A Study of Latina K-12 Public School Administrators: Barriers and Strategies to Career

Advancement and the Impact of Race and Gender on Ascension and Leadership

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband Bradley for his unwavering encouragement and support. Bradley, for the countless times that you understood my need to conduct research instead of spending family time and for the unselfish ways that you gave up your time so that I could pursue my dream, I thank you. The countless drives you took to the forest, the park, or the pool with our girls so that I could focus on this research will never be forgotten. Please know that this degree is as much yours as it is mine.

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ABSTRACT

The numbers of Latinas in educational leadership positions are minuscule and not reflective of the Hispanic student population in the United States. Limited studies exist exclusively on the lived experiences of Latina administrators and the roles that race and gender play in their careers.

Grounded on critical race theory, this mixed methods research study identified barriers related to the attainment, retention, and promotion of Latina, K-12 educational leaders. It then examined the effects of these barriers, as well as identifying successful strategies employed by Latina educational leaders in order to overcome perceived barriers. This study also examined the roles that race and gender play in the careers of Latina educational administrators.

The findings of this study were derived from a Likert-type questionnaire, inclusive of categorical responses, open-ended responses, and a voluntary short-answer section that was administered to Latinas in the roles of public school assistant principals and principals. Data were also gathered from interviews conducted with four Latina public school administrators. Data were analyzed by utilizing SPSS 23 statistical software and through thematic categorization.

Results indicate that race and gender may be inseparable factors challenging Latinas in their attaining and advancing through educational leadership roles and that race and gender play integral roles in Latinas' leadership practice and style. Latina administrators contend with racism, racial stereotyping, deficit thinking, cronyism, menial role assignment, and a lack of professional support systems. Latinas employ many successful strategies to compete with perceived barriers that would likely challenge their career advancement.

Recommendations for ensuring equitable hiring practices, increasing Latina educational leadership representation, and promoting diversity within institutions of learning were presented. A call to action to eradicate racial and gender bias, racism, racial discrimination, stereotyping, and deficit thinking on aspiring and practicing Latina administrators was made as a result of the findings in this study.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Latinas have been notably absent from the study of educational leadership (López, 1996;

Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, Murakami, Byrne-Jimenez & Hernandez, 2015;

Murakami, Hernández, Méndez-Morse, & Byrne-Jiménez, 2015; Sánchez & Usinger, 2008;

Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). The limited number of studies of minority female school

administrators "conducted since the late 1970s usually appeared in larger studies of women"

(Santiago, 2009, p.1).

The research about Hispanic women in educational administration is limited. Literature

focusing on female minorities usually includes African-American women, with very little

research focus on Latina administrators. Underrepresentation of Latinas in school leadership

positions is evident in the literature (Byrd, 1999; Byrd-Blake, 2004; Méndez-Morse, 2000;

Méndez-Morse, et al, 2015; Sánchez, et. al; 2008; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Whitaker & Vogel,

2006; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Alemán (2009) and Méndez-Morse (2000) identified

possible reasons for the absence of Latinas in research studies: few researchers focus on the lived

experiences of Latinas; a limited number of Latinas hold educational administration positions;

and it has been a tradition in education to research "without centering issues of race" (Alemán,

2009, p. 291).

Latinas are relatively as scarce in leadership positions in public schools as they are in

literature. Nonetheless, fractional representation does not equal nonexistence but, rather, may

indicate exclusion or neglect, and that absence negates Latinas' historical contributions and

further understanding of their leadership styles or practices (Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015). A thorough analysis of historical data of school administrators clearly indicates Latina underrepresentation in the leadership ranks. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reveals the following demographic data on school administrators. In 2012, 52 % of all public-school principals were females. In 2013, it was reported that that 81.8 % of all school principals, male and female, were White, 9.4 % African-American, and 6.0 % Hispanic (these demographic data were exclusive of gender).

Latina school administrators are undeniably underrepresented when compared to their White and African-American counterparts (Bitterman, Goldring, & Gray, 2013). Many obstacles have been identified as possible reasons for that underrepresentation. However, those barriers need further investigating. Méndez-Morse et al. (2015) recommend further studies to examine race or ethnicity as a barrier and how gender and race can benefit Latina leaders' careers or practice.

Fernández, Bustamante, Combs, and Martinez-Garcia (2015) and Sánchez et. al (2008) have recognized the potential benefits of Latina leadership. They maintain that effective leaders, who can identify racially and ethnically with the students they serve, can influence their development and future aspirations, as well as increase motivation and academic engagement. Diversity in school leadership is ever important, especially to support historically underserved and underprivileged students. The contributions of Latina administrators are critical to minority student development. In the absence of adult role models with whom to identify, students' academic performance may suffer; in fact, that may be one of many factors impeding Hispanic

students from improving their educational attainment when compared to students of other ethnic or racial groups (Fernández et al., 2015; Murakami, et. al., 2015).

In addition, Latina principals are imperative because they can guide students through the racial and gender barriers they face, can provide guidance to students whose parents lack knowledge of the school system, and can demonstrate to all students that leadership positions can be filled by minorities of all ethnicities (Magdaleno, 2006, Sánchez, et. al., 2008).

If meaningful change is to occur in the recruitment of Latina public school administrators, then a thorough examination into the policies and practices in which race and gender intersect and limit ascension through the ranks must be conducted. There is a pressing need for educational systems—beginning with leadership preparation programs—to focus on practices which will help all educational leaders examine biases and assumptions as well as eradicate inequitable practices which maintain the status quo and limit opportunities for Latinas to enter or ascend through the educational leadership hierarchies.

The Problem

In the United States (U.S.), the overall numbers of Hispanic women in educational leadership positions are miniscule despite the fact that a majority of teachers as well as graduate students in educational administration programs are women (NCES, 2014). Historically, minority women have been absent or excluded from educational leadership positions, but their fractional representation is no accident. Racial and ethnic discrimination, gender bias, lack of support and mentoring systems, and cultural stereotypes are merely some factors researchers have identified as contributors to the disparity (Alemán, 2009; Brooks & Brooks, 2013; Byrd, 1999; Byrd-Bake, 2004; Fernández, et al., 2015; Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Gardiner & Enomoto, 2000; Grogan, 1999; Haven, Adkinson, & Bagley, 1980; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015; Myung, Loeb & Horng 2011; Ortiz, 1998; Richard, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Steele, Spencer & Aronson, 2002; Tallerico & Tingley, 2001; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Another factor identified as a barrier to minority women pursuing advancement in the educational leadership hierarchy centers on gatekeepers. In effect, per Coleman (2012), "the potential blocking of appointments by gatekeepers raises question about the selection processes and about equality of opportunity" (p. 601). While overall numbers of female minority educational leaders remain stagnant, the minority student population in the U.S. continues to rise (SASS, 2012). Minorities make up over 50 percent of all students enrolled in public schools in the U.S.; 26 percent of those are Hispanic (SASS, 2012). It is with a sense of urgency that strategies to increase Latina representation in school leadership roles should be identified. Such representation is imperative in order "to equate with the demographic population in the country" (Byrd-Blake, 2004, p. 2).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to itemize and illuminate barriers that limit Latina women from ascending through leadership hierarchies, identify the effects which perceived barriers may have on career ascension and leadership, and reveal successful strategies employed to overcome them. It was also the purpose of this study to highlight Latina leadership experiences to determine the extent to which gender and race were related to ascension and leadership practices. This study was conducted with the intention of providing suggestions to ensuring equitable hiring practices and increasing Latina representation within public institutions of learning. Furthermore, another purpose of this study was to create a framework which may aid Latinas, both aspiring leaders and those already within the educational leadership ranks, in overcoming race and gender-related challenges which they may face in the workplace.

Studies exist regarding barriers affecting minority women as they ascend through leadership hierarchies (Byrd-Blake, 1999; Gates, Ringel, Santibañez, Ross, & Chung, 2003; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006), barriers faced by minorities of both genders in secondary educational leadership positions (Fernández, et al., 2015), characteristics of Latina and Latino educational leaders through a Critical Race theory (CRT) lens (Alemán, 2009), and the ways in which cultural identity impacts minority leaders' leadership styles (Santamaria & Gaetane, 2014). However, few studies exist applying a critical race theoretical lens to the barriers faced by Latina women when ascending through leadership hierarchies, as well as to the strategies they employ in order to overcome them.

There is an urgent need to expand the knowledge base on Latina leaders in order to gain a better understanding of their lived experiences, help others seeking to ascend through leadership

ranks, assist in developing future leaders, and provide a framework for public institutions to promote and sustain diverse leadership.

Rationale

This study included Hispanic females who had experienced a transition from teacher to educational administrator. The use of a quantitative survey and interviews with Latina educational leaders provided insights to possible reasons for the underrepresentation of Hispanic females in administrative roles within public education.

Perceptions of barriers hindering Latinas from attaining leadership roles or ascending within the administrative ranks in public schools surfaced in the quantitative and qualitative analyses. Tacit assumptions and beliefs regarding race, ethnicity, culture, and gender held by the majority culture that had kept Latinas from advancing their careers also surfaced in the use of mixed methods analysis. The information provided by this study may assist school districts in examining recruitment and retention policies and practices, as well as racial and gender assumptions and biases, assisting them in diversifying educational leadership so that it mirrors the races and ethnicities of the diverse student population served in K-12 schools throughout the U.S.

In addition, strategies employed by Latina administrators to overcome their perceived barriers arose following the analysis of this study's mixed methods approach. This information may aid aspiring and practicing Latina administrators to ameliorate their struggles. Identified strategies may also assist administrators of the majority culture in providing professional development opportunities for their staff.

There is limited research as to Latinas' experiences with race and gender as relates to hiring, promotion, and leadership practices, and even fewer studies exploring the experiences of Latina administrators under the critical race theoretical framework. Interviews with participants regarding perceptions on the roles that race or ethnicity and gender have on ascension and leadership practices further explain the status of Hispanic women in educational leadership positions and allow for a deeper understanding of the experiences of that racially marginalized group of women. Critical race theory allowed for understanding the experiences of persons who were marginalized for their race or ethnicity, gender or class, or the intersectionality of race and any other forms of subordination, in order to challenge the status quo and move towards social justice (Alemán, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question: What are the experiences of Latina women who have ascended through educational leadership hierarchies? Four research sub-questions directed the form and content of this study:

1. What do Latina school administrators perceive as barriers hindering their advancement through leadership hierarchies?

2. How do perceived barriers affect career advancement?

3. What are the strategies employed by Latina administrators in order to overcome the perceived barriers to advancement through educational leadership hierarchies?

4. Do race and/or gender benefit Latina leaders in their roles as public school administrators? If so, how?

Definition of Terms

Several terms are discussed and defined here in an effort to provide clear understanding of their use in this research.

Hispanic or Latina

The term *Hispanic* or *Latina* encompasses a wide range of ethnic cultures. Both terms can be used in reference to Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Dominicans, and South or Central Americans (Méndez-Morse, 2000). The terms *Latinas* and *Hispanics* are used interchangeably throughout this study.

Racism

In this study, conducted in the United States, the term *racism* is defined as "a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color" (Marable, 1992, p.5).

Status Quo

The imbalance of power in the U.S. due to systematic oppression and marginalization experienced by persons of color and/or of the feminine gender which tends to benefit White males.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical race theory is a research methodology that promotes social justice by "challenging traditional notions of how to conduct, practice, or rhetorically engage in educational politics and leadership" (Alemán, 2009, p. 295). It allows for the analysis of race and racism as a "normal and pervasive aspect of society," while allowing for an "understanding of how race and

racism affect education and lives of the racially disenfranchised" (Alemán, 2009, pp. 295-296).

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2001), the following five themes form the basic

perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy of a Critical Race theory in education:

1. The centrality of race and racism and other forms of subordination;

2. A challenge to the dominant ideology;

3. A focus on the experience of persons of color;

4. Commitment to social justice in order to promote the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty, as well as the empowerment of underrepresented minority groups;

5. A transdisciplinary perspective to better understand racism, sexism, and classism in education (pp. 472-473)

Method

For this study, a mixed methods approach, inclusive of a Likert survey and a case study with interviews, was selected. Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) define mixed methods research as that "in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry" (p. 4). A mixed methods approach is best suited to answer the questions which guided this study, as it is not a limiting method. In conducting mixed methods research, the researcher does not assess dimensions of meaning or magnitude alone, but rather draws from the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, giving way to a more complete understanding of the phenomenon under study (Landrum & Garza, 2015). The researcher's ability to draw from qualitative and quantitative research approaches allowed for the identification of trends which affect Latinas in their transition from teacher to administrator and

in their ascension through the leadership ranks and permitted personal, in-depth, inquiry into their experiences, helping to further explain or confirm trends or patterns.

An eight-section Likert-scale questionnaire comprised of categorical responses, open-ended responses, and a voluntary short-answer section was utilized. This data collection instrument was modified from Dr. Myrtle Campbell's 1985 survey which was designed and utilized to examine barriers and strategies to career advancement for selected female administrators in Indiana. Participants completing the survey received an electronic informed consent form, and completion of the electronic survey served to acknowledge and consent to participation in the study.

The first three sections of the survey were for collecting demographic information, as well as for gathering professional characteristics of the participants. The information gleaned from those two sections aided in identifying these factors: (1) relationships between variables; (2) the respondents' perceptions of barriers; (3) the effects of barriers; (4) the utilization and success rate of specific strategies; and (5) the perceived impact of gender and race on ascension and leadership practice. Section four of the survey was designed to collect data on the respondents' perceptions of barriers to career advancement. Sections five and six were meant to ascertain data on how barriers affected career advancement and to measure the success rate of the strategies which women utilized to accomplish their career goals. Section seven helped measure the degree to which ascension and leadership practices were affected by race or ethnicity and gender. Space for anecdotal responses or comments was made available in section eight.

Since Likert scales alone provide limited information, allowing for the assessment of dimensions of magnitude but not meaning, complementarity, that is, drawing from the domains of strength of two research models, was the best mode for answering the questions under study (Landrum & Garza, 2015). In order to shed light on the Likert-scale data, a case study with interviews was a qualitative approach also employed in this study.

A case study uses a qualitative research methodology in which the investigator provides in-depth understanding of an issue, problem, or phenomenon. It is a strategy of inquiry where a combination of methods, such as observations and structured and unstructured interviews, may be used to explain the meaning of a real-life, contemporary bounded case over time, through detailed and extensive data collection, involving multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2013).

The purposeful selection of the case study sample for this study was, in fact, intended to inform a deeper understanding to the information gleaned from the quantitative analysis. This connecting process, often employed in mixed methods research, does not violate the boundaries of either quantitative or qualitative approaches; rather, since each approach is appropriately analyzed, they mutually shed light on each other while neither confirming nor validating one approach over the other (Landrum & Garza, 2015)

Sample sizes in qualitative case studies are often small, no more than four or five cases in a single study (Creswell, 2013). That is meant to afford the researcher with ample opportunity to identify emerging themes, as well as conduct cross-case analysis if needed (Creswell, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, four Latina public school administrators were invited by the researcher to participate in a face-to-face interview after indicating a willingness to be

interviewed about their survey responses. Prior to the interview, telephone contact was made with the participants; this was done in order to begin establishing rapport needed to foster positive relations. It was important that each school administrator perceive the interview as a valuable task. For the researcher, interviews were an opportunity to capture the experiences of practicing Latina public school administrators -- experiences which could benefit others already in or aspiring to be in similar professional positions.

The interview structure followed in this study was one structured interview, in which the interview protocol was comprised of 38 questions, inclusive of background information, career history, teaching experiences, and administrative experiences.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis for this study began by gathering electronically collected survey data and populating it into an Excel database. All summary and statistical analyses were completed using SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistical data, such as central tendency (mean and median), homogeneity of variance, skewness, and kurtosis, were generated. Skewness and kurtosis results indicated whether the assumptions of normal distributions of the data were tenable. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relationships among the variables, including the demographic data to investigate the roles of gender and race on leadership practice and ascension. T-tests were conducted to determine whether the mean value of a variable met or exceeded 2.5, which was deemed a significant barrier, significant coping tool, or significant consequence of a barrier. Reverse coding was completed to allow for high values to be indicative of a significant coping tool. To test whether the different variables within the barriers, consequences of barriers, or coping tools categories

were significantly different from each other, one-way ANOVAs and post-hoc tests using

Dunnett's T3 procedure were used. Dunnett's T3 procedure was used because homogeneity of

variance assumptions was not tenable. Based on the results of the t-tests that determined whether

a perceived barrier, consequence of a barrier, or coping mechanism was statistically significant,

ANOVAs were conducted to attempt to rank the resulting average scores.

In order to ensure accurate data analysis and minimize errors, quantitative data analysis

was conducted in collaboration with an outside expert in research and measurement. Further

data validation was sought through collaborations with the researcher's dissertation committee

members.

Qualitative analysis was conducted by recording each interview with the permission of

the interviewees. That ensured detailed, complete, and accurate interview data for analysis and

interpretation.   Each interview was converted to an MP3 file and sent to a reputable transcription

service provider. Upon receipt of the transcriptions, the data were organized by the researcher.

All identifiable information was omitted from the transcribed data.

Upon the completion of all interviews, the participants were afforded the opportunity to

review the transcription to approve, delete, or make changes to the data. This process was

completed via email. The data were kept secure and confidential and study results reported in

the aggregate.

Following interview transcription, each participant was emailed her respective

transcription, affording each one the opportunity to provide feedback on the data gathered.

Transcribed interview data were then sorted by color-coding passages on an electronic database,

allowing for the identification of major and minor themes directly related to the guiding research question and sub-questions.

To validate the themes and patterns emergent in the qualitative portion of the study, consensual validation was sought, whereas a team of peer reviewers provided credence to the findings. Their role was to ensure that the personal biases of the researcher did not permeate thematic categorization.

Limitations

This study was designed within the following parameters: (1) The geographic location for this study was limited to southwestern and central Florida; (2) Only four Latina administrators were selected for the qualitative portion of this study, and those four did not represent all ethnic subgroups of the term Hispanic.; (3) The sample size for the qualitative analysis of this study was of four participants; hence precautions should be taken not to generalize these findings to a larger population; and (4) Since the researcher was the primary instrument for data gathering and analysis in the qualitative portion of the study, personal and professional biases could have influenced interpretation.

Assumptions

It was an assumption of this study that participants were willing and available to participate in the study. It was assumed that study participants correctly interpreted and understood the survey and interview questions and that they were truthful in responding to them. Lastly, an assumption was made that participants were able to accurately recollect past experiences.

Summary

Fifty-one percent of all public school students enrolled in grades K-8 and 48 percent of students in secondary schools are minority (Krogstad & Fry, 2014). Hispanic students account for twenty-six percent of all racial minority student enrollments (SASS, 2012). A decline in Caucasian student enrollment in American public schools is expected at least through 2024 (NCES, 2015). Those statistics highlight the rapidly changing racial demographics of schools across the nation—a trend which does not mirror that of public school administrators.

Many barriers impede or challenge Latinas' advancement through educational leadership ranks. Those barriers have led to a small number of Latinas in educational administration roles, consequently creating an urgent need to better understand and learn from their lived experiences in an effort to ameliorate their struggles, assist future leaders in overcoming challenges, and increase Latina representation in educational leadership positions.

Despite low representation of Latina administrators in public schools and little research on that population of women, the positive impact that racial minority administrators can make on education has been noted in the literature (Hernández, 2005; Magdaleno, 2006; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015; Sánchez et al., 2008; Shah, 2009; Tillman, 2004). Latina administrators advocate for a positive educational experience for their students; can effectuate positive changes in student achievement and family engagement; are role models who can shape learners' identity development, as well as their future aspirations; and can model to students that success for minority females is possible (Hernández, 2005; Magdaleno, 2006; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015; Sánchez et al., 2008; Shah, 2009).

Researchers have placed a call to action to further expand the knowledge base on the lived experiences of Latina educational leaders (López, 1996; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Murakami, et al., 2015; Sánchez et al., 2008; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). It is expected that the in-depth examination conducted herein into the professional lives of Latina administrators will aid in broadening the discourse on educational leadership, revealing the effects that their experiences have on educational leadership practice and serving as a catalyst for change in the field of educational administration.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the U.S., a mere 20 percent of all public school principals are a race other than White: ten percent are non-Hispanic black or African American, while 6.8 percent are Hispanic, and 2.8 percent are persons of other ethnicities (NCES, 2012). These figures are in stark contrast to the enrollment of minority students in public K-12 systems of education across the U.S. Of the 50.1 million students enrolled in public schools of education, Hispanic students account for 13.1 million, or 26 percent, making up the largest minority group. Considering these facts and considering that the number of White students is expected to continue decreasing through 2024 (NCES, 2015), the status of Latina women in educational administration deserves attention and warrants further research (López, 1996; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Sánchez, et al.; 2008; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

The student demographics in this country are changing, while the face of administration remains the same. Latina leaders, through their leadership practices formed in part by their cultural identities, linguistic abilities, and characteristics of resilience, are needed in order to bridge the educational and cultural gap of students. Additionally, their leadership is needed to bridge the gap between educators' deficit thinking about Latino students and their families, moving them towards a new way of thinking and educating. Lastly, their presence is increasingly imperative, as it is they who will serve as role models of achievement and success to our nation's students and bolster the potential and capacity of future leaders in schools across America.

As will be exposed, representation of Latina women in educational leadership roles has been historically low and has remained relatively unchanged over time. Many studies have cited the lack of leadership diversity prevalent in America's public schools and have identified barriers preventing Latina women from entering administrative positions (Byrd, 1999; Byrd-Blake, 2004; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Sánchez, et. al; 2008; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). In attempting to ascend through the leadership hierarchy, many Latina women experience racial discrimination, a multifaceted barrier which manifests itself in several forms (Brooks, Arnold, & Brooks, 2013; Brooks, Knaus, & Heewon, 2015; Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Hernández & Marshall, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Other barriers have been identified as gender discrimination and gender-role conflicts. The former, at times overt and at times tacit, has historically inhibited women from achieving their career aspirations with as much success as their male counterparts (Shakeshaft, 1989). Gender-role conflicts, however, have manifested as a societal-imposed norm that women have contended with since entering the workforce (Byrd, 1999; Byrd-Blake, 2004; Coleman, 2012; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

Lastly, of the major barriers faced by Latinas in career advancement, systematic oppression aimed at maintaining the balance of power remains intractably unchanged. Ethnic and racial stereotypes leading to misperceptions and erroneous assumptions of Latinas have been major obstacles in the quest for positions of leadership in public education (Alemán, 2009; Brooks & Brooks, 2013; Brooks, Knaus & Heewon, 2015; Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Hernández & Marshall, 2009; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Orfield & Eaton, 1996; Ortiz, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

Despite these and other challenges, some Latina women have managed to break through the glass ceiling. Latinas can be observed working in assistant principal roles, serving as school principals, and rising to become superintendents (AAUW, 2002; Méndez-Morse, 2000; López, 1996). While Latinas engage in various roles throughout K-12 systems of public education, their fractional representation may lead them to go unnoticed or overlooked for advancement (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Often, many are relegated to administrative positions in elementary grade-levels or struggling schools, (Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Shakeshaft, 1999; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006) while for others, a leadership assignment may occur merely as a symbolic gesture (Ortiz, 1998).

The reality that so few Latinas rise to the level of educational administration warrants further examination into the career experiences of this group of women. This literature review will serve multiple purposes: first, to investigate whether Latina administrators continue to face similar barriers as those which have been evidenced through literature when ascending through the leadership hierarchies and identify the emergence of new ones; second, to understand the degree to which barriers limit Latinas' career mobility; third, to identify effective strategies to overcome these barriers; fourth, to explore whether gender and/or race benefit Latina leaders in their administrative roles; and last, to explore the impact of race and gender on Latinas' abilities to ascend through leadership hierarchies.

The purpose of this study was to expand the knowledge base on Latina leaders, which would lead to a better understanding of their experiences and would be helpful (1) in guiding those seeking to ascend through leadership ranks; (2) in developing future leaders; and (3) in increasing Latina representation in educational administration positions.

