final results to you. Please contact me if you have any questions or information you may need regarding this study.



Consuelo@uwm.edu

or

Dr. Gail Schnieder
School of Education
Department of Administrative
Leadership
PO Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201
(414) 229–5253 or 229–4721
gts@uwm.edu

If you have any complaints about your experience as a participant in this study, please call or write to:

Benjamin Kennedy
IRB Administrator
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
The Graduate School at University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
PO Box 340, MIT 206 Milwaukee, WI 53201
(414) 229 – 3182 (phone) (414) 229 – 5000 (fax)
kennedbj@uwm.edu

Although your name will be requested, all complaints will be kept confidential.
This research project is pending approval by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects for a one-year period.

PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT & CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in a research study exploring “The lived experiences of high school Latina women serving in secondary public education.” I understand the purpose and nature of this study and I am participating voluntarily. I grant permission for the data to be used in the process of completing a Ph.D degree, including dissertation and any other future publication. I also grant permission for all interview sessions to be taped recorded, digitally recorded or computer generated.

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| | |
| Printed Name of Participant | Date |
| | |
| Signature of Participant | Date |

1. What happened?
2. When and where did it happen?
3. Who was involved? (Do not use real names)
4. What was it about the event that was so distressing to you?
5. Was it resolved? If so how?

APPENDIX (G)**Critical Incident Questionnaire**

Directions: Take 10-12 minutes to respond to each of the questions below about your personal experiences as a Latina woman had with aspiring to a public high school principalship position; or acquiring the public high school principalship position. Do not put your name on this form as your responses are anonymous. This information will be discussed upon your request should you desire to elaborate in order for me to understand how these experiences positively or negatively impacted you as a high school principal in secondary public education.

Think back over the time as you navigated your career path into the public high school principalship position. Provide me with an example of a **positive event** involving a personal experience as a Latina woman related to aspiring to a public high school principalship position; or choose a **positive event** with the same circumstances related to acquiring the public high school principalship position. Think back over the past year or several school years. The event should be one that kept you feeling cheerful and encouraged for the entire day or night, excited about how your career aspirations, choices or expectations were handled, and the impact it had on your life. Write some notes regarding this incident and include the following details.

1. What happened?

2. When and where did it happen?

3. Who was involved? (Do not use real names)

4. What was it about the event that was so positive to you?

APPENDIX (H)

Demographic Profile

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|----------|---------|---------------------------------------|----|---|---|-----|-------------|-----|-----------------------------------|------|---------------|
| Oscar | 36 - 45 | Educational Leadership | M | S | N | 8 | 1,500 | 85% | H=93% AA=<1% A=<1% W=12% | 14% | CA 140-150 |
| Vestes | 46 - 55 | Counseling & Education Administration | M | S | N | 4 | 3,000-4,999 | 13% | H=22% AA=7% A=24% W=33% | 1% | CA 125-150 |
| Ram | 25 - 35 | Education Leadership | M | U | Y | 2.5 | 1,000-2,999 | 74% | H=94% AA=1% A=4% W=4% | 8.7% | TX 85 |
| Reyes | 46 - 55 | Education Specialist | B | U | N | 1 | ? | 71% | H=13% AA=65% A=0% W=22% | 13% | FL 104 |
| Palacio | 36 - 45 | Education Leadership | M | S | N | 1 | 3,000-4,999 | 18% | H=36% AA=7% A=13% W=36% | 13% | CA 113-120 |
| Martinez | 46 - 55 | Adult & Post Secondary Ed. | PR | S | N | 1 | 1-999 | 95% | H=83% AA=15% A=2% W=2% | <1% | TX 81 |
| Maldon | 46 - 55 | Education Administration | C | U | N | 11 | 1,000-2,999 | 81% | H=37% AA=39% A=7% W=15% | 1% | 120-140 |
| Alonso | 46 - 55 | Administration Leadership | M | U | | 4 | | | | | CA 100+ |

Note: S=Suburban; U=Urban; M=Mexican; B=Brazilian; PR=Puerto Rican; C=Cuban

Note: Heading 1=Name; 2=Age; 3=Academic Major; 4=Ethnicity; 5=District Type; 6=More than 1 district as Principal; 7=Number of Years as high school principal; 8=Student population in school; 9=Free and reduced lunch; 10=Student Racial Demographics; 11=ESL/ELL; 12=State/Salary