Historical Account of Women and Their Roles in Education

Degrees Attained

In the U.S., 52 percent of higher education degrees (Bachelor's, Master's, Professional, and Doctoral) are awarded to women (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). During the 2012-2013 school year, 79 percent of Bachelor's degree recipients were female (NCES, 2014). The number of females earning Master's in Educational Leadership degrees is also higher than that of males. During the same school year, 67 percent of those degrees were awarded to women. Although the number of female enrollments in educational administration preparation programs has grown, the number of females in administrative roles remains disproportionately low (Pounder & Merrill, 2001; Scollay & Logan, 1999; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Of doctorates in Educational Administration awarded in the U.S., 63 percent were awarded to women (NCES, 2014).

Ethnic and racial data sets with respect to degrees earned are generally unavailable, particularly at the master's and doctoral levels. There are data, however, which indicate that 81 percent of all bachelor's in education degrees awarded during the 2012-2013 were earned by Caucasian women, eight percent by African-American women, and seven percent by Hispanic women (NCES, 2014).

Women in the Teaching Profession

As would be expected, given the high number of females earning degrees, a disproportionate number of women, as compared to their male counterparts, can be observed in the teaching profession. An overwhelming majority, 76.3 percent of all public school educators, are female (NCES, 2012). The unbalanced representation of women in the teaching profession can be traced back to the early twentieth century (Shakeshaft, 1989). In regards to the racial

makeup of American teachers, 81.9 percent are Caucasian, 6.8 percent African-American, and

7.8 percent Hispanic (NCES, 2012).

A persistent and disproportionately large number of females in education, particularly in

elementary education, has remained relatively unchanged over time (NCES, 2012). Unclear and

indicative of necessitated research are the reasons why female teachers continue to represent a

majority at the elementary school levels and why their presence continues to be limited in middle

and secondary schools. Possible explanations are that women have bought into traditional

gender norms which dictate specific roles which they must serve in society or, perhaps, that they

possess inherent qualities which make them better suited for elementary grade instruction

(Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Grogan, 1999; Méndez-Morse, et.al, 2015; Shakeshaft, 1988; Tallerico,

2000; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

Women as School-Based Administrators

The trend towards women serving in elementary schools maintains dominance in the

analysis of women in educational leadership positions. In its most recent report highlighting the

gender of school principals across the U.S., the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

revealed that 52 percent of public school principals are female, of whom 64 percent are

elementary school principals (2012). It is imperative to highlight the large percentage of female

principals at the elementary level as proportionate to secondary schools; this is because

advancements to top administrative positions, such as superintendent, often occur from the

secondary level (Young & McLeod, 2001). The scarcity of female administrators in secondary

schools has been cited as "a phenomenon worldwide" (Wrushen and Sherman, 2008, p. 458), and

a call to action has been made in order to examine the role which gender plays in achieving these positions.

The strides Caucasian women are making in securing administrative positions, particularly at the elementary level, cannot be disputed. Regardless of this, racial disparity amongst those holding administrative positions is of notable concern (Whitaker & Vogel, 2006). NCES (2013) reports that 81.8 percent of all school principals, male and female, are White, whereas 9.4 percent are African American, and 6.0 percent are Hispanic. The number of White principals has been reported as high as 90 percent in nearly half of the U.S. (Sánchez, et al., 2008).

Women as Superintendents

The availability of information pertaining to those who hold administrative positions, while indicative of a majority of females in elementary administrative positions, also reveals an absence of comprehensive data on school administrator demographics or characteristics. The absence of data is even more prevalent for executive administration positions, where "no federal or national organization, including the National Center for Education Statistics, collects or reports annual administrative data by gender" (Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, & Ballenger, 2007, p. 103). Thus, available statistics are minimal, making it difficult to establish trends over time.

What little has been reported with regards to gender representation among superintendents is in stark contrast to what has been reported on the teaching profession and school-based administrative roles. Here, the number of females is dismal—a relentless and historical trend with no indication of future change. In 1928, 1.6 percent of females were

superintendents. By 1984, this number had nearly doubled so that three percent of those in the

superintendency were female (Shakeshaft, 1988). Feminine representation among

superintendents ascended slowly, and by 1988 the percentage had increased to 3.7 (Jones &

Montenegro, 1988).

In 1992, the American Association of Superintendents (AASA) reported 6.6 percent of

superintendents were women. López (1996), who conducted a study on upper-level school

administrators, indicated that a mere 1,000 of the 15,000 superintendent positions in the U.S.

were held by women, of which only 25-30 were Latinas. Later in 2000, the percentage of female

superintendents reportedly doubled to 13.2 percent (Richard, 2000), and declined to 12 percent,

five percent of whom were minority, in 2002 (AAUW, 2002).   Most recently, as indicated in the

2012 U.S. Department of Education Schools and Staff Survey Report, only 23%, of

superintendents nationwide are women (NCES, 2012.). It is unclear how many Latinas in the

U.S. are currently in the superintendency.

Barriers in Leadership Ascension

Gender Discrimination

Although Latina women have managed to see their way into the administrative arena,

gender discrimination tends to be one of the first barriers with which they contend. Women

leaders routinely acknowledge gender discrimination as a problem (Richard, 2000), and

numerous studies have documented obstacles linked to gender stereotypes (Christman &

McClellan, 2008; Coleman, 2012; Fernández, et al.,2015; Magdaleno, 2006; Méndez-Morse et

al., 2015; Richard, 2000; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Additionally, a positive correlation exists

between gender bias and an inhibited rate of mobility (López, 1996; Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011).

For many years, women have struggled against a conventional (masculine) form of leadership. From existing literature, three norms related to gender and leadership have emerged: traditional leaders are male, leadership style is traditionally macho, and theorizing about leadership tends to marginalize gender (Coleman, 2003). Gendered norms have marginalized women, often leading to their leadership capacities being viewed as inferior to those of men (Christman & McClellan, 2008; Grogan, 1999; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Women are frequently perceived as less capable than men to administer discipline and less able than men to be good financial managers. Other assumptions about female leadership have led to the belief that women will act or ought to act in consensual, collaborative, and caring ways (Christman & McClellan, 2008, Coleman, 2012). While these assumptions about feminine leadership may be true of some women, there is no research-based evidence to indicate that school leaders of any one specific gender or ethnicity are more capable than others (Myung, et al., 2011).

Conventional views on women's leadership styles have caused many women to be screened out during the hiring process, thus perpetuating gender imbalances in the educational system (Tallerico, 2000). Further exacerbating gender imbalance within the educational system is that women are occupying subordinate or inferior leadership positions to men, leading to the devaluation of women's leadership qualities (Grogan, 1999). Despite many ungeneralizable views on feminine leadership, Latina leaders have been found to favor a democratic leadership style, as well as enhanced instructional leadership skills (Hernández, 2005; Méndez-Morse, et

al., 2015; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Leaders of underrepresented groups also possess cross-cultural, critical, and applied leadership qualities (Santamaria & Gaetane, 2014).

Entering the Ranks

For Latinas, joining the leadership ranks poses unique challenges. Whitaker and Vogel's (2006) examination of the application and acquisition process of individuals who had completed a principal licensure program over a five-year span (1998-2003) spawned troubling revelations concerning females and minorities. First, only a few minorities were reported to have taken part in a principal preparation program during these years. A mere six percent of that study's respondents were minority, four percent of whom were Hispanic. Similar results indicating low numbers of minorities holding principal certification have previously been documented (Sánchez et al., 2008; Winter, Rinehart, Keedy, & Bjork, 2004). Whitaker and Vogel (2006) also found that females are more likely to apply for an administrative position than males; however, after one or two times of not obtaining a leadership position, they are less likely to pursue further applications for advancement. Whitaker and Vogel's findings contrast with DeAngelis's (2003), who found that women are less likely than men to seek an administrative position.

When they do apply, minority female school leadership candidates experience limited recruitment, targeted placement in elementary or curriculum areas, and a higher degree of scrutiny than non-White candidates. Oftentimes, Latina leaders experience "questioning and nonacceptance" (Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015, p. 182) and are viewed as less qualified based solely on their racial/ethnic status, a phenomenon known as "deficit thinking" (Garcia & Guerra, 2004, pp.150-158). This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that most recruitment agencies, school board members, and superintendents are White males who often seek to fill

administrative positions with persons who closely mirror themselves in race and gender.

Practices such as these are leading to the maintenance of the status quo and stray away from

inclusionary practices supportive of racially, ethnically, or gender diverse school leadership

(Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Tallerico, 2000). López's (1996) findings on factors affecting the

career mobility of upper-level Hispanic administrators similarly suggested that "school boards

hire upper-level administrators who reflect the majority ethnicity of their membership" (p. 60).

Oftentimes, "well-qualified minority candidates hold jobs as assistant superintendents or

principals" yet "aren't considered for the top positions" (Richard, 2000, p. 2). When a Latina

does manage to be appointed to a high-level administrative position, such as superintendent, her

appointment is often symbolic and riddled with political overtones. Furthermore, Latinas'

leadership abilities are often viewed with skepticism and met with the suspicion that "[they] will

act to favor members of [their] own group" (Ortiz, 1998, p. 8). It is ironic that those who engage

in perpetuating hegemonic power structures would be suspicious or concerned about the

possibility of other racial or ethnic groups engaging in the same behavior. Is there an

unconscious fear of the power balance tipping in the other direction? The findings on hiring

practices suggest a need to further investigate those policies and practices.

As previously noted, some Latinas enter the leadership ranks by way of a leadership

preparation program. Others, however, rely on succession management processes to prepare

them and provide them with experiences which will translate to needed skills that will help

effectively meet the demands of their school/district. Myung, Loeb, and Horng (2011) describe

an effective succession management system as one which identifies teachers with high leadership

potential early and provides them with the necessary leadership development opportunities for a career in administration.

Few districts have systematic succession processes in place, particularly for school leadership positions. What is instead relied upon is a traditional form of ascension known as tapping. Tapping, a pervasive, informal, mechanism used to identify and encourage promising individuals to pursue school leadership, is often done in the absence of formal succession programs such as the one described above (Myung, Loeb & Horng, 2011). Whereas this form of sponsored mobility can be utilized to identify those who exhibit the greatest potential to be school leaders, that is not always the case. Instead, "sponsored mobility is frequently associated with the social reproduction of inequality as a consequence of homosocial reproduction (i.e., the tendency for people to establish sponsorship ties with people with whom they share demographic characteristics" (Myung, Loeb & Horng 2011, p. 698). Research indicates that while principals will tap those with leadership potential, expressed desire, and school-level leadership experience, they also disproportionately tap teachers who are male and share their same race. Thus, non-Whites and females are denied access to potential sponsors, a process which gives way to an educational leadership crisis (Myung, Loeb & Horng, 2011). Grogan, (1999) stated,

> There is a manufactured crisis in leadership. A critical examination of the ways in which leadership positions are ordinarily filled in educational administration reveals the processes to be gendered. That is to say, they have been designed and modified to maintain the predominance of White, middle-class men in school administration. This is true of mentoring practices, sponsorship, and networking opportunities. It is also true of

policy initiatives that are being developed to address the growing leadership 'crisis' in

educational administration. (p. 529)

For Latinas, gender discrimination often intersects with racial discrimination. Having to

contend with the burden of dual marginalization is a challenge to this group of women who are

often overlooked for leadership positions (Hernández, 2005; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015;

Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Resisting gender, racial, and ethnic stereotypes, Latinas often have

to work twice as hard and with more diligence than other women in order to join the leadership

ranks; they must then prove themselves in order to maintain their positions (Santamaria &

Gaetane, 2014; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002).

Mentorship and Sponsorship, Networking, and Access to Power Groups

Studies indicate a need to implement focused recruitment strategies to attract Latina

educational leaders (Fernández, et al., 2015; Myung, Loeb & Horng, 2011). Many minority

female educational leaders lack role models, mentors, and sponsors. Consequently, this limits

networking opportunities and necessary guidance to those aspiring to the administrative ranks

(Byrd-Bake, 2004; Fernández, et al., 2015; Gardiner et al., 2000; Haven Adkinson, & Bagley,

1980; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015; Richard, 2000; Tallerico & Tingley,

2001). Quality mentors are essential and necessary to the development and career success of

aspiring leaders (Fernández, et al., 2015; Gardiner et al., 2000; Whitaker, 2003), and mentors of

similar races or ethnicities and genders who have similar personal and professional experiences

to those of their mentees, can better assist them in navigating through the gender and racially-

based challenges they will inevitably face (Magdaleno, 2006).

Despite the benefits to aspiring leaders, little has been done to ensure that Latinas are provided with mentorship opportunities (Méndez-Morse et al., 2015). In fact, gendered and deliberately unequal hiring processes, designed to maintain and perpetuate the status quo—the predominance of White males in school administration positions—limit access to resources and opportunities, to institutional power, and to networking and mentoring opportunities to those who do not meet a specific racialized and/or gendered profile (Alemán, 2009).

In the absence of mentors and role models to help guide, support, and encourage career advancement, many Latinas resort to creating figurative role models (Méndez-Morse, 2000). As Herrera (1987) explained,

> Many women reported that, since there are few Hispanic women role models in their professional areas, they must create their own "symbolic" role models. They create this model by selecting various qualities or behaviors that they have observed in their dealings with colleagues…family members and national figures. The sum total of these qualities [became] the "role model." (p. 21)

Similar to Herrera (1987), Méndez-Morse (2004) uncovered that a vast majority of Latina educational leaders had not benefitted from the mentorship of another educational leader and that although some professional mentors were present, most of the participants identified their mothers as their first mentors and role models. When a professional mentor was not available to them, women constructed a "symbolic" (p. 582) mentor by putting together talents of persons whom they had viewed as facilitating their professional growth.

As noted, there is a tendency in education to want to reproduce and maintain the status quo. Consequently, mentoring relationships and sponsorships occur with most frequency

between persons who share the same demographic characteristics, stereotypically, (and

statistically) amongst White males (Ortiz, 1998). It is imperative that educational leaders begin

to challenge the status quo not by covering up institutional biases against minority females but

rather by engaging in practices that lead toward the goal of social justice. As Sánchez et al.,

(2008) contended,

> There is not a quick-fix solution to the current shortage of minority leaders in education.
>
> However, even if one barrier is removed at a time, that single change could provide one
>
> more opportunity toward promoting diversity within public education leadership" (p. 8).

Gender-Role Conflict

Social constructs have led to the establishment of gender roles, creating yet another

challenge for Latinas wishing to pursue educational leadership roles. Often, social expectations

about the role of women require female leaders to take on the bulk of their domestic

responsibilities (Coleman, 2012). This social convention takes a toll on family life for female

leaders, who are more likely than men to be divorced and/or have children (Coleman, 2012).

Gender-role differences add a level of difficulty for aspiring women leaders—difficulties not

likely to be faced by men.

In her 1999 study of female administrators of varying races, Byrd found that Hispanic

women, more often than women of other races, perceived conflict between spousal roles and

career roles to be a major barrier to advancement. Conversely, Méndez-Morse (2000) found

insufficient evidence to support this: "It cannot be assumed that there is no role conflict for

Hispanic women, yet it must be reiterated, that research findings indicate that role conflict is

'minimal'" (p. 587). Further research on the impact role conflict has on leadership is warranted;

however, many researchers, including Méndez-Morse et al. (2015), found that for Latina women,

holding an administrative position negatively impacted their family, indicating that maintaining a

healthy work life balance remained a struggle for this group of women. In all, it can be

contended that role conflict plays a part in the lives of female administrators (Byrd, 1999; Byrd-

Blake, 2004; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

The pervasiveness of gender-role conflict continues to be a barrier for practicing and

aspiring Latina administrators. It is plausible that gender-role conflicts are exacerbated by the

ever-growing demands on school administrators, consequently keeping a greater number of

Latinas from pursuing administrative roles. In fact, the impact that administrative positions have

on individuals and their families has been found to be a factor influencing application for

principal positions (Whitaker & Vogel, 2006).

Racial or Ethnic Discrimination

Racism is defined as:

an oppressive tool used to dominate others culturally, psychologically, economically,

politically and socially; a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress

African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians; oppressive of

all people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color, (Marable, 1992, p. 5)

It is a latent barrier with which Latina administrators must still contend (Brooks et al, 2013;

Byrd, 1999; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Simply identifying as a member of this racial category

leads them to be judged as less qualified individuals and subjected to more scrutiny when

applying for administrative positions. Furthermore, leadership candidates having Spanish

surnames have been found to be perceived negatively (Ortiz, 1998).

While racism has been at the heart of many diversity initiatives, most educational administration programs continue to avoid discussions about issues associated with race, equity, and social justice; and although "racism may reveal itself in different forms than in the past, it still pervades" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 160) the U.S. without any indication of disappearing. Similarly, it has been a tradition in educational leadership to research, teach, and subsequently practice "without centering issues of race and racism" (Alemán, 2009, p.291).

Stereotyping

In addition to racial or ethnic discrimination, Latinas contend with racial and gender-based assumptions (Grogan, 1999; Wrushen and Sherman, 2008). They take on culturally ingrained stereotypes which them who they are or are supposed to be. Of the few studies which have been conducted on this particular group of women, ethnic stereotypes have surfaced as an additional barrier with which Latinas must contend (Méndez-Morse, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Steele, et al., 2002). Possible explanations for the incidence of ethnic stereotypes could be the lack of historical accounts portraying Latinas as leaders, as well as the lack of research on minority women in leadership roles (Méndez-Morse, 2000; Wrushen and Sherman, 2008).

Stereotypes of Latinas center around three general areas:

- Relations with men: Hispanic women are dominated by them.

- Prevalence of domestic roles and responsibilities: Their primary role and responsibility is to be a wife and mother, maintain the home, and care for their children.

- Limitations for work outside of the home in education: Engaging in your primary responsibilities leaves no time for career advancement and any deviations from

fulfilling your expectations will be looked down upon and/or discouraged

(Méndez-Morse, 2000).

Although the prevalence of these stereotypical attitudes towards Latinas stemming from within and outside Latino communities is not disputed, studies on successful Latinas in educational administration conclude that they are capable of successfully contradicting and overcoming prescribed expectations.

Deficit Thinking and Microaggression

No discussion which centers on ethnic stereotypes would be complete without addressing concepts such as deficit thinking and microaggression. Deficit thinking is a set of assumptions that one possesses about certain groups of people which automatically makes them inferior or less capable than others; "deficit beliefs become a filter that blocks educators' abilities to examine their assumptions and to look beyond traditional solutions for real and meaningful change" (Garcia & Guerra, 2004, p. 151). Many studies have evidenced deficit thinking in developing or aspiring leaders, as well as in the hiring of minority educational leaders (Hernández & Marshall, 2009; López, 1996; Quiocho & Ríos, 2000).

A worthwhile tool that would assist in combating deficit thinking arises from a qualitative study analyzing aspiring administrators' reflections on issues related to equity, diversity, and social justice. Suggested were the use of personal reflections about experiences with differences to gain insight into "hidden" (Hernández & Marshall, 2009, p. 305) values and beliefs regarding topics such as race, social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and inclusion. Although this practice was suggested for aspiring leaders in leadership preparation programs, a limitation of the study is its failure to recommend this practice to practicing

administrators or those seeking a higher leadership role. Some notable findings were, however, revealed in the study: (1) There were indications that aspiring leadership students are not willing to experience discomfort for the sake of learning about differences; (2) People think about issues related to social justice in distinct developmental ways; and (3) Most White aspiring leaders have little to no experience with persons of color.

The unwillingness of future administrators to experience discomfort, coupled with their lack of experience with persons of color, is disconcerting, as well as indicative of the likelihood that perpetuation of the status quo is likely to continue. In the absence of experience with persons of color, incidents of microaggression are likely to occur, behaviors which per Solórzano & Yosso (2002) are defined by three main characteristics:

> (1) subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, visual) directed at people of color, often done automatically or unconsciously; (2) layered insults, based on one's race, gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname; (3) cumulative insults that cause unnecessary stress to people of color while privileging Whites. (p. 160)

The Placement of Latina Leaders in Schools

Data indicate that women account for most of those enrolled in teacher preparation programs and are most of the school teachers and school principals of elementary schools (Bitterman, et al., 2013; NCES, 2012). Despite this, "the number of females in administrative roles remains disproportionate, particularly at the secondary school principal and superintendent levels" (Whitaker & Vogel, 2006, p. 7). What little is known about Latinas in education roles indicates that leaders and candidates exist in low numbers (Bitterman, et al., 2013; Sánchez, et al., 2008;Whitaker & Vogel, 2006). If one uses the standard proportional representation by

gender, it is safe to assume that they, too, serve mostly in elementary schools. There is some evidence to indicate that "the highest representation of minority principals is in charter schools" (Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Ross & Chung, 2003, p.19), although there is even more evidence to support the claim that the placement of minority women predominates in schools with a heavy concentration of minority students (Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Ortiz, 1998; Richards, 2000; Sánchez, et al., 2008).

White Privilege and Maintenance of Status Quo

A thorough understanding of educational systems reveals that those who benefit from the status quo are White, and those negatively affected by the imbalance of power and systematically oppressed and marginalized are persons of color (Alemán, 2009; Hernández & Marshall, 2009, Myung, et al., 2011; Planty, Hussar, Snyder, Provasnik, Kena, Dinkes, et al., 2008; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006). All too often, gender and racial minority aspirants to leadership positions are not automatically included in networks that have developed out of male organizations, thus limiting their opportunities for ascension (Byrd, 1999; Byrd-Blake, 2004; Grogan, 1999; Méndez-Morse, 2000). It is known that White principals are more likely to promote male teachers who share their ethnicity and are significantly less likely to tap Hispanic teachers (Myung, et al., 2011; Tallerico, 2000).

Minority school leadership candidates tend to be held to more scrutiny than non-minority candidates, hence perpetuating the status quo as well as educational systems that are unsupportive of racially, ethnically, and gender diverse school leadership (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Tallerico, 2000). Moreover, school boards have been found to "hire upper-level administrators who reflect the majority ethnicity of their membership, educational system, and

community" (López, 1996, p. 60), a practice which also supports the maintenance of the status quo, "contributes to the inaccessibility of upper-level administration" (p. 60), and confines Hispanics who aspire to become administrators to predominantly Hispanic school districts and communities.

It could be argued that those who oppress and marginalize do so in unconscious ways; after all, White male and even female leaders "seldom consider their Whiteness as a race or an ethnicity" (Méndez-Morse, 2015, p. 181). Whatever the case, privilege and power erase the others' existence; often persons being sought out to serve as educational leaders are persons who mirror those in positions of power (Solórzano et al., 2001).

Those with the best intentions to understand cultural differences lack general knowledge about topics such as racism and White privilege (Hernández & Marshall, 2009), while those who experience marginalization tend to act with cordiality and civility towards their oppressors. This type of behavior, skirting around issues centered on minority students with the intention of minimizing organizational disruption, is common among minority educational leaders who engage with White leaders. The most well-intentioned Latino/a leaders, nonetheless, engage in acts of niceness—a practice which aids to "maintain the status quo, cover up institutionalized racism, and further silence the experiences of the oppressed" (Alemán, 2009, p. 291).

Education has engaged in "a tradition of conducting research, teaching, and practicing without centering issues of race and racism" (Alemán, 2009, p. 291). In order to move towards a more equitable educational system, one that benefits all its constituents, it is vital that not only scholars of educational policy but educational leaders themselves begin to "move toward a more critical understanding of power, democracy, and the political process" (p. 291).

Lack of Prospective Minority Teachers

Early Educational Experiences

One explanation for the low number of Latina leaders can be traced as far back as the classroom experience. The lack of educational equality and equity and the persistent gaps in educational attainment of racial and ethnic minority groups begins to manifest during high school. Hispanics historically have higher dropout rates than Whites, and each year between 1972 and 2006, the dropout rate was lowest for Whites and highest for Hispanics (Planty, et al., 2008). Not only is there evidence of disproportionately larger number of Latino students dropping out of school, but many are failing to participate or perform well on SAT and ACT tests, as well as other measures of academic success (Alemán, 2009).