APPENDIX (I):

Historical Perspective

Historical Background on the Principalship

Principals did not always exist. The principalship position evolved over time as schools grew in numbers and expanded with increased student enrollment. In 1812, “New York State established the first office of superintendent of common schools” (Glass et al., 2004, p. 13) for the purpose of managing fiscal matters. The non-professional teacher was generally the most educated parent in the towns (p. 14) and in the rural sections (Sisk, 1953). They acted as both teacher and supervisor of the school-house. As the evolution of the principalship position transpired, “principals were considered part-time administrators subordinate to the superintendent in his administrative role, but holding the status of teacher” (Payne, 1901; as cited Glass et al., 2004, p. 19).

Over time, the number of principals grew tremendously (Glass et al., 2004, p. 3). Like schools in rural areas, schools developed in cities across the United States. Ultimately, urban school districts in large cities were viewed as models in administrative practice (p. 137). The need to train teachers to become principals resulted in the rapid growth in the number of school buildings (pp. 127, 135) in urban settings (pp. 2, 31).

The school administrator profession developed from 1820 through 1914 (Glass et al., 2004, p. 135). The role of administrator was considered a true profession in 1901 (p. 32) when the role was identified. Between 1875 and 1900, there was a phenomenal growth in full-time principals (p. 32).

Principals were needed to manage the growing number of secondary schools as they took over grades eighth and ninth (Glass et al., 2004, p. 53). They headed the newly created

junior high schools founded in 1909-1920 (Butts, 1955, p. 540; Newsom & Langfitt, 1940, p. 5; as cited in Glass et al., 2004). Finally, principals facilitated the expansion of secondary schools that resulted from the increasing number of 14-18 year olds who enrolled in high schools. In 1900, 10% of 14-18 year olds were in school and by 1936, 65% of 14-18 year olds were in school (p. 54).

Formal training in education administration increased as the rapid pace of new schools and administrative positions increased, and were highly influenced and shaped by former “schoolmen” (Glass et al., 2004, p. 132) who progressed in their education career. The men held positions as teachers, principals, later superintendents, and ultimately professors and textbook authors. In their role as a professor, they recruited school principals and superintendents. The former administrators became the experts in the education field and wrote practice-based textbooks for principal instruction (p. 128) to be studied at home.

Principals and aspiring principals studied the textbooks at home as there were few colleges supporting educational administration (Glass et al., 2004, p. 136). Eventually, training books were placed at high schools, which included extended grades thirteen and fourteen. After some time, two-year colleges were created for training. Finally, institutions such as Teacher’s College, George Peabody College, Stanford University, the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin provided educational administration preparation and training. Ultimately, educational administration certification was established for “professional legitimacy,” (p. 5) credibility, and selection of principals.

The former school principals were majority White male. They were products of the first settlements of the New England Protestant churches established in the United States. The New England church members established the first schools and dominated the education

system across the United States in the 1840s (Glass et al., 2004, pp. 127-128). Religious traditions and beliefs influenced public education taught in schools. The male administrators were embraced and followed religious Protestant church culture (p. 127). The principalship training included the maintenance “of strict moral upbringing required by the Anglo-Saxon Protestant work ethic that was so much a part of life in the America of their time” (p. 128). Religious culture also influenced preparation and training; and how principals learned administrator roles, responsibilities and character. Further, they noted what a principal should resemble.

Administrators who became professors acted as change agents, mentors, career placement recruiters and made job placements for principals in particular (Glass et al., 2004, p. 129). They “influenced their students and identified best practices and trait characteristics of best leaders” (p. 5). They also dictated who was acceptable to be a school administrator (Chancellor, 1904; as cited in Glass et al., 2004). Religion also influenced how men perceived women. Women were perceived as not equal to men. For example, women were restricted from education administration and leadership positions. Women were typecast as too soft and unfit for school board members or administrators. The principalship was promoted to male candidates and men were expected to mirror the profile of school principal (Glass et al., 2004, p. 39).

The opinions of these experts became the law of educational administration (Glass et al., 2004, p. 137) and were highly influential. They also advocated for “men’s salary [to] remain higher than [for] women [teachers]” (Koo et al., 1940, pp. 346, 420-422; as cited in Glass et al., 2004, p. 52). The role of women in education was restricted. Although teachers were overwhelmingly women (p. 51), some school districts practiced “Blue Law” (p. 51).