Academic achievement gap is a factor likely leading to fewer minorities to pursue careers in educational administration. Educational systems "systematically oppress, exclude, and damage students of color" (Alemán, 2009, p. 291). Effectively, minority students have had few role models to emulate and few educational leaders with whom to identify. Minority students who have pursued educational leadership as a career report numerous accounts of educational leaders who failed to provide them with support or student engagement during their early education experiences. As a result, these minority school principals share student advocacy as a characteristic of their leadership style (Hernández, 2005).

If we are to fill a pipeline of potential leadership candidates, we must begin by modeling to minority students that leadership roles are not only possible but attainable. Students must have adult role models with whom to identify either racially and/or ethnically (Fernández, et al., 2015; Fry, 2003; Romo & Falbo, 1996).

Despite the tradition of avoiding issues centering on race and racism, the impact of the Latina leader must be given credence. Their presence positively correlates with student engagement and academic performance, while their continued absence perpetuates the gap in educational attainment (Fernández, et al., 2015; Fry, 2003; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Sánchez, et al., 2008). Latina educational leaders not only cause significant impact in student learning and school improvement but are also especially vital to the "understanding of power, democracy, and the political process" (Alemán, 2009, p. 291); their presence is needed to help move education towards a more socially just system.

Leadership Preparation Programs

Leadership preparation programs play a critical role in preparing administrative candidates who reflect the culture and diversity of our nation's schools (Sánchez et al., 2008). For nearly two decades, these programs have prepared a growing number of female educational administration candidates. Despite this, the number of females in administrative roles has remained disproportionately low, particularly in secondary and superintendent administrative roles (Bitterman, et al., 2013; NCES, 2012; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006). For Latinas, enrollment in principal preparation programs has occurred in low numbers (Planty et al., 2008; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006).

Several reasons may explain the limited presence of Latinas in leadership preparation programs: lack of encouragement for promotion within the educational environment, inequities in testing and teacher preparation programs, culturally inadequate or ineffective leadership programs, and a lack of focused recruitment efforts (Alemán, 2009; Fernández, et al., 2015; Haven et al., 1980; Quiocho & Ríos, 2000, Wrushen and Sherman, 2008).

Scholars continue to call attention to the need for leadership preparation programs to implement focused recruitment strategies in order to attract competent minority educational leaders. This need is both imperative and apparent (Fernández, et al., 2015; Sánchez, et. al., 2008; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006; Wrushen and Sherman, 2008). Attracting competent minority educational leaders will require strategic efforts, as well as a commitment to developing socially just school leaders, particularly when disparities in the achievement gap across racial groups continue to widen (Hernández & Marshall, 2009). Also required are educational leadership programs willing to help students question their values, beliefs, and experiences, all of which have subsequent influence on their leadership practices (Hernández & Marshall, 2009). Lastly, leadership programs will need to commit to changing the landscape for women in secondary school leadership positions (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

The extent to which leadership preparation programs can prepare women to resist socialization, traditional gender norms, and prescribed ethnic stereotypes is important to understand (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). University leadership programs "rarely explicitly address social justice issues in ways that raise the consciousness of all school leaders regarding the importance of diversity in school leadership" (Wrushen and Sherman, 2008, p. 72).

Intrinsic Barriers

In the same way that Latinas face numerous external barriers to career advancement, they must also overcome intrinsic barriers which may interfere with their pursuit of educational leadership positions or their rise in the leadership ranks. Whereas studies indicate limited numbers of minorities applying for administrative positions (Whitaker, 2003; Whitaker & Vogel,

2006), this may be explained by Latinas' reservations about the career itself or the fact that many tend to question their own leadership capacities (Fernández, et al.,2015).

Self-efficacy may play a role in attainment of leadership positions, as well as ascension through leadership hierarchies. Solórzano and Yosso (2001) identify three major internalized beliefs that Latinas may have to challenge. These are (1) self-doubt, (2) imposter syndrome, and (3) survivor's guilt. Self-doubt is characterized by an internal voice which tells Latinas that their capabilities are inferior to those of others—a product of a long history of sexism and racism. As for impostor's syndrome, this is a belief that one's status as a successful woman of color makes one an 'outlier' (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001, p. 485). Impostor's syndrome is often characterized by questioning how it is that one has arrived at a certain educational or career status when so many others have not. It is often accompanied by concern that someone will realize that she is not "one of them" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 485). Lastly, survivor's guilt is a feeling of guilt to have "survived" (p. 485) the experiences of racial and gender discrimination, while others did not.

Latina's self-efficacy is also affected by what Solórzano and Yosso (2001) term as "invisibility" (pp. 477, 487-488). This belief, residing within those with privilege and power, impacts Latinas when their abilities are ignored because they do not reflect the same racial and gender characteristics as those in power. Solórzano and Yosso's findings give reason to believe that Latinas' internalized beliefs, as well as the internalized beliefs of those with privilege and power, may be the reason why few minorities apply for educational administration positions; furthermore, their findings explain just how ingrained the notion of maintaining the status quo remains.

Strategies Employed by Latina Educational Leaders

Motivation & Drivers

Whereas Latinas face many challenges in order to obtain and subsequently ascend

through leadership hierarchies, these barriers have not been enough to keep them from obtaining

administrative positions, inclusive of the superintendency. For many, drive and determination,

coupled with a passion for education and effectuating change, have been their drivers to success

(Fernández, et al., 2015; Méndez-Morse, 2004). Furthermore, many have found impetus from

their family who have encouraged and supported their desires to pursue educational leadership

roles (Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Morie &

Wilson, 1996). As previously noted, where mentorship has not been available, Latinas have

effectively managed to find mentors and role models in their families or 'create' a mentor if

necessary (Méndez-Morse, 2000).

The drivers and strategies employed by Latina educational administrators are positive

characteristics which can be employed by aspiring and acting Latina educational leaders alike.

On the contrary, some Latinas have been found to engage in practices of niceness in an effort to

thwart confrontations related to race. Alemán (2009) found Latinos/as utilizing strategies of

niceness to include the formation of coalitions between the oppressed and the dominant groups,

employing efforts of cordiality and commonality, and engaging in collaborative, civil, and polite

approaches to policymaking without engaging racial discourse or discourse relating to the

structures, policies, and practices, contributing to inequity and injustice. Participants in

Aleman's (2009) study believed that these practices were the most effective way to advocate for

change and better opportunities for Latino students, which led to a distorted sense of "coalition building" (p. 304).

Alemán (2009) contended that discourse used to forge solidarity but not to discuss matters of race and racism is risky. It further exacerbates "dominance, inequity, and racist policies and structures" (p. 308). Furthermore, niceness can have the unintended consequences of "maintaining the status quo, covering up institutionalized racism, and silencing the experience of Latino/a educational leaders" (p. 308), precisely the opposite of what is needed for Latinas to overcome the many challenges which have been evidenced.

Latinas as Leaders

Leadership Styles

As has been noted, Latinas' leadership capacities have often been questioned and even overlooked. Racial or ethnic and gender stereotyping have led many to believe that their leadership capacities are inferior to those of men, particularly White males. Limited studies on this group of women only serve to perpetuate this belief; yet despite this limitation, evidence exists to the contrary (Hernández, 2005; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015; Shah, 2009).

What exactly does a Latina educational leader look like? Latinas possess a wealth of instructional experience and, therefore, can build the "instructional experience of students" (Méndez-Morse et al., 2015, p. 179). Moreover, their leadership style has been self-described as democratic, a characteristic attributed to their own experiences as students of color (Hernández, 2005). Their educational experiences have shaped their personal identities, resulting in Latina administrators who advocate for a positive educational experience for their students and who can effectuate positive changes in family and community engagement. Their ability to engage more

than just parents, but also extended family, is attributed to their comprehensive views on family (Hernández, 2005; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015; Shah, 2009).

Leaders from underrepresented groups are not only able to tap into their educational experiences to shape their leadership practices, but also due to their ability to "tap into intersecting aspects of their identities [and] life experiences … [minority leadership is regarded as] … increasingly contextualized, responsive, transformational, effective, and relevant" (Santamaria & Gaetane, 2014, p. 356). Minority women lead in atypical and exceptional ways. Their leadership style "is complex, context specific, savvy, caring, and responsive to students, self, community members, and environment" (p. 356).

What is known about Latinas as educational leaders is that their leadership style is unique and impactful. However, considering the limited availability of research on Latinas in educational administration roles, there is still much to learn.

Who Benefits from Latina Leadership

Despite Latina educational leaders and candidates being in low numbers, their contributions are critical to minority student development. In the absence of adult role models with whom to identify, students' academic performance may suffer. This may be one of many factors preventing Hispanic students from improving their educational attainment when compared to students of other ethnic groups (Fernández, et al., 2015; Fry, 2003; Romo & Falbo, 1996). Effective leaders who can identify racially, ethnically, and culturally with the students they serve may be able to influence their development and future aspirations, as well as increase their motivation and academic engagement (Fernández, et al., 2015; Sánchez et al., 2008; Tillman, 2004).

Researchers have established an empirical relationship between principals' behaviors and student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Furthermore, Latina principals are crucial because they can guide students through the racial and gender barriers they face, can provide guidance to students whose parents lack knowledge of the school system, and can demonstrate to all students that leadership positions can be filled by persons of all ethnicities (Magdaleno, 2006; Sánchez et al., 2008).

Considering the continued increase in the Hispanic student population, the connection between students and administrators is ever important, especially to support historically underserved and underprivileged students. Yet, despite this, the number of minority principals has not increased relative to the increase in Latino/a student population (Gates, et al., 2003; Murakami et al., 2015; Sánchez, et al., 2008). As noted, those who would most benefit from Latina leadership are underrepresented students and their families, not to mention aspiring or practicing Latina administrators. Amid rising minority student enrollment, there is a call for minority educational leaders to serve, particularly in urban centers, where minority populations tend to be higher (Gates, et al., 2003; Sánchez, et al., 2008). While this call is promising, speaking to the potential rise in Latina administrators, caution is warranted. On the one hand, placing Latinas in minority-majority schools does correlate with minority student achievement. On the other hand, "placing minority principals only in such schools could help reestablish old patterns of racial segregation" (Sánchez, et al., 2008, p. 5).

The Effects of Race or Ethnicity and Gender on Latina Leadership

Considering that educational and life experiences of Latinas impact their leadership practices, it is important to examine whether and to what extent their gender and/or racial/ethnic

identities also impact their leadership practices. Whereas there is limited research on Latina

school administrators' characteristics and their intersection with leadership practice, Méndez-

Morse, et al. (2015) do find that at least for some Latinas, race or ethnicity has impacted their

leadership practice. As for the impact of gender on leadership practice, most Latinas have

indicated that their leadership practice has been influenced by their gender). Méndez-Morse et

al. have also found gender differences in the instructional background of Latina leaders. With

more instructional experience than their male counterparts, Latinas in that study demonstrated

"enhanced instructional leadership" (p. 183) and a commitment to improving the working

conditions of other Latinas.

In a like manner to Méndez-Morse et al., (2015) study findings on Latina/o leadership,

Santamaria and Gaetane (2014), as well as Evans (2007), assert a link between cultural identity

and leadership practice. In their study of female principals of varying ethnicities, Santamaria and

Gaetane discovered that race, as well as class, inspired leadership practices more so than did

gender identity. The impact of culture on leadership is described as giving way to "increasingly

contextualized, responsive, transformational, effective, and relevant" (p. 356) leaders.

Moreover, minority women principals can tap into "particular aspects of their identities, resulting

in the practice of cross-cultural educational leadership for social justice and educational equity"

(p. 356). Evans (2007) asserted that both race and gender impact minority educational leaders'

daily practices and added that minority educational leaders are sensitive to the challenges of the

oppressed because they are able to "mediate their own racial identities with that of their

students" (p. 165).

In consequence of gender and race/ethnicity impacting leadership practices, Latinas may be able to disrupt the dominant narrative stories that are widely entrenched and accepted by larger parts of society (Santamaria & Gaetane, 2014). More studies on Latina administrators are needed to identify the role that gender, race or ethnicity play on attainment of leadership positions and promotion within ranks and to examine whether there is a correlation between these characteristics and the educational outcomes for students they serve.

Research-Based Recommendations

Latinas face a multitude of challenges when attempting to enter educational administration, as well as when they try and ascend through the leadership ranks. If only by their fractional representation within educational leadership, it could be stated that the odds are stacked against them. However, as has been evidenced, Latinas do find themselves in leadership positions (NCES, 2012). Research-based accounts on the challenges that Latinas have encountered in their journeys through the leadership ranks have led many scholars to further examine and propose ways in which to assist practicing and future Latina administrators in overcoming the challenges they will encounter as they climb towards the top of the hierarchical ladder.

Beginning with leadership preparation programs, one recommendation is to prepare more principal candidates who reflect the culture and diversity of our nation's schools (Sánchez, et al., 2008). Scholars also recommend that leadership preparation programs make a commitment to developing socially-just school leaders by offering opportunities for their students to question their values, biases, and beliefs on topics related to gender, race, and ethnicity. It is further recommended that educational leadership students be afforded opportunities to examine whether

their biases and beliefs influence their leadership practices, as well as examine the educational

impact that their held beliefs have on students (Hernández & Marshall, 2009). Furthermore,

higher education faculty ought to encourage their students to think "beyond their worldviews"

and challenge the status quo (Hernández & Marshall, 2009, p. 319).

Another suggestion is for leadership preparation programs to establish partnerships with

local school districts to help develop minorities and women in educational administration.

Tonnsen (1989), for example, examined programs which were successfully preparing and

placing minorities and women in educational administration. They highlighted a limited, yet

effective, number of programs which were succeeding at placing least 50 percent of their

participants into administrative positions. One program, no longer in existence, was the Minority

Administrator Program (MAP) at the University of South Carolina. There, interns were selected

by a team of principals to participate in a preparation program sponsored by the interns' school

district, which not only paid their salaries, but freed them from their teaching duties so that the

interns instead could engage exclusively in undertaking all leadership responsibilities during the

entire school year, under the tutelage of their principal. That program placed nearly 98 percent

of their participants (Tonnsen, 1989). A second program took place in Duval County, Florida.

The Administrator Intern Program (AIP), also for minorities and women, began in 1980 with the

purpose of balancing the staff to the composition of the external labor market. According to

Tonnsen (1989), that program successfully placed 90 percent of its participants. Recent inquiry

into this last program reveals that it is still in existence, although interns are placed in school

buildings rather than at district offices, as was the case when it first began.

Leadership preparation programs with a commitment to developing socially-just school leaders and educational partnerships to help develop the leadership capacities of minority women have been noted as effective at increasing gender and racial minority representation in educational leadership. While these are a promising start, Latinas who are already in the administrative trenches, or somewhere along the continuum of educator and administrator, may benefit from strategies that they can employ personally.

Morie & Wilson (1996) suggested that Latina educational leaders continue to seek advanced educational degrees; become more persistent about career goals; obtain the advice of gatekeepers, mentors, or sponsor; and maintain a positive outlook on their future. Strategic mentoring programs and the establishment of mentoring relationships are also strategies that researchers have proposed as necessary in order to help minority women ascend through educational leadership hierarchies (Gardiner & Enomoto,, 2000). Seeking out networking opportunities has also been recommended (Byrd, 1999; Fernández, et al., 2015). Whereas Byrd (1999) concluded that women of varying ethnicities ought to engage in networking with one another and sharing in "the strengths that each possesses" (p. 122), this may prove to be challenging, particularly considering the predominance of White male leaders, as well as the limited number of outside organizations available to offer support to Latina administrators (Fernández, et al., 2015).

Overall, recommendations for assisting Latinas wishing to ascend or enter educational leadership positions are limited and general, highlighting a pressing need to learn more about their experiences and needs. As more is learned from this group of women, school districts should examine the extent to which minority women are represented within their districts'

leadership ranks; examine their hiring, promotion, and placement practices; and work towards establishing systematic and unbiased approaches for recruiting and moving Latinas along the leadership ranks.

Summary

Discourse on educational leaders is incomplete without further studies focusing on Latinas' experiences as educational administrators. What is known about this group of women is positive, yet limited, as little studies exist on minority women leaders' experiences, and even fewer research studies investigating the lives or administrative experiences of Latinas have been conducted (Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Phenomenological studies focusing on Latinas who have moved up the leadership ranks are also virtually nonexistent (López, 1996).

It can be surmised that a crisis exists in regards to educational leadership diversity. The percentage of minority students continues to exceed the percentage of minority school administrators, while historical trends in educational administration fail to indicate the likelihood of an increase in minority leadership. In order to obtain entry and ascend the educational leadership ranks, Latinas will likely face many challenges. From early learning experiences to achievement gaps limiting entry into education programs, their opportunities are thwarted from the onset. Latinas lack mentorship and sponsorship opportunities. They are often overlooked for promotion for reasons such as deficit thinking, racism, gender bias, stereotyping, and the desire of those with status and power to maintain the status quo—a predominance of White males in positions of leadership. The limited number of Latinas who will continue to break through will

too, with near certainty, continue to contend with barriers stemming from their gender and ethnic minority characteristics.

Much work lies ahead in order to increase diversity among educational administrators across the U.S. Rather than engaging in the tradition of maintaining the status quo, consequently turning Latinas away from pursuing careers in educational administration, it is time to take note of their positive leadership qualities enhanced by their culture and gender and the impact these may have on student learning outcomes. It is time to broaden the discourse on educational leaders so that the positive effects of their leadership can not only be experienced by students and communities of color, but also by those who would otherwise never benefit from ethnically diverse role models in education.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

The Problem

The overall number of Latinas in educational leadership positions is miniscule when compared to other feminine or even masculine counterparts, despite a feminine majority of teachers as well as graduate students in educational administration programs (NCES, 2014). In addition, the overall number of Latina educational leaders remains stagnant, while the minority student population in the U.S. continues to rise. Low Latina representation in educational leadership roles has been attributed to many factors. Gender bias, racial and ethnic discrimination, lack of support and mentoring systems, unhelpful gatekeepers, and arbitrary educational policies and processes are merely *some* contributors to the disparity.

Academic discourse on Latinas' experiences as educational administrators has also been limited, with merely a handful of studies having been conducted on the subject (Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Phenomenological studies focusing on Latinas who have moved up the leadership ranks are nearly nonexistent, as are mixed methods studies on the subject.

Understanding of Latinas' experiences as educational leaders will be richer through the examination of the phenomenon of entry and ascension through the educational leadership ranks via a mixed methods approach. This approach to inquiry will serve to illuminate patterns and trends experienced by Latina administrators and provide more detailed understanding of the phenomenon than what may be revealed in a quantitative analysis alone. Landrum and Garza (2015) assert that "together, quantitative and qualitative approaches are stronger and provide

more knowledge and insights about a research topic than either approach alone" (Landrum & Garza, 2015, p. 207).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to itemize and illuminate barriers that limit Latina women from ascending through leadership hierarchies, identify the effects which perceived barriers may have on career ascension and leadership, and reveal successful strategies employed in order to overcome them. It is also the purpose of this study to highlight Latina leadership experiences in order to determine the extent to which gender and race are related to ascension and leadership practices. This study was conducted with the intention of providing suggestions to ensuring equitable hiring practices and increasing Latina representation within public institutions of learning. Furthermore, a purpose of this study was to create a framework which may aid Latinas, both aspiring leaders and those already within the educational leadership ranks, in overcoming adversity.

Studies exist regarding barriers affecting minority women as they ascend through leadership hierarchies (Byrd-Blake, 1999; Gates, et. al., 2003; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006), drivers and barriers faced by minorities of both genders in secondary educational leadership positions (Fernández, et al.,2015), characteristics of Latina and Latino educational leaders through a critical race theory (CRT) lens (Alemán, 2009), and the impact of cultural identity on minority leaders' leadership styles (Santamaria & Gaetane, 2014). However, few studies exist applying a critical race theoretical lens to the barriers faced by Latina women when ascending through leadership hierarchies, as well as to the strategies they employ in order to overcome them.

There is an urgent need to expand the knowledge base on Latina leaders in order to gain a better understanding of their lived experiences, help others seeking to ascend through leadership ranks, assist in developing future leaders, and provide a framework for public institutions to promote and sustain diverse leadership. Mixed methods modes of inquiry, then, fill a gap in the body of literature that until recently provided a limited understanding of the experience of Latina administrators (Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) define mixed methods research as "that in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and/or methods in a single study or program of inquiry" (p.4). A mixed methods approach is best suited for the purpose of this study, as it allows for further explanation and a deeper understanding of Latina administrators than what can be generated through quantitative or qualitative data alone.

In mixed methods research, one way to integrate qualitative and quantitative data is by connecting data, whereby one type of inquiry informs the other at a subsequent or concurrent time (Landrum & Garza, 2015). Engaging in quantitative analysis to identify trends and patterns experienced by Latinas who undergo the career transition from teacher to administrator and then allowing them to provide meaning through a qualitative mode of inquiry will prove to be beneficial in informing the questions under study and in assisting others in overcoming similar struggles. In addition, the comprehensive findings of this study will provide all educational leaders with an acute awareness of patterns in policies and practices which are affecting current and future Latina administrators—this understanding, coupled with the rich stories of this group

of women, may ultimately shape policy and practice affecting the diversification of educational leadership pools.

Latina leaders face long and challenging journeys—most struggles imposed by the policies, practices, biases and assumptions of those in power. To investigate Latina leaders' experiences, their stories of struggles and success, and understand the roles that gender and ethnicity play on leadership practices through a complementary mode of inquiry may lead to new insights on the discourse of educational leadership.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research question: What are the experiences of Latina women who have ascended through educational leadership hierarchies?

Four research questions direct the form and content of this study:

1. What do Latina school administrators perceive as barriers hindering their advancement through leadership hierarchies?

2. How do perceived barriers affect career advancement?

3. What are the strategies employed by Latina administrators in order to overcome the perceived barriers to advancement through educational leadership hierarchies?

4. Do race and/or gender benefit Latina leaders in their roles as public school administrators? If so, how?

Research Design

The design of this study is mixed methods. A mixed methods approach is one where qualitative and quantitative approaches complement one another in a single study providing results with greater depth and breadth (Roberts, 2010). Mixed methods research in education is

expanding as a viable methodology in social and human sciences (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Roberts, 2010). This is evident in the proliferation of books and journals promoting models of mixed methods research. Methodological plurality allows researchers to draw on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research (Landrum & Garza, 2015). Comprehensive possibilities of inquiry can be made, and power and richness can be added to the explanation of the data from the viewpoint of the participant (Roberts, 2010).

The purpose of mixed methods research is augmentation rather than confirmation or validation (Landrum & Garza, 2015). Drawing from the strengths of quantitative and qualitative research, mixed methods research provides more evidence for studying a research problem and provides a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study, revealing new themes or insights which would not emerge in either quantitative or qualitative methods alone (Creswell & Plano, 2011; Landrum & Garza, 2015). In mixed methods research both types of data gathered augment each other, illuminating contextual factors which may prevail in the phenomenon under study (Landrum & Garza, 2015).

For the research question and questions set forth in this study, a mixed methods approach is best suited to provide answers. The use of quantitative methods of data collection and analysis allows the researcher to identify specific trends or patterns which continue to be barriers for Latina administrators, allows for the determination of strategies used to overcome barriers, and serves well in determining whether there is a relationship between race and/or gender and ascension or leadership practice. On the other hand, the qualitative mode of inquiry which follows the initial quantitative data analysis allows additional insight and understanding and complements the results gleaned from the quantitative analysis, adding meaning to magnitude.

Comprehensive understanding of the research problem under study cannot be accomplished through quantitative inquiry alone. Quantitative analysis of a marginalized group warrants further insights and explanations, insights which merit the utilization of case study research, in turn leading to the application of a mixed methods approach (Creswell & Plano, 2011; Landrum & Garza, 2015).