This law dictated how married women should be excluded from teacher hiring. Women also faced termination upon marriage (p. 51). Although few women reached ranks of principal in those days, many of the women faced discriminatory conditions as they advanced into the position as principals. Women educators were generally assigned to rural townships making considerably less money compared to male principals who worked in urban districts.

Although both female and male students in schools were teacher candidates, many women advanced into teacher roles. Primarily White males filled lead teacher and school principal roles. These men advanced into the role of high-ranking administrative positions such as superintendent. Over time, some of these men became college and university professors of education administration. They promoted the practice of women's exclusion into public education administration and held on to deficit expectation that of women were not competent to work as principals (Glass et al., 2004).

Mid-twentieth Century Background on Principals

By the mid-twentieth century up to the 21st century, principals were trained to learn management theory with the foundation based on the version of Dewey's "Democracy for teachers" called group policy-making (Koopman, Miel & Meir, 1963, p. 50; as cited in Glass et al., 2004, p. 68). Principals were encouraged to share in the execution of administrative policy and were to include teachers as "contributors to cooperative procedures" (p. 67). Further, principals were introduced to the social movement era of 30 years with the inclusion and support in "multiculturalism, feminism and religious conservatism" (p. 112). Principals were encouraged to utilize the management theory created by Sergiovanni and Carver in 1973 (p. 102). This is when sociology and psychology are transferred into the educational realm. The purpose was to "loosen bureaucratic structures and find ways by which staff,

students and parents can be treated in humane ways” (p. 102-103). It was used in conflict resolution and leadership style, according to Glass et al., (2004).

By 2000, principals were challenged to reform their schools in an effort to focus on student learning achievement. Principals also focused on best practices. Presently, practicing principals are mandated by legislation to “adopt site-based management and planning models” (p. 120) as a way of managing daily operations.

The principals are high-ranking administrators of elementary, middle, and high schools in the public school district (Ubben et al., 2004). They report to the superintendents, directors, specialists, coordinators or associate superintendents of either elementary or secondary content areas. Others identified as “elementary and secondary curriculum experts, assistant or associate superintendents can evaluate principals” (Ortíz, 1982, p. 12). Top administrators of private schools are called headmasters (Jorgenson, 2006). Headmasters have similar responsibilities to that of public school principals. The major differences are that the headmasters have more influence in the schools, have less bureaucratic interference and must conduct fundraising activities (Jorgenson, 2006). Other schools managed by school administrators are parochial, charter and magnet schools (Ubben et al., 2004). School managers are also identified as school executives, school administrators, school principals, school heads, and headmasters (Jorgenson, 2006; Ubben et al., 2004). They are responsible for “orderliness and certitude. [They are] oriented and assume a highly stable environment. [They] keep things moving correctly according to the norm...[and] operate from a problem-solving perspective” (Ubben et al., 2004, p. 16). They assume managerial functions and logistics of a school (Ubben et al., 2004).

More substantially, principals impact “working conditions [for teachers] by improving the school culture” (Deal & Peterson, 2003; as cited in Greenlee & Brown, Jr., 2009, p. 98; Sergiovanni, 1999) in high need schools characterized by high poverty, high minority enrollment or low academic performance (Greenlee & Brown, Jr., 2009, p. 101-102). Overall, principals have the potential to retain their teaching staff in urban settings (Easley, 2006, p. 241).

The history of school principalship has evolved over several decades to define roles and responsibilities. The transfer of educational leadership has moved from White men dominant to include women and people of color through policy driven initiatives, and court cases, such as the case *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka*, or through women’s political reform (Grogan and Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 86).

APPENDIX (J)

Latino Cultural Values

Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, Gallardo-Goober's (2002), *The Chadwick Center for*

Children and Families, defined a set of Latina/o Cultural Values:

- *Familismo* is the preference for maintaining a close connection to the family. Latinos/Hispanics, in general, are socialized to value close relationships, cohesiveness, and cooperativeness with other family members. These close relationships are typically developed across immediate and extended family members as well as close friends of the family (Marín & Triandis, 1985).
- [*Los hijos—sons and daughters*] *Value of Children* reflects the value that Latino/Hispanic families place on children. Parents are often very affectionate with their children. However, in some homes, children are expected to be seen, and not heard (Pajewski & Enriquez, 1996).
- *Marianismo* is a gender-specific value that applies to Latina females. [Stevens (1973), defined *Marianismo* as a “cultural structure...rigidly enforced” (p. mm) to produce the socialization of submissive behaving women in Latina society. Jezzini, Guzmán, and Grayshield (2008) stated that *Marianismo* is, “a traditional gender code of behavior for Latinas...” (p. 3). Kulis, Marsiglis, Lingard, Nieri, and Nagoshi (2008) extended the definition of *Marianismo*, as a gender role theme that influence gender role scripts for Latina women (p. 260).]
- *Machismo* is a gender-specific value that applies to Latino males. [Also called *macho*, culture is also termed *Machismo*, and refers to an aspect of masculine identity in relation to family expectations. Role themes influences are socially acceptable for men of Latin countries, and are thought to originate from the Spanish conquest of Mexican Indians. Dominant characteristics include maintaining patriarchal status, believing in male superiority, controlling, and being aggressive toward women (Comas-Días, 1987). Aspects of gender differences or inequities are clearly marked and emphasized, but not necessarily present in all families.]
- *Personalismo* is the valuing and building of interpersonal relationships... it encourages the development of warm and friendly relationships, as opposed to impersonal or overly formal relationships (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002).
- *Respeto* implies deference to authority or a more hierarchical relationship orientation. *Respeto* emphasizes the importance of setting clear boundaries and knowing one's place of respect in hierarchical relationship (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002).

- *Simpatía* [kindness] emphasizes the importance of being polite and pleasant, even in the face of stress and adversity. Avoidance of hostile confrontation is an important component of *Simpatía*...
- *Religion and Spirituality* refers to the critical role that faith plays in the everyday life of most Latinos/Hispanics. Most are Christian, with the majority belonging to the Roman Catholic Church...religion offers a sense of direction in their lives and guidance in the education and raising of their children...(Pajewski & Enriquez, 1996).

APPENDIX (K)

Career Experiences of Latina Women Principals

| Name | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----|
| Vestes | HS Teacher's Assistant 2 yrs | HS Teacher 1.5 yrs | HS Counselor 12 yrs | University Education/ Research Supervisor 4 yrs | HSAP 1 yr | HSP 2 yrs | MSP 7 yrs | HSP |
| Reyes | Middle School Teacher 10 yrs | MSP 2 yrs | HSAP 7 yrs | | | | | HSP |
| Oscar | HS Teacher 3 yrs | HSAP 3yrs | HSAP 1 yr | HSP School #1 8 yrs | | | | HSP |
| Palacio | Elemen- tary Teacher 1 yr | HS Teacher 5 yrs | Staff Develop- ment 3 yrs | Support Provider Some yrs | Staff Coach 1 yr | HSAP 3 yrs | HSAP 2 yrs | HSP |
| Martina | HS Teacher 1 yr | HSAP 2 yrs | HSAP 2 yrs | HSAP 1 yr | HSAP 2 yrs | | | HSP |
| Maldon | HS Teacher 5 yrs | HSAP 5 yrs | HSP Unknown yrs | MSP 5 yrs | | | | HSP |
| Alonzo | HS Teacher 11 yrs | HS Coun- selor 1 yr | HSAP 3 yrs | HS Principal On Central Office 3 yrs | | | | HSP |
| Ramirez | HS Teacher 4 yrs | HSAP 3 yrs | | | | | | HSP |

Note: High School Assistant Principal (HSAP); High School Principal (HSP); Middle School Principal (MSP).

APPENDIX (L): Vitae
Consuelo A. Palacio
Consuelo@uwm.edu

EDUCATION

| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Urban Education Dec | Doctoral Program 2013 | Graduation: |
| Major: Educational Administration & Supervision Minors: Curriculum/Instruction and Business Administration <i>University of Wisconsin –Milwaukee, (UWM)</i> | | |
| Master of Business Administration – Management & Human Resources | | 1998 |
| <i>Lindenwood University –St. Charles, Missouri</i> | | |
| Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Humanities | | 1996 |
| <i>University of Missouri –Kansas City, (UMKC)</i> | | |