Whereas mixed methods research serves as a tool for in-depth and comprehensive discovery, it is surrounded by philosophical assumptions or rather, worldviews, which operate at a broad level (Creswell & Clark, 2007). A worldview, synonymous with *paradigm,* is a term favored by mixed methods researchers. In mixed methods research, worldviews may or may not be associated with any specific discipline or community of scholars, but do, in fact, suggest the shared beliefs and values of researchers (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The researcher in this study holds to the philosophical assumptions of the advocacy/participatory approach. This worldview arose in the 1980s and 1990s from individuals who felt that postpositivist and constructivist assumptions did not address marginalized individuals or groups or issues of social justice and failed to advocate change that would help marginalized persons (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

An advocacy/participatory worldview calls for research to contain an action agenda for reform which may cause change in the lives of the participants (Creswell & Plano, 2011). This worldview speaks to issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, and alienation, and provides a voice to the study participants. The purpose of this study is to provide an awareness of trends affecting the ascension of Latina educational administrators, illuminate the experiences of this group of women, give credence to the experiences of Latina educational leaders by allowing their own voices to serve as the medium, and ultimately shape policy and practice

affecting the diversification of educational leadership pools. These goals clearly align with an advocacy paradigm.

The advocacy worldview held by the researcher in this study integrates with the philosophical assumptions of critical race theory (CRT). CRT in education highlights the aspects of society, institutions, schools, and classrooms which inform on the functions, meanings, causes, and consequences of racial inequality; it also highlights the extent to which race and racism are embedded within society (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011). Critical race theorists share in the belief that race is a central structure in society and that it permeates much of our systems of beliefs and ideologies. Critical theorists also possess a clear understanding of racialization, that is, social divisions based on race (Zamudio et al., 2011).

The aims of critical race theory are to present information from the perspective of people of color, eradicating racial subjugation while at the same time recognizing that race is a social construct. In addition, "CRT addresses other areas of difference such as gender, class, and any inequities experienced by individuals" (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p. 32). The use of CRT as a framework means that the researcher exposes the experiences of persons of color and offers solutions to end racial, gender, and class subordination in societal and institutional structures (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

In addition to its specific aims, critical race scholarship in education is guided by five themes which form the basic perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy. Solórzano and Yosso (2001) itemize these five principles:

1. The centrality of race and racism and other forms of subordination;

2. A challenge to the dominant ideology;

3. A focus on the experience of persons of color;

4. Commitment to social justice in order to promote the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty as well as the empowerment of underrepresented minority groups;

5. A transdisciplinary perspective to better understand racism, sexism, and classism in education (pp.472-473)

The mixed methods approach to inquiry as proposed herein clearly correlates to the aims and principles of critical race theory, as it will place emphasis on the experiences and struggles of Hispanic women. Their experiences will be highlighted through the complementary mode of inquiry achieved in mixed methodology. Through the discovery of patterns and trends, as well as through case study research, the researcher will advocate for solutions which will not only help to ameliorate the struggles of current or aspiring Latina administrators. but will assist in changing the practices and ideology of the dominant power groups—this so that greater Latina representation in educational leadership can begin to be evidenced in schools throughout the U.S.

Selection of Sample

The sample size in mixed methods study varies since its purpose is to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches in an effort to provide "results with greater breadth and depth" (Roberts, 2010, p. 145). The selection of sampling reflected purposeful sampling strategy, which focuses on selecting individuals who can provide a deeper understanding of a shared phenomenon and who can provide multiple perspectives about the case under study (Creswell, 2013). Where there is a need for ensuring that the knowledge gleaned from the study provides extensive understanding of a phenomenon from a defined group of persons with particular

experience or knowledge, then a mixed methods approach is well suited (Palinkas, Howritz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2013).

Essential to the commencement of purposeful or purposive sampling is selection criteria, also referred to as criterion-based selection (Merriam, 2009). A list of essential attributes to the study was first created, and then the researcher proceeded to find or locate a unit matching the list. The established criteria for purposeful sampling directly reflected the purpose of the study and guided in the identification of the experience and knowledge-rich cases (Merriam, 2009).

The selection of the Latina educational leaders to participate in this study began with "typical" selection, recommendations by university professors and colleagues, and also with prior knowledge as to where a larger sample of public school Latina administrators could be located. Six school districts in southwestern and central Florida were examined prior to the selection of participants. A database of female educational leaders inclusive of the districts and schools they serve, positions held, telephone numbers, and email addresses was created from publicly available data. Only female administrators with Spanish surnames serving as school principals or assistant principals were identified as possible participants of the study, 142 in total. Other possible participants were located through snowballing, whereas one participant recommends another for participation in the study. Criteria for the selection of the sample were as follows: principals or assistant principals who self-identified as Latina by demographic ethnicity.

The researcher sent email communication to 142 possible participants. Email communication included an informed consent form along with an electronic link to the quantitative survey. Each potential participant was asked to complete the survey within three

weeks of initial receipt; a specific date was provided. One week after the initial three-week period, an email reminder was sent. After this four-week period, an additional email reminder was sent, followed by a final email reminder at the eight-week mark. Nine weeks after the initial survey requests were mailed, the survey was concluded. The survey yielded 30 responses, a response rate of 21 percent. Four survey responses were incomplete.

For the qualitative portion of this study, four public school administrators, two assistant principals and two principals were interviewed. The rationale for the selection of these participants was based on the following criteria: During the quantitative survey, the participants indicated a willingness to be interviewed. The researcher followed-up with those willing to participate in the qualitative portion of the study with a telephone call and electronic correspondence, in order to establish rapport, provide more information about the study, answer interviewees' questions, and schedule the interview.

Limitations of the selection of participants reflect the geographic distance from one county to another in the state of Florida. Because the researcher is based in Southwest Florida, to expedite the process and minimize traveling, all interviews were conducted with educational leaders within 100 miles from the researcher's home. One interview was conducted via telephone; two interviews were conducted in the office of the administrators, and another in the administrator's home. Interviews ranged between 60 and 90 minutes.

Data Analysis

In order to ensure detailed, complete, and reliable interviews, each interview was audio recorded with the permission of the interviewee. Each interview was converted to an MP3 file

and sent to a reputable transcription service provider. Upon receipt of the transcriptions, the researcher studied the data. All identifiable information was omitted from the transcribed data.

Upon the completion of all interviews, the participants were afforded the opportunity to review transcribed interviews to approve, delete, or make changes to the data. This process was completed via email. The data was kept secure and confidential, and results were reported in the aggregate.

Following interview transcription an opportunity for feedback was afforded to each administrator. The transcribed interviews were then color-coded, allowing for the identification of major and minor themes.

To validate the themes and patterns emergent in the qualitative portion of the study, consensual validation was sought, whereas a team of peer reviewers provided credence to the findings. Their role was to ensure that the personal biases of the researcher did not permeate thematic categorization.

Quantitative data analysis for this study began by gathering electronically collected survey data and populating it into an Excel database. All summary and statistical analyses were completed using SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistical data, such as central tendency (mean and median), homogeneity of variance, and skewness and kurtosis, were generated. Skewness and kurtosis results indicated normal distributions of the data. Descriptive statistical data were utilized to rank-order perceived barriers, effects of barriers, coping strategies, and variables related to race, gender, and foreign language skills on leadership.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficients were calculated at $p < .05$ to determine the relationships among the variables, including demographic data. To see if there were

differences in the perceived barriers and to test whether the different variables related to coping

tools significantly different from each other, one-way ANOVAs and post-hoc tests using

Dunnett's T3 procedure were used. Dunnett's T3 procedure was used because homogeneity of

variance assumptions was not tenable. A check of the assumptions of normal distributions

(Shapiro-Wilk $p<0.01$) and homogenous variances (Levine statistic $25,780 = 3.97$, $p<0.01$)

contraindicate running the ANOVA. Because this is a first exploration of many of these

phenomena, a decision was made to use the parametric test to ensure no differences were missed,

acknowledging the elevated risk of false positive interpretations (type I errors).

T-tests at $p <0.01$ were conducted to determine whether the mean value of a variable met

or exceeded 2.5, identifying a significant barrier, significant coping tool, or significant

consequence of a barrier. Reverse coding was completed to allow for high values to be

indicative of a significant coping tool. The results of the t-tests determined whether a perceived

barrier, consequence of a barrier, or coping mechanism was statistically significant.

In order to ensure accurate data analysis and minimize errors, quantitative data analysis

was conducted in collaboration with an outside expert in research and measurement. Further

data validation was sought through collaborations with the researcher's dissertation committee

members.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher had great interest in the findings that emerged from this study and was

vested in this study since she is a Latina who has encountered many of the barriers described in

the literature. As an insider, the researcher is aware of the effects which researcher bias may

have on data collection and analysis and for this reason was careful to not make assumptions

based on her prior experiences or knowledge. Employing an outside expert in research and measurement and sharing and checking the interpretations of collected data with the researcher's academic research committee were strategies used to overcome possible insider bias. Furthermore, the researcher considered all the ethical issues, such as honesty, privacy, and responsibility, as inseparable and took specific precautions as required by the design of the survey and case studies as per IRB guidelines. Except for data collection, the researcher did not intervene during interviews and did not affect the subjects' responses by sharing personal experiences or opinions.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Chapter Four is a presentation and discussion of the findings of this study. It includes demographic data, an exploratory examination of the barriers that Latina K-12 administrators report have affected career advancement and how the barriers are perceived to have affected their careers, and the identification of successfully employed strategies utilized to overcome the challenges. Furthermore, this chapter presents findings which reveal the role that gender and race play on career attainment, advancement, and leadership practice.

Considering the mixed methods nature of this study, the chapter has been divided into two major sections, beginning with the presentation of findings relative to quantitative analysis. Data for this section of the chapter were gathered through survey data analysis. Surveys consisting of 77 questions, referred to as variables (Appendix E) were completed by 30 participants who self-identified as Latina. Statistical analyses were completed using SPSS version 23. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relationships among the variables, including the demographic data to investigate the roles of gender and race on leadership practice and ascension (Appendix F); t-tests were conducted to determine whether the mean value of a variable met or exceeded 2.5, which was deemed a significant barrier, significant coping tool, or significant consequence of a barrier.

Data for the qualitative portion of this study were gathered through in-person interviews lasting between 60 minutes to two hours: two interviews conducted in the respective offices of a principal and assistant principal, another in the principal's home, and another via telephone with an assistant principal. The recorded interviews were transcribed and coded thematically. The

methodology used is found in Chapter Three, under Data Analysis. Two principals and two

assistant principals were interviewed.

Findings of the study are organized by the four research questions which guide this study.

Results from quantitative findings are presented first. Qualitative data findings follow, and a

summary discussion of the data that emerged from survey and interviews analyses and how these

illuminate the research questions concludes the chapter.

Quantitative Analysis

Demographic Data

Administrators who participated in the study were contacted using a combination of

publicly available information found via the Internet and referrals from other administrators in

order to find Latina administrators. A total of 30 public school administrators, 8 principals and

22 assistant principals completed the electronic survey (Appendix C). All thirty administrators

were working in public schools ranging from K through twelfth grades in six school districts

throughout southwestern and central Florida. All had prior experience as teachers. All

administrators who completed the survey were invited to participate in interviews for this study.

Table 1 presents the demographic data collected from the surveys. Entitled "Descriptive

Statistics for the Demographic and Background History Data of the Survey Participants," the

table presents various information points. Data revealed a mean participant age of 44 and

average immigration generation of second generation. Fifty-three percent of the survey

participants were born in the U.S. to foreign-born parents. A total of 13 participants, or 43

percent of respondents, indicated English was their second language. Twenty- six participants,

or 87 percent, selected "married" as their marital status, whereas two indicated "single," one

"divorced," and one "separated." The mean number of children for the survey participants was

two, with a mean of one child living at home.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for the Demographic and Background History Data of the Survey Participants*

Participant Information	N	M	SD	Mdn	Min.	Max
Participant Age	30	44.0	9.1	43.5	29	62
Immigration Generation	30	2.0	0.9	2.0	1	5
Number of Children	30	1.7	0.9	2.0	0	3
Number of Children Living at Home	30	1.4	0.9	2.0	0	3
Number of Years in Current Position	30	5.0	5.8	3.0	1	26
Age Appointed to Current Position	30	39.3	6.9	39.5	26	51
Number of Years in Current District	30	14.3	5.1	14.0	4	27
Number of Years Teaching Prior to Obtaining First Leadership Position	30	9.9	4.1	10.0	4	20
Number of Times Applied Prior to Obtaining First Leadership Position	26	2.2	1.7	2.0	0	6
Number of Times Turned Down Prior to Obtaining First Leadership Position	26	1.7	1.7	1.0	0	6

Note: Min. =Minimum, Max. =Maximum

As Table 1 shows, the participants in the survey had worked an average of 14 years in

their respective school districts and had been educators for an average of ten years prior to

having obtained their first leadership position. The survey yielded 26 responses in regards to

number of times applied to and turned down for a leadership position prior to obtaining their

first, revealing a mean of two times applied and two times turned down.

Barriers Perceived to Hinder Career Advancement for Latina Public School Administrators

Entry into Leadership

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, conducted on 77 survey variables (Appendix E), indicated that the higher the participant age and number of years in current district, the less perceived was differential treatment on the basis of gender during the formal application, screening and selection process (Appendix E). A positive correlation, however, was found between the variables of differential treatment on the basis of gender during the formal application, screening and selection process and aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing (Appendix E). The same positive correlation was evident between the variables of differential treatment on the basis of gender during the formal application, screening and selection process and exclusion from informal network (Appendix E).

Correlation analysis resulted in the identification of a negative correlation among variables six and 17, indicating that with more years in one's current district, the less perceived was differential treatment on the basis of race during the formal application, screening, and selection process (Appendix E). Descriptive statistical analysis identified a significant barrier affecting entry into leadership as differential treatment on the basis of race during the formal application, screening, and selection process. When rank-ordered, this barrier yielded a mean score of 2.5. An additional barrier to leadership entry was identified as teachers, parents, and community preference for White administrators. This barrier, too, yielded a mean score of 2.5 (Appendix E).

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for the Perceived Barriers Data of the Survey Participants.*

Perceived Barrier	N	M	SD	Mdn	Min.	Max.
Lack of Professional Network	30	2.20	1.35	2.0	1	5
Teachers, Parents, and Community Preferences for Male Rather than Female Administrators	30	2.17	1.37	2.0	1	5
Teachers, Parents, and Community Preferences for White Administrators	30	2.50	1.59	2.0	1	5
Lack of Prior Opportunities to Qualify for Higher-Level Administrative Positions	30	2.13	1.43	1.0	1	5
Differential Treatment on the Basis of Gender During the Formal Application, Screening and Selection Process	30	2.23	1.25	2.0	1	5
Differential Treatment on the Basis of Race During the Formal Application, Screening and Selection Process	30	2.47	1.61	2.0	1	5
Existence of "Cronyism" or the "Buddy System" Where Males refer their Male Associates to Jobs	30	2.67	1.52	3.0	1	5
Existence of "Cronyism" or the "Buddy System" Where Females Refer their Female Associates to Jobs	26	2.62	1.50	3.0	1	5
Lack of Career Mobility	30	2.07	0.98	2.0	1	4
Conflicts Between the Roles of Wife/Mother and Career Woman	30	2.77	1.57	2.5	1	5
Lack of Role Models	30	1.77	1.25	1.0	1	5
Problems in Overcoming Stereotypical Attitude About Women's Appropriate Roles In Society	30	2.67	1.56	2.5	1	5
Problems in Overcoming Stereotypic Attitudes About Latina Women's Leadership Capacities	30	2.63	1.59	2.0	1	5
Lowered Aspirations Due to Limited Opportunities for Growth and Advancement	30	2.10	1.30	2.0	1	5
Unspoken Racial Prejudice	30	2.70	1.42	3.0	1	5
Supervisor's Negative Attitudes About Women's Competency and Effectiveness in Administrative Positions	30	1.67	1.09	1.0	1	5

Note: Min. =Minimum, Max. =Maximum. The higher the mean or median, the higher the barrier was perceived to be. Factor scores were ranked as follows: 1=Not a Factor, 2=Somewhat a Factor, 3=Neutral, 4=A Factor and 5=A Serious Factor.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for the Perceived Barriers Data of the Survey Participants*

(continued).

Perceived Barrier	N	M	SD	Mdn	Min.	Max.
Superior's Negative Attitudes About Latinas' Effectiveness in Administrative Positions	30	2.00	1.26	1.0	1	5
Lack of Encouragement or Support from Family	30	1.23	0.68	1.0	1	4
Lack of Encouragement or Support from Peers	30	1.70	1.02	1.0	1	5
Exclusion from the Informal Socialization Process into the Profession ("Good Old Boy Network")	30	2.77	1.43	3.0	1	5
Lack of Influential Mentor (Defined as a person INSIDE the field/career of education)	30	2.20	1.54	1.0	1	5
The Small Proportion of Latina Women in Administrative Positions Affect How You are Perceived By and Responded to By Colleagues	30	2.80	1.49	2.5	1	5
Lack of Motivation to Pursue Particular Administrative Positions Because of Past Obstacles Encountered	30	1.87	1.41	1.0	1	5
Higher Level of Training Required in Order to Be Competitive with Male Colleagues	30	1.73	1.01	1.0	1	4
Higher Level of Training Required in Order to Be Competitive with Female Colleagues	30	1.80	1.16	1.0	1	4

Note: Min. =Minimum, Max. =Maximum. The higher the mean or median, the higher the barrier was perceived to be. Factor scores were ranked as follows: 1=Not a Factor, 2=Somewhat a Factor, 3=Neutral, 4=A Factor and 5=A Serious Factor.

Challenges to Career Advancement

As indicated in Chapter Three, perceived barriers to career ascension were rank-ordered to determine the most significant barriers, as perceived by the survey respondents. Descriptive statistics in mean scores of 2.5 or higher were deemed as significant (Table 3). Rank-ordering for the perceived barriers resulted in the identification of nine significant barriers to career advancement, two related to leadership entry, previously noted. In order of significance, the greatest barriers affecting these Latina administrators are as follows (Table 3):

1. The small proportion of Latina women in administrative positions affects how you are perceived and responded to by colleagues;

2. Conflicts between the roles of wife/mother and career woman;

3. Exclusion from the Informal Socialization Process into the profession ("Good Old Boy" Network);

4. Unspoken racial prejudice;

5. The existence of cronyism or the buddy system, wherein males refer their male associates for jobs;

6. The existence of cronyism or the buddy system, wherein females refer their female associates to jobs;

7. Problems in overcoming stereotypic attitudes about Latinas' leadership capacities and abilities

8. Teachers, parents, and community preference for White Administrators;

To determine differential treatment on the basis of race during the screening and selection process, ANOVA analysis was utilized to determine whether there were mean differences in the perceived barriers, corroborated many of the findings revealed by the descriptive statistics for the perceived barriers. Of statistical significance, as noted in Table 4 and Figure 1, were the following:

1. The small proportion of Latina women in administrative positions affects how you are perceived and responded to by colleagues;

2. Conflicts between the roles of wife or mother and career woman;

3. Exclusion from the Informal Socialization Process into the Profession ("Good Old Boy" Network);

4. Unspoken racial prejudice;

5. The existence of cronyism or the buddy system, wherein males refer their male associates to jobs;

6. The existence of cronyism or the buddy system, wherein females refer their female associates to jobs;

7. Problems in overcoming stereotypic attitudes about Latina's leadership capacities and abilities.

In addition, "Problems in overcoming stereotypical attitudes about women's appropriate roles in society" was deemed as statistically significant.

Correlation analysis served to identify numerous statistically significant relationships among variables related to perceived barriers. For instance, it was observed that the higher the ages in which participants were appointed to their current position, the lesser their perception that teachers, parents, and community have preference for male rather than female administrators. Additionally, the higher the age in which participants were appointed to their current position, the fewer problems were perceived in overcoming stereotypical attitudes about women's appropriate roles in society and in overcoming stereotypical attitudes about Latina women's appropriate roles in society (Appendix E).

Table 3. *Analysis of Variance Statistics for Perceived Barriers.*

	SS	df	MS	F	*p*-value
Between Groups	144.98	25	5.80	3.20	<0.01
Within Group		780	1.81		
Total		805			
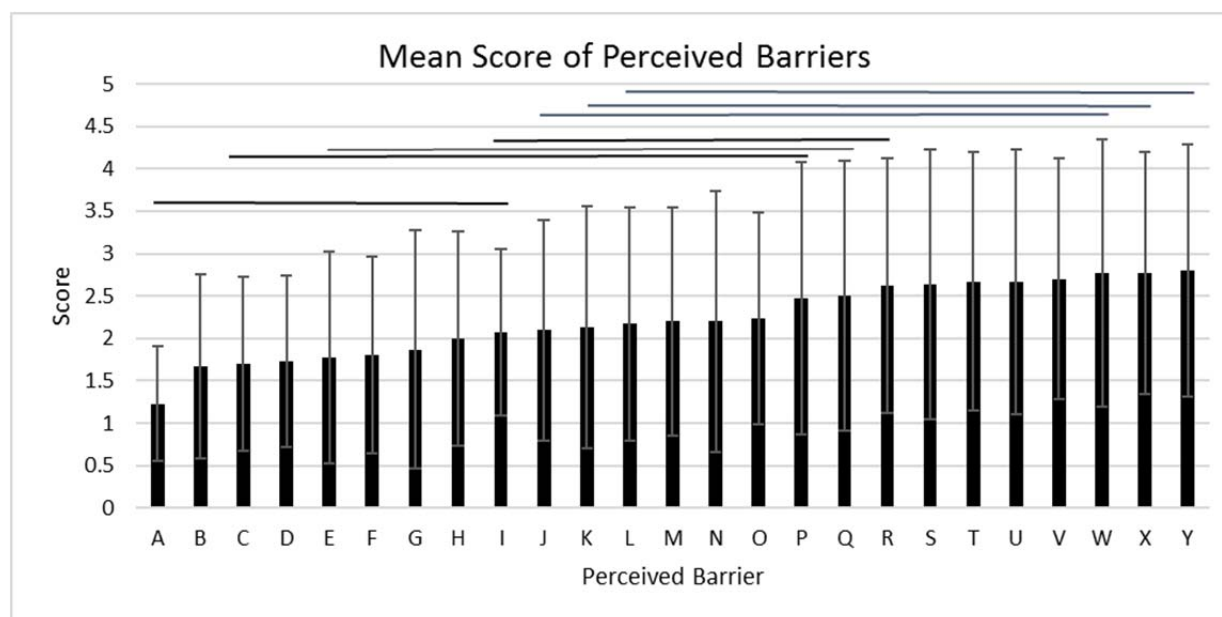
Figure 1. Mean score and standard deviation of perceived barriers. A=Lack of Encouragement or Support from Family, B=Supervisor's Negative Attitudes About Women's Competency and Effectiveness in Administrative Positions, C=Lack of Encouragement or Support from Peers, D=Higher Level of Training Required in Order to Be Competitive with Male Colleagues, E=Lack of Role Models, F=Higher Level of Training Required in Order to Be Competitive with Female Colleagues, G=Lack of Motivation to Pursue Particular Administrative Positions Because of Past Obstacles Encountered, H=Superior's Negative Attitudes About Latina Women's Effectiveness in Administrative Positions, I=Lack of Career Mobility, J=Lowered Aspirations Due to Limited Opportunities for Growth and Advancement, K=Lack of Prior Opportunities to Qualify for Higher-Level Administrative Positions, L=Teachers, Parents, and Community Preferences for Male Rather than Female Administrators, M=Lack of Professional Network, N=Lack of Influential Mentor (Defined as a person INSIDE the field/career of education), O=Differential Treatment on the Basis of Sex During the Formal Application, Screening and Selection Process, P=Differential Treatment on the Basis of Race During the Formal Application, Screening and Selection Process, Q=Teachers, Parents, and Community Preferences for White Administrators, R=Existence of "Cronyism" or the "Buddy System" Where Females refer their Female Associates to Jobs, S=Problems in Overcoming Stereotypic Attitudes About Latina Women's Leadership Capacities, T=Existence of "Cronyism" or the "Buddy System" Where Males refer their Male Associates to Jobs, U=Problems in Overcoming Stereotypical Attitude About Women's Appropriate Roles In Society, V=Unsaid Racial Prejudice, W=Conflicts Between the Roles of Wife/Mother and Career Woman, X=Exclusion from the Informal Socialization Process into the Profession (Good Old Boy Network), Y=The Small Proportion of Latina Women in Administrative Positions Affect How You are Perceived By and Responded to By Colleagues. Horizontal lines indicate homogenous groups. 1 = Not a Factor, 2= Somewhat of a Factor, 3= Neutral, 4= A Factor, 5= A Serious factor

Effects of Barriers Perceived to Hinder Career Advancement for Latina Public School

Administrators

Perceived Effects of Barriers

  T-tests used to compare whether a consequence to a barrier was perceived to be at least "To some extent" (rank of two), indicated none were statistically greater than two. Rank-ordering, however, indicated the most significant perceived consequences of barriers as follows, in order of greatest to least mean scores (Table 4):

1. Career was delayed due to family responsibilities;

2. Limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias;

3. Aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing;

4. Applied less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered;

5. Exclusion from informal network;

6. Denied access to power groups that make important decisions;

7. Problems with finding balance between feminine identity and professionalism;

8. Interruption of career;

9. Having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs;

10. Promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with abilities and experiences.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for the Perceived Consequences of a Barrier or Combination of*

Barriers.

Participant Information	N	M	SD	Mdn	Min.	Max.
Career Was Delayed Due to Family Responsibilities	30	2.3	1.4	2.0	1	5
Denied Access to Power Groups that Make Important Decisions	30	1.7	1.1	1.0	1	4
Aspirations and Motivation Thwarted Because of Difficulty Encountered in Advancing	30	1.9	1.2	1.0	1	4
Interruption of Career	30	1.6	0.9	1.0	1	4
Applied Less Frequently for Available Administrative Positions Because of Obstacles Encountered	30	1.9	1.4	1.0	1	5
Exclusion from Informal Network	30	1.8	1.3	1.0	1	5
Promotion into Dead-End Positions Which are Not Commensurate with Abilities and Experiences	30	1.5	1.1	1.0	1	5
Problems with Finding a Balance Between Feminine Identity and Professionalism	30	1.7	1.1	1.0	1	4
Limited Opportunities to Advance Professionally due to Gender Bias	30	2.0	1.4	1.0	1	5

Note: Min. =Minimum, Max. =Maximum. The higher the mean or median, the higher the consequence of a barrier or combination of barriers was perceived to be. Factor scores were ranked as follows: 1=Not at all, 2=To some extent, 3=To a moderate extent, 4=To a large extent, and 5=To a great extent.

Relationships between Perceived Barriers and Perceived Consequences of Barriers

Entry into Leadership

A positive correlation was evident among the number of times applied prior to obtaining

first leadership position and promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with

abilities and experiences. That is to say, the more Latinas applied in order to obtain their first

leadership position, the more they perceived that they would be promoted into positions

corresponding to their expertise and experience.

"Good Old Boy Network."   When Latinas perceived being excluded from the informal socialization process into the profession ("Good Old Boy Network"), the perception increased that their aspirations and motivation were lowered due to the difficulty which they encountered in advancing. Exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession ("Good Old Boy Network") was also found to be positively related to Latinas applying less frequently for available administrative positions (Appendix E).

Masculine form of cronyism. Survey questions distinguished two types of cronyism, the masculine form, wherein males refer other males for jobs, and the feminine form, wherein females refer other females for jobs. Correlation findings in regards to the masculine form of cronyism not only substantiate the findings exposed through descriptive statistics analysis, but also reveal a positive correlation between this variable and the effect of having applied less frequently for available administrative positions due to obstacles encountered. What is more, a positive correlation was evidenced between the masculine form of cronyism and perceiving exclusion from informal networks (Appendix E).

Feminine form of cronyism. Supporting the finding that the feminine form of cronyism is a barrier contended with by Latina administrators (Table 2, pp.68-69), correlation analysis indicated that more negative effects result from feminine cronyism than from masculine cronyism. For instance, data analyses indicate a positive correlation between the feminine form of cronyism and having to accept less attractive and challenging jobs. For the participants of this study, this barrier also correlated with the consequences of being excluded from informal networks, being denied access to power groups which make important decisions, and applying less frequently for administrative positions because of obstacles encountered (Appendix E).

Overcoming Gender Stereotypes

One of the barriers examined in this study was Latina administrators' problems with overcoming stereotypical attitudes about women's appropriate roles in society. Though rank-ordering did not identify this particular variable as a major barrier faced by Latina administrators, correlational data analysis identified several relationships between this barrier and several perceived effects. Latinas who indicated having faced this barrier also perceived, for example, their aspirations and motivation to grow and advance professionally to be lowered (Appendix E).

Positive correlations between problems in overcoming stereotypical attitudes about women's appropriate roles in society and exclusion from informal networks as well as being denied access to power groups that make important decisions were identified (Appendix E).

Gender Bias and Discrimination

Participants in the study were asked to indicate whether they perceived supervisors' negative attitudes about women's competency and effectiveness in administrative positions to be a hindrance to their career (Appendix C). What resulted from correlation analysis was a positive relationship between this variable (27) and several others. For instance, a positive correlation was evident between variables 27 and 44, promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with abilities and experiences ($r = .722$). The higher the perception that supervisor's negative attitude about women's competency and effectiveness is a barrier, the higher the perception of promotion into dead-end positions. A positive correlation identified that variable 27 may also be linked to having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs (Appendix E).

Linked to the perception of supervisors' negative attitudes about women's competency and effectiveness were also the negative consequences of being excluded from informal networks, being denied access to power groups which make important decisions, and having their aspirations and motivations thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing, as well as applying less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered (Appendix E).

Whereas data analysis indicated several statistically significant correlations between negative attitudes about female competency and effectiveness, it also indicated relationships between teachers, parents, and community preferences for male rather than female administrators and exclusion from informal networks, as well as promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with abilities and experiences, one of the major barriers identified in hindering the career advancement of Latina administrators. The data suggest that the higher the perception of this variable as a barrier to career advancement, the greater the Latinas' perception of being adversely affected by exclusion and lack of promotion equal to their abilities and experiences (Appendix E).

Racial Bias & Discrimination

Rank-ordering indicated that Latinas contend with significant race-related barriers. Those was differential treatment on the basis of race during the application, screening, selection process and community preference for White administrators, unspoken racial prejudice, and a skewed perception of Latina administrators' capacity and effectiveness in leadership roles (Table 2, pp. 68-69). Race-related barriers to career ascension were further supported through the findings revealed via correlation analysis. What was found was a positive correlation between

supervisors' negative attitudes about Latina women's competency and effectiveness in administrative positions and the following significant consequences (Appendix E):

- Aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing;

- Promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with abilities and experiences;

- Having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs;

- Applying less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered;

- Exclusion from informal network.

Racial Stereotyping and Prejudice

Providing further evidence of race-related challenges and consequences was correlation analysis which indicated what is likely to occur when Latinas are faced with problems in overcoming stereotypical attitudes about their appropriate roles in society. Several positive relationships between this barrier and consequences were evidenced.

Statistically significant, positive correlations revealed that significant consequences related to stereotypical attitudes about Latinas' appropriate roles in society were having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs, being denied access to power groups that make important decisions, and being excluded from informal networks (Appendix E).

Unspoken racial prejudice, a major barrier as perceived by Latina administrators, was found to be linked to the same consequences as stereotypical attitudes about Latinas' appropriate roles in society. Those consequences were having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs, being denied access to power groups that make important decisions, and being excluded from informal networks (Appendix E).

Lastly, the analysis of race-related barriers led to the identification of a significant, positive relationship between teachers, parents, and community preferences for White administrators and the consequence of being excluded from informal networks (Appendix E).

Lack of Peer Support or Encouragement

Two correlations of significance were identified in the quantitative portion of this study with regards to peer support and encouragement. The first was a statistically significant positive correlation between lack of encouragement or support from peers and exclusion from informal networks.

The second prominent correlation in relation to peer support and encouragement reveals that as indices of this barrier increase, so too does the perception that it leads to promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with abilities and experiences (Appendix E).

Lack of Mentorship

Much emphasis has been placed on the importance of mentors within the field of education in the careers of Latina administrators. What can occur when lack of mentorship is pervasive, as suggested by the findings in this study, is exclusion from informal networks, a lessened frequency to apply for available administrative positions, and the acceptance of less attractive and less challenging jobs (Appendix E).

Lack of professional networking. Mentorship and networking are closely related. Both of these are of extreme benefit and importance to advancing the careers of Latina educational leaders. A lack of professional networking opportunities can lead to being denied access to power groups that make important decisions, aspirations and motivation being thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing, and applying less frequently for available administrative positions due to obstacles encountered (Appendix E).

Lack of career mobility and limited opportunities for growth and advancement.

Latinas who perceived a lack of career mobility as a barrier to career ascension helped to identify a positive correlation between this and the effect of having diminished aspirations and motivation due to difficulties encountered in advancing (Appendix E).

"Lowered aspirations due to limited opportunities for growth" was a barrier linked to several significant effects. For instance, correlation analysis indicated a relationship between this and being denied access to power groups that make important decisions, exclusion from informal networks, as well as applying less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered (Appendix E).

Lack of Motivation to Pursue Administrative Positions

When Latinas ceased to pursue administrative positions because past obstacles encountered have lessened their motivation to do so, the effects were many. Data suggest a positive correlation among this barrier and several perceived consequences. For example, a positive correlation seems to exist between lack of motivation to pursue particular administrative positions because of past obstacles encountered and promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with abilities and experiences. Furthermore, as the severity of this barrier increases, as perceived by study participants, so too does the consequence of applying less frequently for available administrative positions, and having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs (Appendix E).

Strategies to Overcoming Perceived Barriers

Rank-Ordered Strategies Employed by Latina Administrators

Survey data analyses indicate that Latina educational leaders successfully utilize a variety of strategies in order to overcome perceived barriers. In order of the perceived success of the strategy from high to low, rank-ordering identified 13 strategies with a mean of 2.5 or higher. Identified strategies of statistical significance were as follows (Table 5):

1. Seeking advanced training and certification;

2. Obtaining support from family;

3. Learning to cope with multiple roles wife/mother/professionals;

4. Setting career goals and formulating plan of action;

5. Attending seminars and administrative training workshops to improve professional and

     interpersonal skills;

6. Improving professional image;

7. Obtaining support from peers;

8. Being more assertive in pursuing career goals;

9. Becoming professionally visible;

10. Ignoring stereotypical attitudes about Latina administrators;

11. Confronting stereotypical attitudes about female administrators;

12. Developing/Utilizing "New Girl Network;"

13. Enlisting influential mentors.

T-tests revealed several coping strategies that participants thought they used with some success (rank score of 3) or better. "Learning to cope with multiple roles-

wife/mother/professional" (M=3.36, *t* (27) =2.29, *p*=.015), "Obtaining support from family"

(M=3.46, *t*(27)=2.56, *p*=.008), "Seeking advanced training and certification" (M=3.58,

t(25)=5.09, *p*=.000), and "Setting career goals and formulating plan of action" (M=3.27,

t(29)=1.61, *p*=.059) appeared to be used successfully according to the perceptions of the

participants. ANOVA analysis comparing the means of the various coping strategies and using

the a priori 0.10 level of significance indicated mean differences amongst strategies,

F(12,327)=1.62, *p*=.085, (Table 6 and Figure 2).

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics for the Coping Strategies of Perceived Barriers.*

Participant Information	N	NU	M	SD	Mdn	Min.	Max.
Setting Career Goals and Formulating Plan of Action	30	0	3.3	0.9	3.5	1	4
Developing/utilizing "New Girl Network"	22	8	2.8	1.1	3.0	1	4
Enlisting Influential Mentors	25	5	2.8	1.1	3.0	1	4
Seeking Advanced Training and Certification	26	4	3.6	0.6	4.0	2	4
Being More Assertive in Pursuing Career Goals	28	2	3.1	1.0	3.0	1	4
Becoming Professionally Visible	25	1	3.0	1.0	3.0	1	4
Improving Professional Image	26	4	3.2	0.9	3.0	1	4
Attending Seminars and Administrative Training Workshops to Improve Professional and Interpersonal Skills	27	3	3.2	1.1	4.0	1	4
Learning to Cope with Multiple Roles- Wife/Mother/Professional	28	2	3.4	0.8	4.0	1	4
Obtaining Support from Family	28	2	3.5	1.0	4.0	1	4
Obtaining Support from Peers	26	4	3.2	0.9	3.0	1	4
Confronting Stereotypical Attitudes about Female Administrators	22	8	2.9	1.2	3.0	1	4
Ignoring Stereotypical Attitudes about Latina Administrators	23	7	3.0	1.1	3.0	1	4

Note: Min.=Minimum, Max.=Maximum. The higher the mean or median, the higher the perceived coping strategy was successful. Factor scores were reverse coded from the survey so they ranked as follows: 1=Unsuccessful, 2=Somewhat successful, 3=Successful, 4=Very successful. NU=Number of times the strategy was not used.

Table 6. *ANOVA Mean Scores of the Coping Strategies for Perceived Barriers.*

	SS	df	MS	F	*p*-value
Between Groups	18.13	12	1.51	1.62	<0.85
Within Group	305.22	327	0.93		
Total	323.35	339			

At r = .569, correlation analysis identified a positive relationship between number of

years in current district (v6) and developing/utilizing "New Girl Network" (v49). A negative

correlation was identified among variables 12 and 53 at r = -.401. This correlation revealed that

the more the participants perceived a lack of professional network, the less successfully they

utilized becoming professionally visible as a coping strategy (Appendix E).

Lastly, a positive correlation between the strategies of being more assertive in pursuing

career goals and obtaining support from peers was revealed. Variables 52 and 58 resulted in r =

.785, indicating that for these Latina administrators, being more assertive in pursuing career

goals went hand in hand with obtaining peer support (Appendix E).

Gender and Leadership Career Advancement

Two of the most significant findings when rank-ordering survey responses on the role of

gender and Latina leaders' careers were that gender was perceived to have hindered participants

from obtaining their current position and was also perceived to have hindered them from

advancing their educational careers. With significant means of 3.67 and 4.08, these two survey

statements yielded significantly higher mean scores than their counterpart statements which

would have indicated gender as a benefit to obtaining current position, as well as to career

advancement. The latter statements revealed mean scores of 1.90 and 1.92, respectively (Table

7). Survey respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement "My gender is

a benefit to me in my current position." Responses for this statement resulted in a significant

mean score of 2.53, indicating that Latinas view gender as valuable in their leadership roles

(Table 7). Correlation analysis supports this finding as a positive relationship between variable

61, "My gender benefited me in obtaining my current position" and variable 65, "My gender is a

benefit to me in my current position" were positive covariates (Appendix E).

Other significant correlations resulted from data analyses which highlight the role of

gender on career advancement for Hispanic educational leaders. A positive correlation between

promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with abilities and experiences

and limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias was the first correlation of

significance. Hence, a positive relationship among effects of barriers suggests that such type
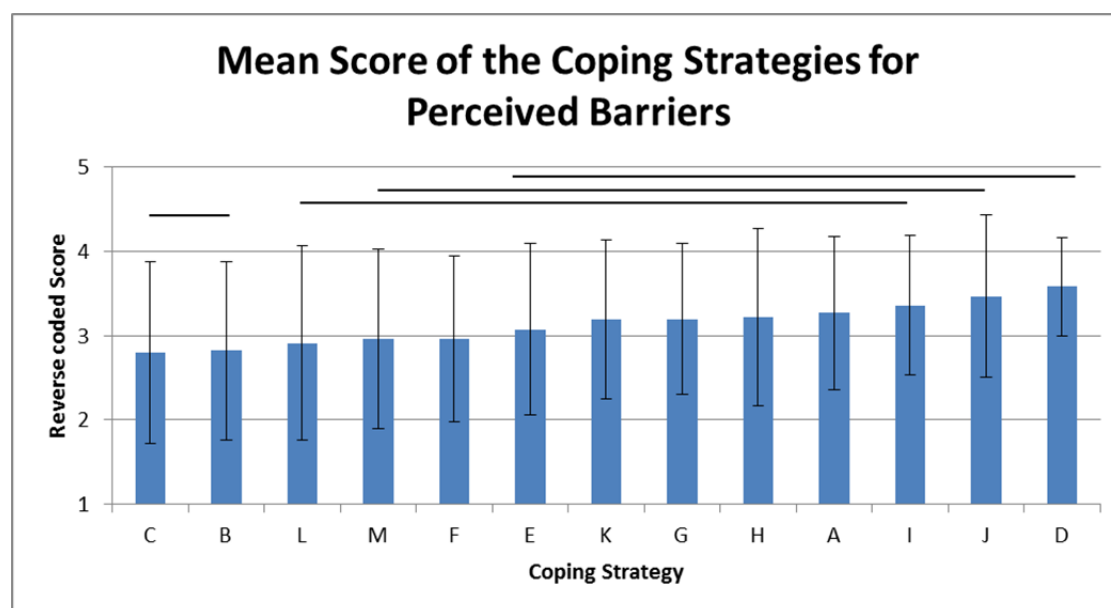
Figure 2. ANOVA analysis of variance statistics for perceived coping strategies. Mean score and standard deviation of the reverse coded coping strategies for perceived barriers. A= Setting career goals and formulating plan of action, B= Developing/utilizing "New Girl Network", C= Enlisting influential mentors, D= Enlisting influential mentors, E= Being more assertive in pursuing career goals, F= Becoming professionally visible, G= Improving professional image, H= Attending seminars and administrative training workshops to improve professional and interpersonal skills, I= Learning to cope with multiple roles- wife/mother/professional, J= Obtaining support from family, K= Obtaining support from peers, L= Confronting stereotypical attitudes about female administrators, M= Ignoring stereotypical attitudes about Latina administrators. Horizontal lines indicate which strategies are not significantly different.

of dead-end promotion may be linked to gender bias. Next, a negative correlation between the

challenge of finding balance between feminine identity and professionalism and the statement

"My gender has benefited me in advancing my educational leadership career" was also noted.

This correlation indicates that the prevalence of finding balance between feminine identity and

professionalism reduces the perception that gender is beneficial to advancing the careers of

Latina educational leaders (Appendix E).

Notable too was a positive correlation between the participants' perception that gender

hindered them in obtaining their current position and that gender hindered these Latinas from

advancing their educational leadership career. As evidenced by covariates v62/v64, r = .935, this

finding corroborates earlier findings that gender in and of itself does not assist Latinas in

obtaining a leadership role nor in advancing their leadership careers. And although gender was

perceived as helpful to Latinas in their current leadership role, as will later be noted, gender

alone was not found to impact leadership practices/style (Appendix E).   .

Table 7. *Descriptive Statistics for the Perceived Role Race and Gender Played on Latina*

Educators' Careers.

Role	N	M	SD	Mdn	Min.	Max.
My Gender Benefitted Me in Obtaining My Current Position*	30	1.90	1.16	2.0	1	5
My Gender Hindered Me in Obtaining My Current Position	30	3.67	1.40	3.0	1	5
My gender has Benefited Me in Advancing My Educational Leadership Career*	26	1.92	1.23	2.0	1	5
My Gender Has Hindered Me from Advancing My Educational Career	26	4.08	1.13	5.0	2	5
My Gender is a Benefit to Me in My Current Position*	30	2.53	1.57	2.0	1	5
My Race/Ethnicity Benefited me in Obtaining My Current Position*	30	3.30	1.49	4.0	1	5
My Race/Ethnicity Hindered Me in Obtaining My Current Position	26	4.42	0.90	5.0	2	5
My Race/Ethnicity Has Benefitted me from Advancing My Educational Career*	26	2.73	1.51	2.0	1	5
My Race/Ethnicity Has Hindered me from Advancing My Educational Career	26	4.23	0.99	5.0	2	5
My Race/Ethnicity is a Benefit to Me in My Current Position*	30	3.63	1.54	4.0	1	5
My Foreign Language Skills Benefited Me in Obtaining My Current Position*	26	4.04	1.40	5.0	1	5
My Foreign-Language Skills Hindered Me from Obtaining My Current Position	26	4.58	0.99	5.0	1	5
My Foreign Language Skills Have Benefitted Me in Advancing My Educational Leadership Career*	26	3.62	1.53	4.0	1	5
My Foreign-Language Skills Have Hindered Me from Advancing My Educational Leadership Career	26	4.65	0.80	5.0	2	5
My Foreign Language Skills are a Benefit to Me in My Current Position*	26	4.46	1.21	5.0	1	5
My Gender Affects My Leadership Practices/Style*	30	2.67	1.73	2.0	1	5
My Race/Ethnicity Affects My Leadership Practices/Style*	30	2.67	1.67	2.0	1	5

Note: Min. =Minimum, Max. =Maximum. The higher the mean or median, the higher the barrier was perceived to be. Factor scores were ranked as follows: 1=Agree, 2=Somewhat Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Somewhat Disagree and 5=Disagree. *=Reverse Coded.

Cronyism

Whereas gender was found to hinder Latinas from attaining a leadership role, perceived to hinder career advancement, yet be a benefit to their leadership practice, correlation analysis identified that the gender of these Latina administrators in and of itself is not the only gender-related barrier with which they contend. Findings of this study identified that the gender of other leaders impacts career mobility for these Latina administrators. For example, correlation analysis identified an association between cronyism wherein males refer other males for jobs, and the lack of career mobility. There is a positive relationship between these two barriers, indicating that male/male cronyism and lack of career mobility may be linked to one another (Appendix E).

Even more significant correlations were evidenced between the variable indicating the perceived existence of cronyism wherein females refer other females for jobs and other variables indicating the prevalence of barriers. Data suggest that this type of cronyism is associated with more barriers than is the masculine form of cronyism. Prominent findings link feminine cronyism to aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing, lack of career mobility, lowered aspirations due to limited opportunities for growth and advancement, negative attitudes about women's competency and effectiveness in administrative positions, negative attitudes about Latina women's competency and effectiveness in administrative positions, exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession, and lack of motivation to pursue particular administrative positions due to past obstacles encountered (Appendix E).

Positive correlations between feminine cronyism were also found linked to several consequences. As perceived by survey respondents, the higher the perception of feminine

cronyism, the more the perception that this barrier led to being denied access to power groups that make important decisions. Additionally, the more feminine cronyism was perceived, the higher the perception that aspirations and motivation were thwarted due to past obstacles encountered. Perceived feminine cronyism was positively related to Latinas having to accept less attractive and challenging jobs, as well as a higher perception of exclusion from the informal network (Appendix E).

Gender and Strategies to Career Advancement

Three statistically significant findings were made in relation to strategies employed by Latina educational leaders in order to overcome perceived barriers. The first significant finding is a positive correlation between the strategy of developing/utilizing "New Girl Network" and the statement "My gender is a benefit to me in my current position." The more successful the participants were at utilizing this strategy, the higher the perception that gender benefited them in their current leadership roles (Appendix E).

The second finding of statistical significance related to gender and strategies to career advancement was found in the correlation among variables 53 and 61. At r = -.400 it was evidenced that the more success was perceived by engaging in becoming professionally visible, the less gender was perceived as a benefit to the current position of these Latina educational leaders.

Lastly, a negative correlation was evidenced between the strategy of seeking advanced training and certification and the statement "My gender affects my leadership practices or style," covariates 51/v76, at r = -.362. This correlation indicates that the more education was attained by Latina administrators, the less they perceived the impact that gender made on leadership practice or style (Appendix E).

The Role of Race and Gender in Leadership and Ascension

Race and Entry into Leadership

Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis resulted in the identification of several significant associations related to race and leadership careers of Latina administrators (Appendix E). Several significant correlations related to the attainment of the leadership roles were observed. For instance, the higher the participant age, the less the perception that they were challenged with differential treatment on the basis of race during the formal application, screening and selection process. When participants did perceive differential treatment on the basis of race during the formal application, screening and selection process, the perception of race/ethnicity as beneficial in obtaining their current position decreased.