ACADEMIA AND STUDENT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Instructional Substitute Teacher | 09/2007 – Present | 09/2002 – 2005 |
| <i>Kenosha Unified School District, WI</i> | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach core instructional academics to diverse student, K-12; 30 students per class. • Facilitate a school culture that encourages an appreciation of higher education. • Provide support to retain students who come from disadvantage backgrounds. | | |
| Student Advisor | | 03/2007 - |
| 2010 | | |
| <i>Kenosha Unified School District, WI</i> | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided presentations on college entrance, financial aid options and study skills. • Conducted recruitment workshops. • Designed cultural identity and leadership development seminars. • Coordinated all aspects of academic student support group for the Minority Academic Affairs Director. • Increased student attendance by more than 15%. • Motivated students to be academic achieving. • Recognized student accomplishments with awards. • Communicated with school directors, teachers, parents and agency directors. • Planned fieldtrips, community service, and other activities. | | |
| School Instructional Leader | | |
| <i>The Council for the Spanish Speaking, Inc. – Milwaukee, WI</i> | | 06/2007 – 11/2007 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created precollege booklet for academic development for at-risk high students. • Partnered with school to facilitate a pilot student life program initiative. • Instructed teachers and support staff on the pre college program curriculum. | | |

- Designed assessment tool for measured effectiveness.
- Reported student survey and measured results, 90% learning, to principal and CEO of funding resource.

Graduate Administrative Assistant/Student Advisor
08/2004 – 05/2007
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

- Supervised staff and teacher certification Education Resource Center.
- Monitored student progress as they proceeded through their state exams for college completion.
- Provided advising to diverse student population in higher education.
- Facilitated workshops to underrepresented emergency-licensed teachers K-12.
- Coordinated workshops in partnership with Milwaukee Public School's (MPS) Transition to Teaching Alternative Certification Program and Administrators.
- Communicated raw test score results to director for grant preparation.
- Reported proven track record of effective learning with an 80% passing rate for students who use ERC.
- Successfully instructed learners who had diverse learning styles, education levels, and language barriers.
- Participated in Division of Student Affairs committees, activities, and programs.

Graduate Research Assistant
01/2003 – 01/2004
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

- Assisted in the facilitation of private and public forums on diversity issue dialogue.
- Supported the Chair who investigated the extent to which UWM had provided an accepting and accommodating environment for faculty, staff, and administrators from various racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- Utilized Internet and library to research studies in education and campus climate.
- Managed budget and entered confidential survey results into database.
- Worked with professors in other departments to encourage and support diversity/inclusion programs.
- Assisted with the coordination of diversity/inclusion needs assessment initiatives.

Summer Youth Program Coordinator
Summer 2006
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

- Monitored daily operations of the program for middle and high school students.
- Interacted with university directors, teachers, students and parents.
- Facilitated enrollment in partnership with Kenosha Unified School District.
- Recruited underprivileged students of diverse career backgrounds.
- Coordinated student pick up schedule with transportation management.

RELATED KPROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Coordinator of Spanish Outreach Program
09/2001 – 04/2002

Aurora Health Care – Kenosha, WI

- Managed the overall grant funded grassroots outreach program.
- Recruited all new hires for the outreach program.
- Assisted in new hire orientation.
- Assisted department heads in job training.
- Assessed skill levels for beginning English language learners (oral/written, Spanish/English).
- Created lesson plans for- and instructed English as a Second Language.
- Facilitated pre- and post-assessment for educational reported outcomes.

Supervisor of Customer Relations**08/2000 – 04/2001***JCPenny Catalog Logistics – Lenexa, KS*

- Coordinated diversity initiatives to increase multicultural awareness.
- Conducted personnel disciplinary reports.
- Provided leadership training.
- Led Staff meetings.
- Provided training to staff for email written communication.
- Managed the quality and overall performance of staff and team leaders daily.
- Utilized written, oral, and interpersonal skills to communicate with department manager and work team.