Race and Latinas' Leadership Role Attainment

Correlation analysis indicated a positive relation between age and the perception of race as beneficial in obtaining one's current position. That is, the higher the participant age, the more favorable was the participant's view on race and its value in obtaining their current position (Appendix E). Notwithstanding age, rank-ordering revealed that in general, race/ethnicity was perceived by the participants as a barrier to obtaining their current leadership roles as indicated by a mean score of 4.42 (Table 7).

In addition to age, the number of years teaching prior to obtaining one's first leadership position correlated with the participant's perception of the role that race/ethnicity played on the attainment of leadership roles. Correlation analysis resulted in identifying a negative relationship between the number of years teaching prior to obtaining the first leadership position and a lesser perception of race/ethnicity as a hindrance in obtaining the current position, as identified by covariates (Appendix E). That is to say that the more teaching experience prior to

having obtained a first leadership position, the less the perception that race/ethnicity was a

hindrance to leadership role attainment. Lastly, an evident negative correlation was revealed

between the strategy of developing/utilizing "New Girl Network" and the perception that

race/ethnicity hindered Latinas from obtaining their current position. The more successful

Latinas were in utilizing this strategy to overcoming perceived barriers, the less the perception

that race/ethnicity hindered them from attaining their current position (Appendix E).

Race and Latinas' Leadership Careers

As was noted, race/ethnicity was perceived by the participants as a barrier to obtaining

their current leadership role (Table 8). It was also noted that age and number of years teaching

are relative to the role of race/ethnicity on the attainment of leadership roles. Other significant

correlations in relation to the impact of race on the career of Latina administrators were also

identified. For instance, race was deemed more of a benefit to practicing administrators than

gender, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.63 (Table 7). Furthermore, correlation analysis

relative to perceived barriers against variable 70 which stated, "My race/ethnicity is a benefit to

me in my current position" revealed several negative correlations of significance.

A negative correlation, for instance, was revealed between the perceived barrier

identified as lack of professional network and variable 70. At $p <.05$ and r $= -.374$, covariates

v12/v70 indicated that the more challenges with a perceived lack of professional network, the

less the belief that race/ethnicity was beneficial to these Latinas' current leadership roles.

Similarly, indicated by covariates v31/v70, r $= -.420$, a negative correlation was existent between

the perceived barrier of exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession

("Good Old Boy Network") and variable 70. The aforementioned negative correlations suggest

that when faced with these specific barriers, lack of professional network and exclusion from the

informal socialization process, Latina administrators' perceptions of the benefit of their race/ethnicity on their leadership practice may be negatively altered.

Of notable significance was a negative correlation between being more assertive in pursuing career goals and the perceived benefit of race/ethnicity to Latinas' current educational leadership positions. The more Latinas utilized this strategy in order to overcome barriers, the less their perception that race/ethnicity benefits them in their current position (Appendix E).

Race and Career Advancement

Although race was deemed as beneficial to their current leadership roles and certain barriers and strategies seemingly relate to the perception of race on Latinas' current professional roles, with a mean score of 4.23, it was concluded that race/ethnicity poses a greater barrier to career advancement than gender (Table 7).

Other noteworthy outcomes of correlations analysis indicate statistical significance between demographic data and the perception that race/ethnicity hinders leadership career advancement. For instance, the higher the number of years teaching prior to obtaining their first leadership position, the less the perception that race/ethnicity hindered leadership career advancement.

Data also indicate that the more participants perceived that race was a benefit in obtaining their current position, the more that race/ethnicity was perceived to benefit Latinas in advancing their educational leadership careers. Inversely, the more that race/ethnicity was perceived to hinder Latinas from obtaining their current position, the higher the perception that race/ethnicity had hindered educational leadership career advancement (Appendix E).

Race and Leadership Practice or Style

A notable correlation was made with regards to Latinas' leadership practice/ style. That is, when Latinas viewed race or ethnicity as beneficial in aiding career advancement, the perception that race/ethnicity affects leadership practices or style also increased (Appendix E).

Gender and Race and Leadership Role Attainment

Statistical data analysis revealed significant correlations between variables related to gender and race giving way to a theory meriting further exploration, which hypothesizes that gender and race may play an equal role in hindering Latinas' educational leadership role attainment. For instance, data analysis indicates a positive correlation between the perception that gender hindered the participants in obtaining their current position and that race/ethnicity hindered them in obtaining their current position. A positive correlation between the perception that gender hindered educational leadership advancement and the perception that race/ethnicity too hindered Latinas in obtaining their current position corroborates this theory (Appendix E).

Gender and Race and Career Advancement

Among the variables related to perceived barriers, a positive correlation was evidenced between limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias and limited opportunities to advance professionally due to racial bias. A similar correlation was also evidenced among variables 64 and 69, "My gender has hindered me from advancing my educational leadership career" and "My race/ethnicity has hindered me from advancing my educational leadership career." From the aforementioned correlations it can be inferred that gender and racial bias may be inseparable factors limiting career advancement (Appendix E).

Gender and Race and Leadership Style

An important correlation was made with regards to whether gender and/or race were perceived to affect leadership practice or style. Descriptive statistics indicate an equal mean score of 2.67 (Table 7). That is, for the participants of this study, gender and race are perceived to play an equal role in Latinas' leadership practice/style. Further substantiating this finding is the positive correlation which exists between the perception that gender affects leadership practice/style and that race/ethnicity affects leadership practice/style (Appendix E).

Qualitative Findings

This section of the chapter is organized in terms of identified themes related to the four research questions posed in Chapter One. Reported here are the findings on barriers which Latina administrators perceive as hindering their advancement through leadership hierarchies, strategies employed by Latina educational administrators in order to overcome the perceived barriers, the impact of gender and race on the career of Latina educational leaders, as well as the role of second-language skills in the careers of Latina administrators.

Participant Description

The first interviewee, who shall be referred to under the pseudonym of Wendy, is a 53-year-old Latina of Puerto Rican descent whose second language is English. She is married, has no children, and is currently the only Latina elementary school principal in a large, urban school district in central Florida; she has held this position for the last four years. Prior to becoming a school principal, she served as an elementary school assistant principal for two years, and has been in public education, serving the same school district and same school for a total of 12 years. Prior to her first role as public school administrator, she was an elementary school teacher in the

area of special education for six years. She considers herself as highly successful in her career and aspires to move into a district position where she can have a greater impact on education.

Amy, the second interviewee, is a 35-year-old Latina of Guatemalan descent whose first language is English. She is married, has two children, and is currently an elementary school assistant principal in a large, urban school district in southwest Florida. This is her first year in the role of assistant principal. Prior to becoming an assistant principal, she was an elementary school teacher for 10 years. She considers herself as highly successful in her career and aspires to obtain a higher leadership position within her school district. She is currently considering advancing into a district level position.

Charlotte, the third interviewee, is a 62-year-old Latina of Venezuelan descent whose second language is English. She is married, has two children, and is currently a high school assistant principal in a large urban school district in central Florida. She obtained her first leadership position as an assistant principal after having taught for 10 years in a public school district. Her prior teaching experiences were at the middle school and high school levels. In her first leadership role, she served as an assistant principal for five years prior to moving into a principal role, which she held for four years. She then returned to an assistant principal role, a position which she has now held for the last eight years. She has been employed at her current school district for a total of 26 years and is on the cusp of retirement.

Finally, Eve, the fourth interviewee, is a 51-year-old Latina of Puerto Rican descent whose second language is English. She is married, has two children, and is currently a high school principal in a large urban school district in central Florida. She has been a high school principal for six years and is the only female high school principal in her district. Prior to the holding this position, she was a high school assistant principal for six years. Before that, she was

an elementary and high school educator for a total of 14 years. She views herself as highly

successful in her leadership role and aspires to a higher leadership position within the district

office.

The interviewees represent a variety of ages, educational, and administrative experiences;

they also represent a total of four public school districts in the Southwest and central regions of

Florida. The four school districts can all be described as urban, with high minority populations.

Analysis of the interviewee responses was conducted individually, for the purpose of

identification of categories, themes, and patterns. Analysis was first done by color coding

passages which corresponded directly to the research question and questions which guided this

study. Passages were categorized and the findings presented herein.

Challenges in Entry into Leadership

Many interview questions uncovered the challenges faced by Latina educational leaders

in their transition from teacher to administrator (Figure 3). However, prior to discussing these

challenges, it is imperative to learn why and how this study's participants became public school

administrators.

For all interviewees, their entry into leadership began by receiving encouragement from

someone in a higher leadership role. Many of the women reportedly received recognition for

their actual or potential leadership capacities. For each of the four women, encouragement and

recognition manifested in different forms. Wendy, who came from a long line of educators, said

that her first school principal was "very influential." According to Wendy, he was always very

positive and encouraging, as well as "very blunt." To which she laughed, "I'm okay with that

kind of feedback." When asked to provide examples of what her principal would tell her, she

stated, "Oh, he would just tell me, 'you have what it takes, you have the proper skill set, you are

a good teacher, and your evaluations are always very good.'" Wendy joyfully recounted, "My first principal was my mentor and my voice of reason when I decided that maybe this wasn't for me." Wendy reports being "tapped" by her first principal to become an administrator. Wendy is now the principal at the very school where she began her teaching career.

Charlotte, who was first inspired to be an educator after seeing her cousin in a teaching role and having been exposed to education at an early age, recalls: "I always had a passion for education." She talked about how as a teacher she would bring ideas to her administration and they would give her words of encouragement, such as "You have great ideas, you have a lot of insights and you should become an administrator, that way you can impact." Charlotte recalls gaining her first administrative position after receiving a phone call from a district recruiter.

Amy recounted, "I feel like I've always been surrounded by good leaders that have shared their wisdom and expertise with me and said to me, and I can see this in you, here are some things in you, building me up to do it as well." Amy's first administrative position, also her current one, was due to the successful completion of her district's Future Leaders Academy, where prospective assistant principals receive comprehensive training in the requirements of the job. Entry into this program could not have happened without recommendation from her school principal.

For Eve, her motivation for becoming a school administrator centered on the need of having minority role models for students. Eve recounted, "I saw parents come into school who were not able to speak to the principal or an assistant principal because they had to find a translator. There was a language barrier for some of my parents. I said, you know what? That's something that I have. Why not use it?" Eve also had educators in her family, sharing that her father had been an assistant superintendent. She laughed as she recalled, "I told my father I

would never be a teacher, ever. He was an assistant superintendent and was an educator for his entire life and of course, I was never going to be teacher. The day I called him to tell him that I was going to be a teacher, I also told him please don't tell me I told you so. He was very proud."

Though Eve acknowledges her father as being her most important personal and professional role model, she gives credit to her first administrator for her entry into leadership. She spoke of her first administrator who later became the superintendent and related, "[She] was always a big proponent of people going back to school and giving leadership opportunities. When I saw her at a meet and greet after she became superintendent, her first statement was: 'I always knew that you were going to be high school principal.'"

For these four Latinas, the experience of transitioning from teacher to administrator took on different forms, took place due to differing motivational factors, and after having taught for a varying number of years. All of the Latina leaders do share, however, the common theme of having been recognized for their leadership contributions at some point during their teaching career. This theme is consistent with the findings in the literature which assert that entry into administrative positions happen by way of leadership recognition, development, formal succession programs, or tapping (Myung, Loeb & Horng, 2011).

For these Latina administrators, their first school leadership position was obtained with varying degrees of difficulty. Wendy for example, did not apply for her first leadership position and simply transitioned into the role. Eve applied for two positions prior to obtaining her first administrative role, and Amy, after completing the Future Leaders Academy, applied for three positions prior to obtaining her first assistant principal role, at the same school where she was teaching. Charlotte faced the most difficulty, having applied for six different positions prior to obtaining her first administrative role.

Challenges in Transition from Educator to Administrator

Although some Latinas faced difficulty gaining their first educational leadership role, other challenges began to manifest upon initial entry into the role. For those who remained in the same schools where they had been teaching, the first hurdle was overcoming the challenge of being the superior of their former teaching colleagues. Some faced resistance and contended with negative comments:

> You always have the haters. You always, oh my God, especially when you're working in the same school and you're transitioning from one position to another. I have had people who were colleagues, peers of mine, had a really hard time with that transition, and trying to, like the kids say "throw shade," and be negative, but on the other hand I also had good people that would just say ignore and keep on, you know, keep on the straight and narrow and do what you are doing, that will speak for itself.

> Amy recounted a similar experience when she stated,

> Sometimes staying at your site when you become an administrator isn't all that it's cracked up to be. For the most part, it's awesome and even better. But for some, it's not easy. Because then they have talked to you in a certain way and treated you in a certain way, you know.

For many of the Latinas interviewed, colleague resistance would prove to be merely the start of the challenges they would face while in the role of administrator. Emergent themes discovered under the category of *barriers to career advancement* were targeted placement, menial job assignments, racism, being made to feel like an outsider due to race, cultural/racial stereotypes, and deficit thinking. These findings are discussed in subsequent sections.

Targeted Placement

Research literature has indicated that Latinas in administrative roles in public education tend to be placed in high-minority, low-performing schools (Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Ortiz, 1998; Richards, 2000; Sánchez, et al., 2008). Analysis conducted for this study corroborates such indications; all four Latina administrators were employed in high-minority schools. In her interview, Eve stated, "My school is extremely diverse, it is 56% minority." Amy stated about her current placement, "We are 70% Hispanic. We are 25% black and then a little bit, like 5% other things like Asian, Indian, and a mix." Wendy and Charlotte also revealed that their current places of employment were, in fact, in high-minority schools.

Employment in high-minority schools is a commonality amongst the interviewees. Also evidenced through interview data analysis was that three of the Latinas perceived to have been placed in administrative positions in part due to their ethnicity and second-language abilities -- characteristics which correspond with the majority culture of the communities which they serve.

Amy's interview supported such thematic revelation. In speaking about her ethnicity, she stated, "I'll tell you that's how I think I got this job to begin with as a teacher at the school..." Amy continued, "The principal, the one I was telling you was a mentor, she saw me, looked at my résumé and was like, 'and do you speak Spanish?' "

Considering the high minority population of students which Amy serves on a daily basis, a subsequent statement also gives credence to the possibility of targeted placement. Amy stated, "So I really think that [race] helped me in getting this position because there were no interviews at the school until 3:30 PM. I asked the principal at the time, listen, if I wait until 3:30 to interview, how will I even know if there is anything? She looked at my resume and said, 'You speak Spanish? I'll call you if there's an opening.'"

Similar to Amy, Wendy also believed that her Spanish-speaking skills aided her in obtaining her administrative position. She stated, "I think it was more my being bilingual, that facilitated the transition." Also she stated, "…you always need the token Latina, and right now I'm it." The latter quote is very telling, considering that Wendy is the only female, Hispanic school principal in her school district.

Most poignant illustrations of targeted placement came from interviews with Charlotte. In accounts of what appears to be targeted or purposeful placement, Charlotte recounts,

When I was teaching in [omitted] County that first year I was approached because I figured they were having a very difficult time dealing with an influx of Hispanics in the area, [omitted] County, and from the district office a gentleman came to see me.

The following three statements serve as credence to the theme of targeted placement, as Charlotte also stated:

When I became a principal because they had the need, they were having a problem in that particular school, and I see in retrospect that the reason why they put me in that school, they needed me and they just put me there, the principal that was there was opening a new school, and of course, 80% of the population was Spanish, Spanish descent, and they needed somebody to, you know, deal with the problems at the school.

She then went on to say,

When I became principal, I felt that they probably put me there; they needed somebody to appease the community because they knew that the principal there was leaving and they wanted somebody that could represent themselves with an 80% Hispanic population.

Lastly, Charlotte shared, "They had the need for an administrator that was ready, you know, educational wise and that was bilingual at the time they had that influx of the particular population in that particular county told you about."

The career paths of these Latina public school administrators began with a transition from teacher to administrator, many times due to professional encouragement and support. It was evident that most interviewees were serving in high-minority schools, and that targeted placement, particularly for reasons of ethnicity and second-language abilities was perceived by most participants.

In the next section, the theme of menial job assignments is described. Interview data revealed many instances where Latinas were performing tasks or jobs atypical of traditional administrative functions.

Menial Job Assignments

An unexpected theme related to targeted placement which was revealed through interview data analysis is the assignment of tasks which could be perceived as menial, or outside of what one would consider to be normal functions of educational leaders. Once the Latina was serving in an administrative capacity, there were many accounts of menial responsibilities. The discovery of this theme is notable as there is no existent research on the job assignments of Latina educational leaders and whether or not they are perceived to be administrative in nature.

The thematic finding of menial job assignments revealed in this study can be evidenced by the interviewee quotes herein. Translating appeared as a task that a couple of interviewees were required to do. A quote by Amy exemplifies this; she recalls being frequently asked, "Can you please translate this conference for us? Or, we need you to do something, to translate this letter for us."

"Translating, translating, translating, and translating," said Charlotte. "And even though you want to be of help, that takes away from your own job and other people are doing their work while you are translating."

In Charlotte's interview, she talked about the many 'administrative' functions which she carried out, many of which could be perceived as menial and not correspondent with more traditional, administrative functions. Three telling mentions were as follows: (1) "Hispanic assistant principals at school, they usually do facilities. Because you know, they think that we can deal with the custodian, we can talk to them, we probably speak their languages and you know; it's sad;" (2) "You know, you always have the ESOL and the foreign language, nothing bad you know, because the language is great. But sometimes they feel that, probably they don't know that we can also do other areas like math, social studies, English, so you have to prove yourself, you have to as a Latina, constantly prove yourself. And that was really painful;" (3) "Also I'm going to tell you this, sometimes I feel kind of down when Mrs. [omitted] is dealing with the toilet being broken and custodians who are not doing a good job."

Ironically, at the same time as Charlotte finished uttering the last quoted statement, her two-way radio went off, and there was an exchange with a person on the other end, who was relaying to her that there was a problem with valves in a bathroom. He asked her to "go deal with it." Charlotte was able to stall for a while by indicating that she was on the phone and the interview proceeded. "Stinking bathrooms," she said, "you know and sometimes when they go for, you know, like conferences and technology, I feel like the Cinderella of the house, you know?"

Racism

Racism was found to be another major emergent theme in the analysis of barriers experienced by Latina educational administrators while on the job. Being made to feel like 'other' or an outsider due to race, as well as contending with cultural stereotypes, were minor themes identified under the umbrella of racism, themes which will also be discussed in this section.

Charlotte recounted her experiences with racism and feeling of 'other' in a community which was experiencing an influx of Hispanic migration. Charlotte recalled, " [T]here was a lot of tension at that time with [city] growing into Latin area. It was a very traditional, very White area and very racist, and I hate to say that, but it was to the point that I had parents who lived in the area who wouldn't even touch my hand." She then went on to say, " You know, it was very tough, and the community started seeing a lot of Hispanics and Puerto Ricans coming to the area and there was a lot of racial tension …" So entrenched was racism in her community that when Charlotte became an assistant principal, many parents rejected her solely due to her race. She recalled her first year as an administrator when "parents . . . didn't want to even talk to me because I was Hispanic. So I remember that they would go to the principal and the principal would say, 'I'm sorry, she's my assistant principal and you have to talk to her. If you don't want to, then you have a problem.'"

Charlotte's response to the question of whether or not she had ever been made to feel like an 'other' in regards to her gender race was "Yes, absolutely, yes." Similar to Charlotte, Wendy has also experienced racism during her tenure as a public school administrator. During the interview, she stated: "Because I'm Puerto Rican and I am the boss, they feel that they don't have to talk to me. They'd rather talk to my AP." She went on to say, "[P]eople feel intimidated, and

they still feel that even though I was born here, that I lived most of my life here, they still see me as a foreigner, as somebody that doesn't belong here." In Wendy's opinion, issues centering on race and racism are still prevalent in public education. She stated, "We want to think that we have, you know, just evolved so much. We have not. As people, as humans we are not as evolved as we think we are, and all these things affect everything we do."

For Wendy, experiences with racism are part of the challenges with which she must contend as a Latina school administrator. In addition, she expressed having been made to feel different or 'other' in regards to her race; she emphatically stated, "Absolutely, especially with race, absolutely!"

Amy revealed having also been made to feel like an 'other' in regards to her race. She recounted a recent occurrence of having attended a meeting for a committee on which she serves:

> There were 50 people on the committee. I was the only one who was Hispanic. I do feel like the other. I actually texted my principal from the meeting and said I'm 1 out of 50 and the only one here who is Hispanic.

She continued,

> I guess that's where it gets a little weird. It takes me back to when I was a kid and people pointed out that you are different. No one at the district level is doing that and they are talking to me like I'm just anyone else but a little bit of that takes me back to those days. I feel a little bit like I'm a kid again. I'm a fly in the milk.

When asked how she responded to moments where she felt like the 'other,' Amy replied, "It makes me sad. It does. That's why when I got your email, I was like yes, I'll participate because I definitely know what you are talking about."

When asked to comment on what she thought were inevitable challenges that Latina women would face when entering into administrative positions or moving into higher ones, Amy responded, "Feeling like you're the 'other' sometimes, because among the pack in your peer group, you are."

Instances of racism and feeling of *otherness* for these Latina school administrators were made possible by persons of a race other than Hispanic. There were many accounts, however, of Latina administrators contending with racial or ethnic stereotyping, not only by persons of the majority culture. Wendy, for example, recalled times when she has faced resistance from other members of the Hispanic community and recounted: "Even in Latino households where there is a patriarch and a machista society, the wives are sitting there [points to chairs in office] very quietly while the man, and I'm like, they see me and; oh, this, I'm not used to this."

Eve commented on the treatment by members of the Latino community and said, "Sometimes they call me a racist because I don't act Puerto Rican. That's done by Puerto Ricans. That I'm biased, which I'm not. I tell them that I'm racist because I'm against the human race that doesn't follow the rules. They're funny. Sometimes they're upset because I don't bend."

Eve talked about her purpose of helping change the perception of what it is to be Puerto Rican:

> [My purpose is to] make sure the community changes the perception that they have about what it is to be a Puerto Rican because the statement is, "you don't look Puerto Rican." I get offended. Or, "you don't behave like one." I say okay, tell me how they behave. Or, "you don't talk like one." I get that one all the time.

Deficit Thinking

The emergent theme of racism and racial/ethnic discrimination goes hand in hand with deficit thinking. To varying degrees, two Latinas in this case study were affected by deficit thinking, that is, being judged to be less qualified based solely on one's ethnic status (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015).

Charlotte's case evidenced more conflict with deficit thinking than that of any other interviewee. She noted that upon taking on her first administrative role, she had to work harder than her colleagues in order to prove her efficacy -- this in a predominantly Anglo-Saxon and traditionally racist community. Charlotte said, "I worked even harder when I became an assistant principal at [omitted] high school here in [city] Florida, and I did it basically to show everybody that I was efficient and thank God I proved myself to them." Despite her efforts at proving herself and her leadership abilities, Charlotte did not perceive such efforts to have been consistently fruitful.

Charlotte recounted that during her administrative tenure her abilities and ideas had been questioned and dismissed due to her race. She stated, "…I say something and it is dismissed but then a year passes by and it's brought up [by someone else], you know; now we need to look at this." She later went on to say,

> I feel that they have the perception that, you know, we might be weak or we might not
> know it all, because probably they think automatically that we came in boat or we came,
> you know, like if we are totally ignorant and we don't know. That perception, I have felt,
> and I have seen it.

Charlotte perceived some barriers as unique to Latinas. During the interview she indicated, "The challenges are, you know, like, lack of trust, you have to prove yourself more

than any other one, any other administrator or any other race, including African-American."

Charlotte felt as though proving herself was a constant during her administrative career, this

because, according to her, "… sometimes they [higher-level administration] feel that, probably

they don't know that, we can also do other areas like math, like social studies, English, you have

to prove yourself, constantly prove yourself. And that's what's really painful."

As Charlotte and I discussed the role of race or ethnicity in her everyday leadership

practices/style, she shared that although she was very proud of being Latina and took every

opportunity to share her Hispanic culture with her students, sometimes outward displays of

cultural pride perpetuated deficit thinking. She held, "[S]ometimes I feel that by showing

[Hispanic culture], you are just Chiquita banana, you know, but you are not taken seriously."

Very similarly to Charlotte, Wendy believed that her race was in part what led to deficit

thinking; gender was equally at fault. In her view, "[B]ecause, one, I am a female and, two, a

Hispanic female," it was difficult for some to accept her role as principal. She later went on to

state that a challenge she continually faced was that of people second-guessing her abilities. "It's

like we were, you know, we were lined up at the dummy truck and we all got dumped on like

handle certain things, we can do certain things. That's something that still amazes me to this

day."

Support Systems

Another outcome resulting from data analysis related to challenges faced by this group of

Latinas while in an administrative role was the perceived lack of formal/systematic support

systems. While all interviewees acknowledged having benefitted from informal mentors, as well

as informal opportunities for networking, a clear lack of formal mentorship and networking

opportunities, as well as a perceived lack of district support, was evident.

During the interview with Charlotte, she recounted in regards to her first leadership position that when she became an Assistant Principal, it "was a good experience, though it was a very tough one because of the support that I feel I never got." She also stated, "You know, when I became an administrator, it's like sink or swim. There was no mentorship program, or any type of leadership assistance to help; no, it was just like, okay, this is your responsibility, go for it."

Charlotte never took part in an administrator preparation program, as one did not exist when she became assistant principal and later principal. She acknowledges that her district currently makes a program available to administrators as soon as they become assistant principals, but cannot account for any formal preparation or mentorship programs for teachers wishing to enter in school-based administrative roles. She laments, "I had to learn it all; it was you know, sink or swim." Charlotte seemed to blame herself for her lack of support:

> They have their supports now and it is probably my fault because I didn't ask for support, I was just trying to survive; working very hard because there was no support, there was no training; nothing. There were trainings; you know, like for how to do teacher evaluations and things like that, the regular ones, but how to deal with being a school leader, manager, there was nothing like that.

I asked Charlotte if she had experienced any type of formal mentorship relationship at any time during her education career, to which she replied, "I never had that opportunity."

Charlotte also laments the perceived lack of district support she received once in the principal role and stated, "That really marked me for life; and to me that destroyed my career." The context of this last quote was Charlotte recalling a time where she went to the district office to report a personnel problem. According to Charlotte, she asked for district support, but received none. Even when the personnel problem led to a legal battle in court, she felt as though

her district had turned its back on her. Upon inquiry into formal networking opportunities, Charlotte reported never having benefitted from such. She said, "Well, you establish your own networking."

Charlotte's statements are congruent with Amy and Wendy's experiences with mentorships, networking, and administrative support. Although Amy does currently benefit from informal and formal mentorship opportunities, she acknowledges the need for mentorship opportunities for teachers wishing to enter the administrative ranks.

> Yes. If you think about in my position [of assistant principal], except for him [she points to the current principal standing outside the conference room door], I don't have anyone at all that would've helped to get me to this position. Not only get me here, but have the success.

She went on to say, "Not having those relationships with leaders currently in education, I think would be a hindrance because then you are blind. It's like being a first-year teacher. You just don't even know what you don't know."

Although Amy's school district does offer a formal leadership talent pool for those wishing to enter into administration, this program does not provide participants with assigned mentors. Formal mentors are assigned only after one obtains a leadership position in the district, at which time the new administrator would also begin a two-year professional development program. Amy is currently enrolled in this program.

When Wendy first began her transition from teacher to administrator, she too mentioned the lack of a formal mentorship program to facilitate entry into administrative positions. She acknowledges that she had an informal mentor who helped her entry into administration. Although her district currently has a leadership talent pool as well, formal mentorship is not part

of this program. In addition, when asked if she had ever benefited from networking

opportunities, she answered, "No, because they don't have formal networking opportunities."

Wendy perceives that district support is also lacking for practicing administrators and stated,

> Because administrators as we speak right now, we don't get support. We don't get
>
> support, we just get pushed down from the top and this is what you are doing and this is
>
> what you have to do, but support per say, we don't even get it.

Role Conflict and Work Life Balance

Thus far, the findings in the qualitative portion of this study have been related to targeted

placement, menial job assignments, racism, feeling like other, racial/ethnic stereotyping, deficit

thinking, lack of formal mentoring and networking opportunities, and a perceived lack of district

support. In this next section, the challenges of role conflict and work life balance will be

discussed. Prior research conducted on Latina administrators has identified a barrier to

leadership ascension as role conflict (Byrd, 1999; Byrd-Blake, 2004; Méndez-Morse, et al.,

2015; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Qualitative data analysis in this

study finds the experiences of these Latinas to be in concordance with the literature.

The job of school administrator can be characterized as demanding and all too often

stressful, requiring long work weeks filled with laborious emotional work and physical work at

times. Said Amy,

> Just the amount of things that are put on assistant principals in this district and I
>
> appreciate the role and I am grateful for it but I mean, there's a lot put on our plate, just
>
> the enormity of the task. On a slow week, I work 60 hours a week. There's just so much
>
> to do.

Charlotte conceded, "The job is so overwhelming, so much, and so stressful."

"[I]t is really hard being a principal. It's really hard work. It's hard emotionally, it's hard mentally, and I can't see how principals have been career principals for 20 years. I just can't, because you burn out," said Wendy.

Given the many hours spent away from family, a major barrier faced by Latina administrators is role conflict. For Charlotte, the challenge of balancing career and home life caused her a great amount of guilt, which she still carries today, despite the fact that her children are now adults. She candidly said,

> This job requires long hours. I couldn't, unfortunately, even though my daughters now, one is [age] and one is [age], you know, they said 'Mom, you gave the time, don't feel guilty,' you know, and thank God they are nice young ladies. Both graduated from university, but it was very, I still feel guilty to the fact that every time they had a school event, my husband was the one; many times I couldn't go.

She goes on to say:

> And so, I see in retrospect that I worked so hard. I remember my two goddaughters were kind of little and I thank God for my husband. I was working seven days a week. I used to get home, it was two o'clock in the morning and I was still on the computer dealing with construction, construction engineers and dealing with situations that I cannot believe a principal would have to deal with, and my first year, there was nobody who came and said, "How can I help you?" You know, I had to hire, I had to deal with problems, parents upset, you name it. So I survived for four years, but I feel that, all the stress was killing me. My mother who was alive at the time came to visit and I was showing her, and she saw the things I was dealing with, and she said, "You know, you are losing your life here. I cannot believe they haven't given you any guidance."

Charlotte later went on to say, "So I think Latinas deal with that, that we are, from the very beginning, our own personal life and the responsibility of being mother first, and the house first, I think that's a big one."

During her interview, Wendy talked about her challenge with maintaining work life balance; in particular, she discussed her difficulty in finding time to spend with her family:

> I don't have time to go and spend time with them, as a teacher I would spend my whole summer with them; I didn't feel like I missed out. Now I feel like I miss out on everything because when I go, it's just for a week. I'm lucky if I get to go two times a year, and with my father getting older, I have to go see him. That to me has been the biggest challenge. Not being able to spend as much time with my family as I would want.

Amy, the newest and youngest administrator interviewed, shared her difficulty in managing roles. Amy perceived that her biggest personal challenge is in work life balance:

> I think definitely the home balance because there is none … I have two very young sons and so he [my husband] has taken on everything at home. He works full-time but he's also become a stay-at-home dad full-time; cooking, cleaning, taking the older one to daycare, to and from swim lessons on Saturdays because all I do is work.

She continued,

> For me, it's a lot of mom guilt. I have so much guilt. I mean, I look at my baby that I never see and I feel so bad. He's my second baby. My first baby who is [age omitted], I saw him all the time when he was a baby. It really eats away at me.

Strategies to Overcome Perceived Barriers

Qualitative analysis revealed a multitude of strategies employed by Latina administrators in order to overcome the challenges described in this chapter. An unexpected finding in this section is the theme of faith and its use as a coping strategy. This section presents findings related to strategies by significant, thematic categorization.

Ignoring, Disassociating from, and Confronting Challenges

Duly noted were challenges in the early stages of Amy and Wendy's leadership careers. Both Amy and Wendy entered into a leadership role at the school where they had previously been classroom educators. While Amy coped with this challenge by seeking support from her school principal, Wendy took a different approach. For Wendy, ignoring or disassociating herself from negativity was the strategy which best suited her particular situation. She shared,

> You always have the haters. You always, oh my God, especially when you're working in the same school and you're transitioning from one position to another. I've had people who were colleagues, peers of mine, had a really hard time with that transition, and trying to, like the kids say "throw shade," and be negative, but on the other hand I also had good people that would say just ignore and just keep on, you know, keep on the straight and narrow and do what you're doing, that will speak for itself.

Similarly, Eve deliberately disassociated herself from negativity. When asked this same question, that is, if there were any persons or processes which made her transition difficult, she proudly stated,

> No, I don't allow that to happen. I disassociate myself with that. It's not that I don't know how to deal with conflict, but I choose not to be part of that conflict. One of my biggest characteristics is if you tell me you can't, I will.
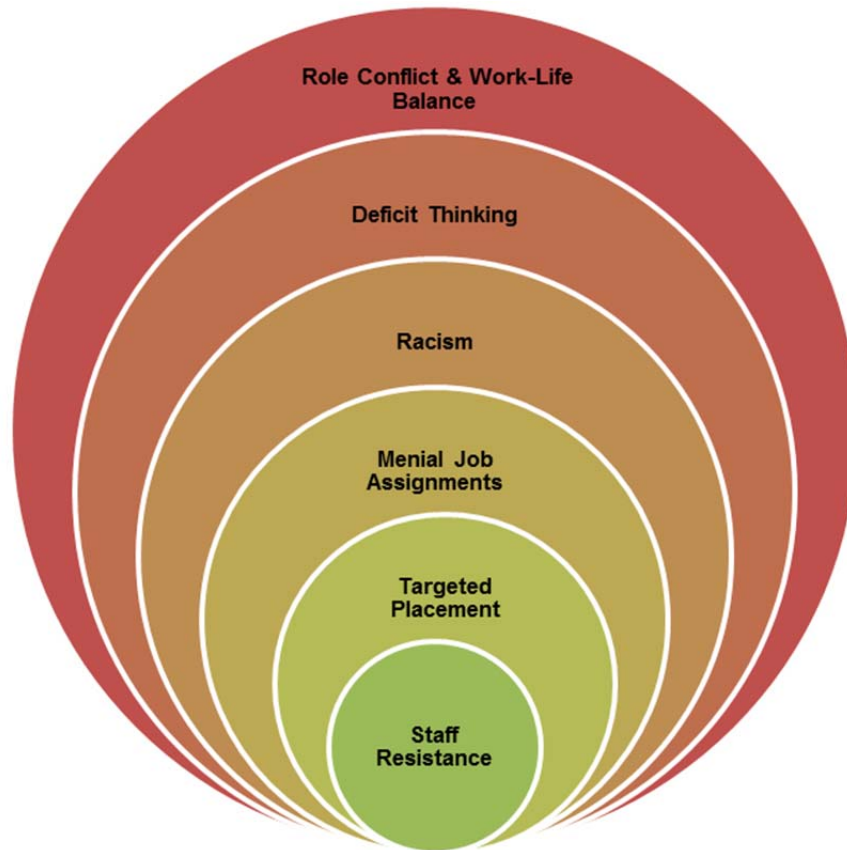
Figure 3. Identified themes relative to barriers to career advancement.

The approach taken by Latina educational leaders towards dealing with challenges early in their leadership career differs from their approaches in overcoming race-related barriers. For Wendy, confronting racial stereotypes and allowing others to contend with their own racial assumptions and biases was the utilized strategy. She lightheartedly shared,

I believe in laughter. I believe in making fun and hitting things head on, you know, because I'm not going to stand there and pretend that I'm not, you know, [Wendy] from [city of birth]. This is me; this is, what you see is what you get. If you have a problem with it, it's your problem; it's not my problem…

In response to how she dealt with being made to feel like an "other" in regards to race, she yet again demonstrated her strategy to confront stereotypic attitudes. In the view of the researcher, such a strategy could be successfully employed by Wendy due to her strong, commanding, and unintimidated personality. Wendy shared,

> The way I react, like I say, I believe in grabbing the bull by the horns and I'll be the first one, you saying that because I'm Hispanic right, or Latina right? And they just look at me like; 'did she call me out like that'? I'll call you out in a heartbeat, but I know not everybody likes me. I know that whether I was White, black or yellow, this is my personality and this is how I was going to be, but the fact I actually kind of enjoy it because I like pushing the envelope and I like to see people's faces. 'Oh no, I didn't say because of that.' Yeah, I know; I know. I'm like it's because of this; I'm brown.

When talking about her challenge with regards to racial pushback, she stated, "You have to be extremely focused and know how to roll with the punches because they will be coming at you and you just need to block and keep on moving like, you got to keep on moving." It is apparent that Wendy's strategies for contending with challenges are varied and situational. She ignored negative comments during the early stages of her career and at times negativity related to race and leadership, while other times, she has "grabbed the bull by the horns."

The ways in which Latina educational leaders in this study approached leadership challenges were varied. This can only be explained by the unpredictability and variety of situations and scenarios with which Latina leaders contend. Life experiences, culture, personalities, ethics, and morals are all considerable factors which guide individual behaviors, factors which are outside the scope of this study. What is evident, however, is that ignoring,

disassociating, and confronting are all strategies which have been employed by these self-described highly successful Latina educational leaders.

Professional Support Systems

Seeking support systems within the profession was an emergent theme revealed through qualitative data analysis. Eve and Wendy both appeared to utilize this strategy as a way to overcome perceived challenges. Take Eve, for example, who has made a conscious decision to establish positive professional support. She shares, "My choice is to surround myself with people that are bringing me more positive than negatives." Throughout our interview, Eve was steadfast in her conviction to seek out and utilize positivity not only to her benefit, but to benefit others around her.

It was evident too that Wendy utilized professional support to deal with challenges along the way. She shared about negative comments made about her:

[B]ut you know, some people let the negative influence them, and there are times you're more susceptible, but also I had, have, continue to have a good support group that would tell me "No, you just need to do this because they're going to be where they're at twenty years from now; you're going to be at a completely different level."

Mentorship and Networking

Interview data indicate that successful Latina leaders are creating mentorship and networking opportunities whenever possible as a strategy to deal with the many challenges evidenced throughout this study. Eve suggests that aspiring Latina administrators seek out mentorship and networking opportunities. She says, "Find someone great and work under them for as long as you can. Talk to them about their practice."

Establishing connections with people who can guide, who have experiential knowledge, and can motivate and inspire, may be key to experiencing success. Charlotte, who laments not having established more connections along the way, shared, "I was extremely always been very humble in the sense of, okay, maybe I'm not ready for that position." She suggests that Latina administrators will see more success by "having more connections with other people."

Professional Visibility

Interview protocol did not include any questions in regards to professional visibility. Despite this, the theme echoed throughout nearly all interviews. In the interview with Eve, for instance, she shared her views on her district's efforts to promote and sustain diverse leadership:

> We have to break some barriers absolutely but we have people that are working on doing that. You just have to be part of it. You cannot be silenced. You need to move. When something is wrong, you help fix it.

This quote speaks to the importance of being professionally visible and taking risks. Eve's view is not only pragmatic, but this participatory approach can serve as an opportunity for Latinas to practice their leadership skills, become change agents, and have their leadership qualities validated.

According to Amy, who serves on several district committees, being professionally visible "puts you out there." In other words, when Latinas are actively engaged in problem solving, their leadership qualities are exalted. "It puts your school out there, your name out there."

Charlotte's advice to aspiring Latina school leaders resonates with Eve and Amy's message. In part, she urges,

You have to find the balance that you are caring, showing that you know, that you can do

the job, be efficient. Now the efficient, unfortunately, we have to prove ourselves from

the first day we set foot as administrator. We have to prove that we're hard workers.

She regrets, "I think if I were to do this all over again, I think I should have sold myself more."

Religious Faith and Leadership

A surprising finding related to strategies to coping with perceived barriers arose from

qualitative case study data. The theme of religious faith as a strategy to overcoming challenges

was made evident through interview data analysis stemming from two participants. These

participants were Charlotte and Wendy. During Charlotte's interview, it was noted that she

specifically mentioned overcoming challenges throughout her career by employing her religious

faith. When talking about how she coped with the challenge of work stress, she noted,

 [T]his is how I have coped with it. I said I worked for God, and I worked for the

children, and I work for the parents that need help and support. That has been my cop-

out, that has been my, you know, my center, you know, being able to, because it's not for

the glory.

When asked about her personal role model, Charlotte shared,

My biggest personal role model I would say, to me I feel that my religion that's a lot of

my core values for me. I had great parents, a wonderful grandmother that to me, you

know, I would say my role model in values, but I think my religion plays, you know, I'm

Catholic and you know, I believe in God and feel that this is my ministry, and I call my

ministry by my vocation.

Charlotte later went on to say that that she had overcome some challenges which led her to leave

the principal role in exchange for an assistant principal role through her "faith," as well as by

"obtaining support from family and friends." Throughout the interview with Charlotte, a reference to God was made a total of nine times, a statistic making this theme worthy of inclusion.

Although Wendy did not mention religious faith as frequently as did Charlotte, there were instances during the interview where she revealed her religious faith was a mechanism utilized to overcome challenges. For example, Wendy talked about when she first became a principal and people would be in disbelief about her role due to her race and gender. She said, "It would upset me. It still does." I asked Wendy what strategy she utilized to overcome these feelings, to which she replied, "I just learn not to take it personal, and attribute it to people's ignorance, and a lot of prayer. A lot of, God please help me…Honestly there are days that I literally have to sit and say God please not today. "

As evidenced, religious faith seemed to play a part in helping at least Charlotte and Wendy take on some of the challenges they faced during their tenures as educational administrators. Data stemming from these two interviews led to a determination of significance by the researcher of this study. This thematic revelation should encourage future research on the role of religious faith in Latina leadership.

Race and Ascension

One of the guiding research questions in this study relates to the part that race and gender play in ascension and leadership. Some of the interviewees' responses reveal the perception that their race/ethnicity would hinder career advancement. In part, this perception is due to their experiences with deficit thinking, which were discussed earlier in the chapter. Another explanation as to why race/ethnicity would hinder career advancement is perceived to be related to racism.

Figure 4. Identified themes relative to strategies employed by Latina educational leaders in order to overcome perceived barriers to career advancement

In her current role as assistant principal, Charlotte experiences frequent encounters with deficit thinking. She recounts, "[B]ut sometimes I feel that they probably don't know that we can also do other areas like math, like social studies, or English. You to have to prove yourself, you have to constantly as a Latina, have to prove yourself."

Charlotte not only feels that she must consistently validate her leadership abilities, but also that her ideas are dismissed due to her race/ethnicity:

I try not to show it, but in meetings sometimes you bring things up and probably, I don't know if it's culture, you bring something up that deal with things that you feel that are important to the school, for example, right now student accountability. I take very good ideas to the team and there have been lesser ideas that are like, you know, so that makes

me feel like my contributions sometimes are not valid or taken into consideration

seriously.

I probed a little further and asked Charlotte if she thought her ideas were not taken seriously because of her race, to which she replied, "I think so probably because they are out-of-the-box; because of our culture we see things in a little different light than others."

When Charlotte was asked whether she believed her race or ethnicity would affect her ability to move up through the leadership ranks, she answered,

Yes. It has crossed my mind. That's how I feel. Being a Latina they only consider you, like for example, say I were to apply to become a principal in a majority Caucasian school; I probably wouldn't be selected. I feel I probably wouldn't be selected because they would like somebody who represents their majority. I am certified K-12, and I have my principal certification. I can work in an all-black school, or I can work in a Hispanic school, or I can work in a White school, you know I think that's something that gets tainted in the selection process.

Charlotte perceives that race will continue to hinder Latinas from advancing through the leadership ranks. This was evident when she said, "I think there's still some apprehension that is not being said. There's still that prejudice. There's still that, you know, they're going to look at you more sternly than the one that's probably doing a worse job than you."

Interviews with Wendy revealed her experiences with race and moving up through the leadership ranks. Though she did not perceive race to have any effect on her transition from teacher to administrator, it was apparent that race was perceived to play a part in her ability to move up the leadership ranks. "Me per se, I think it's helped more than hindered, because you know, you always need the token Latina, and right now I'm it."

In response to how race or ethnicity would affect her ability to move up through the leadership ranks, she replied,

> I think it's going to make a, it's going to be interesting. It's going to be harder to move up than a Caucasian or African-American person. People think that at the top there's not enough room for everybody at the table. People feel intimidated, and they still feel that even though I was born here, that I lived most of my life here; they still see me as a foreigner, as somebody that doesn't belong here.

Amy's perception of the impact race would have on her ability to move up the leadership ranks, while positive, is very telling: "Being a Hispanic administrator, those boxes are not just filled by a lot of people. A lot of people start to know who you are. I think it will absolutely help in that respect."

As was exemplified by these and other quotes presented throughout the chapter, Wendy's Charlotte's, and Amy's perceptions of race/ethnicity reveal the negative effects that racism and deficit thinking have on their current roles. Furthermore, they reveal a realization that racism would either facilitate career mobility due to the need to have token minorities or that deficit thinking based on race/ethnicity and racism would likely challenge career mobility.

Race and Leadership

To study the impact of race on leadership style and practices was a main focus of this research study. Although some is known about the leadership characteristics of Latina educational leaders, there are few accounts stemming directly from this racially marginalized group and none detailing how race or ethnicity affects the ways in which they lead. Several interview questions were designed to inform on this very topic. Specifically, interviewees were asked the following questions: (1) Does your race or ethnicity affect your leadership style or

practice? If so, how? (2) As an administrator, does your race/ethnicity help you connect with students? If so, how? and (3) As an administrator, does your race/ethnicity help you connect with the school community? If so, how? Qualitative data analysis reveals that all interviewees perceive their race to impact their leadership practice.

Charlotte believes that her race guides the way in which she responds to certain situations and helps her connect to her students, as well as to the school community. During her interview she stated,

> I'm pretty sure it does… in the way I react and things like that, you know, people, you know. Not only do they see you have a different style, I have a lot of parents that hug me, you know, and they are from different cultures as well.

Charlotte talked about how race enabled her to connect with her students and said,

> I make it that way. I think it's also part of my personality, because I like to smile to students. I want, you know, them to follow the rules, like you know, you're not supposed to wear hats in school and come here you have to take your hat off, you know. I give an opportunity, and then if I see the same student, I have a good memory, when I see the student with the hat, I say 'dame el sombrero' and they go, and they know that I have been fair.

Charlotte saw her race as an opportunity to model leadership success for her students when she stated: "And you are also a change agent and a role model for the students, so you know they see you in school, and they say you know I'm Hispanic like her, you know, and I can make it there."

Eve too believed her race or ethnicity affected her leadership style. When asked about this she emphatically responded:

Yes. I am passionate. I move, I talk with my eyes, my hands, and my body. People

know when I am pissed off. People know when I'm happy. People know when I'm sad.

People know when you stay away from her. I am passionate. I love my job. I love

making a difference and I think that's part of our culture is caring for others. We are very

happy people in Puerto Rico. We want everybody to be happy. I want everybody to be

happy and doing the right thing.

Eve went on to talk about the impact that being Latina has on her students; "[K]ids look at role

models and they can relate more when they are the same cultural background." Not only did she

feel as though her *Latinidad*, her Latina identity, was helping her relate more with students, but

in addition, being Latina allowed her a greater sense of cultural awareness: "You cannot say you

have empathy, if you do not understand where they are coming from, their background. You are

not going to be able to relate to some of the things, cultures and customs that other people have,"

she said.

Eve went on to say,

I am very proud. I am very proud to be a Puerto Rican woman here making a difference.