OTHER

- Bilingual
- Invited speaker to dialogue with parents about student residential living (Marian University Wisconsin).
- Completed Latino Nonprofit Leadership Program (LNLP) certification. Participated in World Café circle.
- Advanced Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Chaperoned ten students age 14-21 to LULAC leadership conference in Puerto Rico 2009
- Martin Luther King Celebration. Coordinated youth participation. Sponsored by KUSD 2009.
- Hispanic Youth Leadership Conference. Coordinated youth group and chaperoned. Chicago, 2008.
- Holiday service project to the Women and Children's Horizon. Kenosha, 2008.
- Advise students on college preparation. Developed Educational Resource Booklet and College Preparation curriculum; managed televised convention of 'Outstanding Latinas in American History'; and recruited presenters for the workshops. Sponsored by KUSD 2006-present (Invited)
- Provided workshop on "Navigating Academic Success, College Preparedness & Awareness" at MPS Loyola High School, 2007
- American Association for Adult and Continuing Education Convention, Milwaukee, WI. 2006 (Invited)
- Co-planned and facilitated three workshops on academic success in college for UW Milwaukee students, CoSS, 2006, 2007
- Served on Search and Screen Committee for KUSD school superintendent, 2004
- Researched and listed strategies for teachers to use in reading; and researched and developed a reading curriculum list of more than 200 books for Milwaukee's Frances Starns Center school library designed to inspire African American 8th grade students, *Chaired by* Dr. Beverly Cross. Member on School Curriculum Committee, 2004

UW MILWAUKEE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS and/or COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 2009 | LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), State Secretary (Appointed) |
| 2007-present | <i>She Magazine: For the Women of Southeast Wisconsin</i> , 10-member Advisory Board (invited) |
| 2004 – 2008 | Council on Student Success (CoSS), (Initiative on recruitment/retention) Co-Chair (2006-2007) |
| 2003 – 2004 (guest) | Task Force on Race and Ethnicity, Secretary |

SELECTED TRAINER/PRESENTER/SERVICE

2008

- Presented at KUSD, "Skills Development to Achieve Academic Success"

2007

- Presented at the Marian College incoming freshman parent orientation, “Marian College experience as a parent”
 - Presented at Kansas University *Social Work with Latinos*, “Factors which promote educational achievement”
 - Presented workshop to UWM students and CoSS committee, “How to Get an ‘A’ in College”
 - Presented at KUSD, “How to Get an ‘A’ in School”
- 2006
- Presented on the PPST (Pre Professional Skills Test) to Education intended UWM students
 - Presented to the MPS (Milwaukee Public School) Emergency Licensed Teaching Staff PRAXIS I workshop (PPST)
- 2005
- Presented to Education intended UWM Students, “PRAXIS I Preparation”
 - Presented on the PPST (Pre Professional Skills Test) to Education intended UWM students
- 2004
- Presented to administrators at the MPS Frances Starns Discovery Learning Center a newly developed Handbook of Readings for readers in Grades 5-8.

SELECTED SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING

- 2009
- LULAC conference, Puerto Rico
- 2008
- American Education Research Association (AERA) convention, New York.
- 2007
- Urban Education Doctoral Program (UEDP), “Writing for Publication”
 - Roberto Hernández Center (RHC), Hispanic Heritage Month, “Pros and Cons - When Latinos Conduct Research on Latinos”
 - Completed The Master Tutor training on-line
 - American Education Research Association (AERA) convention, Chicago
 - Women’s Leadership Conference
- 2006
- Urban Education Doctoral Program (UEDP), Research Forum Presentations
 - American Education Research Association (AERA) convention, San Francisco
 - American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) convention
 - Urban Forum, “Daring to Educate for Equity and Excellence through Multicultural Education”
 - Round table member Urban Forum, speaker, James Banks
- 2005
- Urban Education Doctoral Program (UEDP), Research Forum Presentations
 - Urban Forum, “Looking Back at Lau vs. Nichols: Issues of Language and Cultural Diversity in Urban Schools”
- 2004
- Urban Education Doctoral Program (UEDP), Research Forum Presentations

- Urban Forum, “Educational Inequality and the Promise of Brown”
- 2003
- Urban Forum, “American Dilemmas: Race, Inequality, and the Unfulfilled Promise of Public Education”

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Education Research Association (AERA)
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- Latino Nonprofit Leadership Program (LNLP)
- League of United Latin American Citizen (LULAC)
- National Education Association (NEA)
- Wisconsin Women in Higher Education (WWHEL)
- The American Association of University Women (AAUW)

AWARDS

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| 2008 | Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee |
| Scholarship | |
| 2007 | Mary Jo Pesch and Larry Martin Education |
| Scholarship | |
| 2007 | Roberto Hernandez Center Faculty and Graduate |
| Student Applied Latino | |
| Research Grant | |
| 2006 | The Dean’s Education Honor Roll Scholarship |
| 2005 | Russel D. Robinson Adult Education Scholarship |
| 2004 | Russel D. Robinson Adult Education Scholarship |