For me, it's pride and joy. Pride and joy. It's an honor. I want to make sure my parents

are proud of me, that my children are proud of me, that my husband is proud of me, my

friends. They are big shoes to fill.

Just as Charlotte and Eve attributed many of their leadership practices to their Hispanic heritage,

Wendy too spoke of how her ethnicity allowed her to adjust to many different roles, allowed her

to connect with parents, and affected everything that she does as an educational leader:

We [Latinas] have many shades of emotions, at least I know I do, and most of the Latino

people do and those things are definitely a benefit to us because we can pull out what we

need to pull out at the time that it needs to be pulled out; like if I need to be the grandma,

I'll be the *abuelita*. If I have to be the sassy Hispanic and you know, I can do that too.

So, I just love the fact that I am who I am and I get to play all these wonderful characters

when it is necessary and convenient for me. So it's, the adaptability, the different roles

that we have to play as administrators.

On race and how it allows her to connect to the school community, she commented: "I know the majority of my ESE and Hispanic parents, my ESE because they know my background, we have some excellent things going on in ESE here, and Hispanic parents because they need the voice, you know." Wendy went on to say about her race and how it affects her as an administrator: "It affects everything I do. It colors everything I do; from my staff, to my kids, to the parents, you know, it does."

Lastly, although Amy seemed not to believe that race impacts her leadership style or her leadership practices, at least not more than gender, she too shared many instances where her race allowed her to connect to her students and the school community.

During her interview she said,

Having those little connections and stuff like that, certainly yes. I feel happy that our

students have a role model in a leadership position that looks like them because there are

none usually. In my whole entire career, I don't think I ever had a Hispanic teacher in my

entire life growing up, let alone an administrator.

Qualitative analysis in this study finds the experiences of these Latinas with respect to their race and leadership to be positive, uplifting, and exemplary of why more Latinas ought to be encouraged to pursue careers in educational leadership. Their cultural awareness allows them to connect to their students, parents, and school communities. Additionally, many of their

leadership practices, perceived to be an inherent part of being Latina, allows for these women to be adaptive in their daily interactions and decision-making. In the next section, findings on the theme related to gender and ascension will be discussed.

Gender and Ascension

Research has indicated that gender has a negative effect on a female's ability to move up through the leadership ranks (Deangelis, 2003; Scollay & Logan, 1999; López, 1996; Méndez-Morse, et. al, 2015; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Qualitative data analysis for this study was inconsistent with previous research findings. The Latina administrators interviewed had varying opinions on whether being a woman would have any bearing on obtaining a higher leadership position.

Reasons given as to why gender would not be a hindrance to ascension were related to the perception that school districts desire to have mixed-gender administrative teams, as well as to the prevalence of females in higher leadership positions. On the contrary, assertions as to why gender would be perceived as a hindrance to career advancement were due to the opinions that women have to work harder than men to obtain a higher administrative position, a lack of feminine representation in high school administrative positions, the existennce of the "Good Old Boys" club, as well as self-imposed limitations.

For Charlotte, entry into administration may have been facilitated due to her gender, but at the same time, she believes it could also negatively affect her ability to move up the ranks. Charlotte recounted that "sometimes in schools they look at your gender even though it's not out there, because they want to have a mixed administrative team. So I would say that it has helped my career in that regard."

She went on to say,

In general I feel that with some exceptions, to be honest with you, like there is an underlying, you know, like women are working harder to get higher positions than men. That's something that I have seen and you can see the number of [females], you know especially in high schools. In high schools there are lots of male principals, you know, so probably yes [being a woman would affect my ability to move up the ranks].

Eve, on the other hand, does not believe that her gender had any effect on her ability to transition from teacher to administrator, although she acknowledges being the only female high school principal in her district:

I don't believe in just because I'm a woman or just because I I'm a man. It is what you want to do, how you want to do it and how you are going to get there. You make your own limitations.

Amy was uncertain as to whether gender would affect her ability to move up through the leadership ranks, as she has been able to observe other women in higher leadership roles. "I don't know," she stated. "I don't know that it will. I know a lot of women that are in leadership positions above me."

When asked to talk about gender and if it has helped or hindered her in her career, Wendy believed it had no effect on her ability to transition from teacher to administrator; what facilitated that transition, in her opinion, was her "skill set." Overall, Wendy views her gender as an asset. Although she makes note that there are times, particularly in the role of administrator, where it could be a hindrance, she has found ways to deal with such instances.

Wendy shared in regards to gender:

I have always seen it as a help. There are times that it hinders you because, especially

when you're in a "Good Old Boys" club, being a woman hinders you, but then again,

that's when you take one of the layers and use what you need to use, you know, what you

need to make sure they see you.

Despite what could be hindrance in a career where a majority is White and male, due to the

amount of time she has dedicated to her district, coupled with the fact that she is a highly

regarded school leader, she believes that gender would not affect her ability to continue to move

up the leadership ranks. "No," said Wendy, "not at this point. No."

Gender and Leadership

Qualitative analysis on gender and the role it plays in the careers of Latina administrators

reveals that just as race impacts leadership practice for these Latinas, so too does gender. Some

of the findings in this case study suggest that these Latinas perceive themselves to have gender-

specific leadership characteristics which they often employ in their administrative roles. These

Latina-specific leadership characteristics are identified as maternal, sensitive, empathetic, soft,

emotional, and receptive.

When asked if her gender affected the way she led or her leadership practice, Eve

emphatically responded,

Yes, it does. You have to have a balance on being maternal, being a mother, being a

sister. I think when we are moms when we are female; we have a sensitive part of us

when we lead. We are strong but also we listen. Usually, in education, who comes to the

school to solve the children's issue? The mom. Very seldom do you see a father because

they are working or they are not in the picture. Their moms are there and I can sit down

and talk from mom to mom. Sometimes I can give them advice, what I have done in their

cases. Because I might not be going through what they are going through, but I can give

little bit of hope. This is what I would do as a mom. This is what I'd do as a sister. We

have the maternal that nobody can take from us. It doesn't matter if you're Hispanic,

black, White or whatever we [women] think and we feel differently.

Amy opined that her ability to soften things, particularly when dealing with parents or

discipline, was a characteristic that set her apart from her male administrative counterpart. "I

think it's more the woman in me that makes all the difference in how I relate to people and how I

handle situations, especially being a mother. I think it is more gender."

She went on to say,

I'm telling you, I really feel like because I work with a man, it [gender] helps. We plan

our approach depending on what is needed, whether it's me going in and softening things

or whether he needs to go in and kind of hard line like, this is what it is. I'm telling you it

would not work any other way here. The angry dad is not going to be angry at me like he

is on a man.

Lastly, interviews with Wendy revealed that gender impacted her leadership practice in a

positive manner:

It affects it in a positive way because I think as women we are so much more receptive to

the emotional part of people, where men either, they get uncomfortable, they don't want

to talk about it, or they just become very, you know, like brusque sort of thing, you know.

Whereas, we can sit and get a napkin and cry with a parent, or cry with a teacher.

The Role of Second-Language Skills on the Careers of Latina Administrators

The benefit that second-language skills provide in the careers of Latina administrators

was an unexpected finding of the case studies herein. Data on how second-language skills

influence career advancement for Latina educational leaders have been, until now, unavailable in scholarly research. Second-language skills were perceived as a benefit for all the Latinas interviewed; these skills were perceived to have facilitated entry into a leadership position, allowed for positive connections with parents and students, facilitated administrative functions required of administrators, and improved the likelihood of ascension.

Many challenges to career ascension have been documented through the analysis of interviews conducted for this study. Additionally, many positive leadership characteristics and qualities in Latina educational leaders have prevailed -- characteristics which are perceived to assist in career advancement. What has yet to be examined is the apparent benefit of second-language skills, Spanish-language skills, to the role of public school administrator.

For all participants in the qualitative portion of this study, possessing second-language skills is perceived as beneficial to their career. Charlotte credited entry into an administrative role at least in part to her to bilingualism when she said, "They had the need of an administrator that was ready, you know, educational wise and that was bilingual…" Charlotte also perceived her Spanish-language abilities as facilitating personal connections with students and felt as though this cultural, linguistic connection allows her the opportunity to combat deficit thinking about Latino students. For example, she shared,

> Many of our students are more comfortable talking in their own native language, so I feel
> that sometimes when the kids are loud, and they are, you know and the administrator
> comes by, I say they're just loud, it's not a big deal, I know they are, it's just culture, you
> know, they were laughing, or they were carrying on about this. We need to teach them,
> don't get me wrong, and say, 'hey, lower your voice' you know, but I don't want, the kids

feel threatened, 'Oh they were looking at us like we are delinquents or something,' you know.

Charlotte later stated during the interview,

Everybody who's a Latina knows the struggle that probably went through to make it there. I want to show my heritage, speak the language as much as a I can with students who are of Hispanic descent, and they don't have any doubt in their mind that I am Latina I feel Latina and I'm proud to be Latina. And I want [students] to know more about the culture, about the beauty of speaking another language...

The ability to communicate in a second-language is also a skill perceived as beneficial when communicating with and assisting parents through their children's academic struggles. In many cases, parents' first language is not English or parents simply feel more comfortable speaking in their native language. The language barrier faced by many parents in the community, coupled with the realization that her second-language skills could be an asset, was the reason cited by Eve as to why she decided to pursue educational administration as a career. She shared, "…the language barrier for some of my parents. I said; you know what? That's something that I have. Why not use it?" In regards to parents, said Eve, they believe; "Now I have someone 'que habla español,' someone that understands us."

For Eve, her Spanish-language skills have helped her feel success in her administrative role. Her ability to solve conflict and analyze situations which if not for her second-language ability would be difficult to contextualize, have also led to a feeling of success. She contended, "I think the most successful experience that I have is being able to speak to my parents in their native language. You get so much out of those issues, conflicts that their children are having." It

has also aided Eve in contending with student discipline. She emphasized this when she stated, "They know they cannot pull one in front of me. I can speak their language."

For Wendy, the ability to connect with parents who may otherwise be concerned or apprehensive over a language barrier and being able to establish cultural and linguistic connections to students has been extraordinarily beneficial to her administrative career. Bilingualism is one of the skill sets she perceived as assisting her to gain entry into her first administrative role. During her interview she shared, "I think it was more my being bilingual what facilitated the transition."

For Wendy, her Spanish-language ability evokes a sense of pride in many parents. Wendy expresses that when Hispanic parents learn of her role as school principal they feel "a sense of relief, a sense of pride, especially when I speak in their language." She reiterated, " So, with the Hispanic people there is a sense of pride, it's a sense of like, oh my God, you know, there's somebody that understands me, and I can speak my language. "

She went on to speak of the cultural connections she is able to make with her minority students, facilitated by their linguistic connection:

Like, there's this connection that, and even with African-Americans, the kind of, I guess I speak and they hear my [city omitted] accent and they are like 'you're from up north,' there's also sense of familiarity, with White families, not so much.

Just as foreign-language skills, Spanish in particular, have benefitted Charlotte, Eve, and Wendy in their administrative careers, this too was an experience shared by Amy. Not only did Amy perceive her language skills as having facilitated entry to administration, "I'll tell you, that is how I think I got this job to begin with," but her language skills have also facilitated dialogue with parents who would have otherwise shied away from the administration office. Amy

recounted that "even more timid parents are telling me in Spanish and bringing concerns, saying, I just want to talk to you about something."

"I speak Spanish," said Amy joyfully, this in response to where she saw herself in five to ten years. "I can also write and read in Spanish and English, I think fairly well." Amy sees herself doing work which involves her Spanish-language skills in the future. She is considering "Maybe looking at contract language or something like editing" as she considers, "because some of the stuff that gets handed out in the district the tests kids take, I am like, 'has anyone read this'?"

Summary of Findings

Barriers to Career Advancement

In this study, it was discovered that Latinas in educational administration contend with many barriers which could impede career advancement, most of which are gender and/or race related. From differential treatment on the basis of race during the screening and selection process and a perceived preference for White administrators, aspiring Latina administrators appear to be challenged from the start. Upon their entry into leadership, the way in which they are perceived and responded to by colleagues due to the already small proportion of Latina women in administrative positions adds to the problem.

Other identified barriers were balancing the roles of wife or mother and career woman, stereotypic attitudes about their leadership abilities and capacities due to race, not to mention contending with unspoken racial prejudice. Exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession ("Good Old Boy Network"), as well as masculine and feminine forms of cronyism, seemingly stifles Latinas' abilities to advance their careers.

As evidenced through quantitative data analysis, differential treatment on the basis of race was identified as a significant barrier to career advancement. It was discovered that only with age and the passing of time within a district was this perception lessened. Otherwise, such racially-based differential treatment was related to being excluded from informal networks and aspirations and motivations being thwarted. It was evident too that with age came the ability to overcome stereotypical attitudes related to women's and Latinas' appropriate roles in society.

The experiences of the Latinas who took part in the qualitative portion of the study herein support and enhance the findings made possible through quantitative analysis. These women revealed being affected by racism, stereotyping, deficit thinking, targeted placement, gender-role conflict, and a lack of support systems. Interview analysis painted a picture of a stressful career where Latina women struggle to maintain work life balance, face peer resistance, are the recipients of less than adequate district support and thus must find and make mentorship and networking opportunities. The identification of a newly identified barrier to career ascension, not pervasive in research related to Latina leadership, was made through qualitative data analysis. As noted, this barrier centers on menial job assignments once Latinas gain entry into administration.

Effects of Perceived Barriers on Career Advancement

Rank-ordered perceived effects of barriers identified the following effects: career delay due to family responsibilities, limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias, aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing, applying less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered in advancing, exclusion from informal networks, being denied access to power groups that make important decisions, problems with finding balance between feminine identity and

professionalism, having to accept less attractive and challenging jobs, as well as promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with one's abilities and experiences. Descriptive data analysis on perceived barriers was consistent with barriers identified through rank-ordering.

Correlation analyses further aided in identifying effects of perceived barriers on the careers of Latina administrators. A multitude of correlations were made between perceived barriers and the consequences of these. Beginning with entry into leadership, the more Latinas applied in order to obtain their first leadership position, the more they perceived that they would not be promoted into positions correspondent with their expertise and experience. When the participants perceived teachers, parents, and community to prefer male rather than female administrators, a positive correlation became apparent with being excluded from informal networks, as well as promotion into dead-end positions not commensurate with their abilities and experiences. Supervisors' negative attitudes about Latinas' competency and effectiveness in administrative positions correlated with promotion into dead-end positions, having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs, and being excluded from informal networks. When supervisors were perceived as having the same negative attitude about women's capacities in general, the effects increased. Such effects were identified as being denied access to power groups which make important decisions, being thwarted in their aspirations and motivations because of difficulty encountered in advancing, and applying less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered.

The findings of this study indicate that when Latinas contend with stereotypical attitudes about their appropriate roles in society (due to race), higher indices of being excluded from informal networks, being denied access to power groups that make important decisions, and

having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs are observed. These very same consequences were observed when the barrier was unspoken racial prejudice.

The masculine and feminine forms of cronyism, wherein persons of one gender refer persons of the same gender for available jobs, were both identified as significant barriers to career ascension. Correlation analyses indicated that the prevalence of these barriers is linked with applying less frequently for administrative positions because of obstacles encountered and perceiving exclusion from informal networks. The feminine form of cronyism appeared to be linked to more perceived consequences than its masculine counterpart, making being denied access to power groups which make important decisions and having to accept less attractive and challenging jobs relative to this barrier.

Latina administrators who perceived a lack of support and encouragement within their organizations seemed to also perceive exclusion from informal networks and promotion into dead-end positions not proportionate to their abilities and experiences. When the perception was a lack of professional networking opportunities, a positive correlation was evident between this and being denied access to power groups that make important decisions, aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing, and applying less frequently for available administrative positions due to obstacles encountered.

A perception of being excluded from the informal socialization process into the profession ("Good Old Boy Network") was positively correlated with the perception that aspirations and motivation were lowered due to the difficulty encountered in advancing and applying less frequently for available administrative positions.

Lastly, a perceived lack of career mobility and limited opportunities for growth correlated with being denied access to power groups that make important decisions, exclusion from

informal networks, having diminished aspirations and motivation, and applying less frequently for available administrative positions.

Notably, many correlations were revealed through quantitative data analysis, helping paint a picture of the severity of the consequences brought about by many of the challenges faced by Latina administrators. Through interview data it was surmised that Latinas constantly engage in proving themselves as a result of their race and that race/ethnicity would likely hinder career advancement.

Strategies to Career Advancement

Survey data analyses indicated that Latina educational leaders successfully utilize a variety of strategies in order to overcome perceived barriers. The most successful strategies employed by Latina administrators in order to overcome challenges are seeking advanced training and certification, obtaining support from family, learning to cope with multiple roles-wife/mother/professionals, setting career goals and formulating plan of action, attending seminars and administrative training workshops to improve professional and interpersonal skills, improving professional image, obtaining support from peers, being more assertive in pursuing career goals, becoming professionally visible, ignoring stereotypical attitudes about Latina administrators, confronting stereotypical attitudes about female administrators, developing/utilizing "New Girl Network," and enlisting influential mentors.

Correlation analysis identified that the more years that Latina administrators work in one school district, the more successful they are at developing/utilizing "New Girl Network," the higher the perception of a lack of professional network, the less successfully they utilized becoming professionally visible as a coping strategy, and that being more assertive in pursuing career goals went hand in hand with obtaining peer support.

Interviews with Latina educational leaders were consistent with many with the identified strategies to overcome the perceived challenges. These Latinas engaged in ignoring, disassociating from and confronting many of the challenges which have come their way due to their race/ethnicity. They sought and created mentorship and networking opportunities whenever possible; they sought out and provided professional supports to others. They exercised being professionally visible as a strategy, and at least two interviewees overcame challenges through religious faith.

The Role of Race in Ascension and Leadership

As previously noted, many significant findings were made in relation to how race impacts the career of Latina educational leaders. Further race-related findings of this study indicate the higher the participant age, the less the perception that they were challenged with differential treatment on the basis of race during the formal application, screening and selection process. When participants did perceive differential treatment on the basis of race during the formal application, screening and selection process, the perception of race/ethnicity as beneficial in obtaining their current position decreased. The higher the participant age and the more teaching experience prior to having obtained a first leadership position, the less the perception that race/ethnicity was a hindrance to leadership role attainment. In general, this study found that race/ethnicity is perceived as a significant barrier in leadership role attainment.

With regards to career advancement, race/ethnicity was generally found to pose a greater barrier on career advancement than gender. Interviews were indicative of a perception that race/ethnicity would likely hinder career advancement.

One significant correlation was found to the contrary. This correlation indicated the possibility that the number of years teaching prior to obtaining the first leadership position may lessen the perception that race/ethnicity hinders leadership career advancement.

Lastly, when Latinas viewed race/ethnicity as beneficial in aiding career advancement, their perception that race/ethnicity affects leadership practices/style also increased. Overall, the participants in this study indicated that race/ethnicity was beneficial to their administrative careers.

Latina administrators interviewed for this study further illuminate the aforementioned quantitative findings when interviews revealed the belief that race/ethnicity plays a very critical role in their everyday leadership roles, their leadership practice and their style.

The Role of Gender in Ascension and Leadership

Two of the most significant quantitative findings on the role of gender and Latina leaders' careers were that gender was perceived to have hindered participants from obtaining their current position and that it was perceived to have hindered career advancement. Unlike what was found through quantitative analysis, interviews with Latina administrators provided varying opinions on whether being a woman would have any bearing on career ascension.

Quantitative analysis indicated that gender was perceived to impact leadership practices/style as significantly as race. Latinas who took part in the interview also perceived gender as valuable in their current leadership roles. They perceived themselves to hold gender-specific leadership characteristics which they often employ in their administrative roles.

Views on the role of gender on leadership were impacted by the implementation of some coping strategies. For instance, the more successful the participants were at developing/utilizing a "New Girl Network," the higher the perception that gender was a benefit to their current

leadership roles. In addition, the more education was attained by Latina administrators, the less the perception that gender impacted leadership practice or style.

The Intersection of Race and Gender in Ascension and Leadership

Findings of this study indicate that gender and race may play an equal role in hindering Latinas' educational leadership role attainment. This was evident through the positive correlation made between the perception that gender hindered the participants in obtaining their current position and that race/ethnicity hindered them in obtaining their current position.

Evidence suggests that gender and race may also play an equal role in hindering career advancement, as was evidenced by the positive correlation between the perception that gender hindered educational leadership advancement and the perception that race/ethnicity hindered Latinas in obtaining their current position. A positive correlation revealed between limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias and limited opportunities to advance professionally due to racial bias, help to further substantiate this finding, as does the apparent relationship between gender and race as a perceived hindrance on career advancement. Results of the aforementioned correlations suggest that gender and racial bias may be inseparable factors limiting career advancement.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The demographic composition of the U.S. has undergone significant changes. Latino students have become a majority across the country, turning many of our nation's public schools into racially, culturally, and even linguistically diverse institutions of learning (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). Despite this, representation of Latina school leaders is not reflective of the increase in Hispanic student population (Manuel & Slate, 2003).

In this study, barriers to career advancement, effects of these barriers, and strategies to overcoming challenges were examined through the perspective of Latina public school administrators. These may be of assistance to Latinas who aspire to become school administrators. This study includes Hispanic females who have experienced a transition from classroom teacher to public school administrator, either assistant principal or principal. The use of both survey data and interviews provided insights to the underrepresentation of Latinas in public school administration.

Possible perceptions of tacit assumptions and beliefs held by the majority culture that may impede Latinas from acquiring or advancing their leadership careers surfaced in the use of the survey and in the use of interviews. In addition, perceptions regarding other significant barriers shed some light on Latinas in their roles as school administrators. Perceived effects of barriers revealed ramifications which many of the barriers posed. Survey and interview data reveal successful strategies that Latinas employed in order to overcome perceived barriers. This information may offer hope and inspiration to aspiring Latina administrators. Lastly, surveys completed by Latina administrators and completed interviews revealed the perceived effects that gender and race pose on leadership practice.

The exploration of Latinas' perceptions of their experiences of the role of school administrator provided explanations for the underrepresentation of Latinas in the field of educational administration.

The Problem

The demographics of schools across the nation are becoming increasingly diverse. It is estimated that 51 percent of all public-school students enrolled in Grades K-8 and 48 percent of students in secondary schools are minorities, mainly Hispanic (Krogstad & Fry, 2014). A decline in the number of Caucasian students in America's public schools is expected through 2024 (NCES, 2015).

As schools become increasingly diverse in the U.S., the overall numbers of Latinas in educational leadership positions continue to be miniscule. Hispanic women have been absent or excluded from educational leadership positions.

The literature has identified many barriers impeding or challenging Latinas from advancing through the educational leadership ranks. To investigate the lived experiences and accounts of Latinas in leadership may bring new dimensions and challenges to the current knowledge based on the lived experiences of Latina educational leaders (López, 1996; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Murakami, et al., 2015; Sánchez et al., 2008; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

In-depth examination into the professional lives of Latina administrators may broaden the discourse on educational leadership, revealing the effects that their experiences have on the practice of educational leadership. The identification of barriers to career advancement, effects of barriers, and successful strategies serves as a catalyst for change in the field of educational

administration, illuminating the roles of race and gender in ascension and leadership, and adding a fresh, new, critical perspective on the careers of Latina educational leaders.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore barriers that are perceived to hinder Latina women from ascending through leadership hierarchies, identify the ramifications of such barriers, and ascertain successful strategies utilized in order to overcome these barriers. Furthermore, this study sought to determine the extent to which gender and race are related to ascension and leadership practice by acquiring information relative to Latinas' experiences as educational leaders.

Studies exist regarding barriers affecting minority women as they ascend through leadership hierarchies (Byrd-Blake, 1999; Gates, Ringel, Santibañez, Ross, & Chung, 2003; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006), drivers and barriers faced by minorities of both genders in secondary educational leadership positions (Fernández, et al.,2015), characteristics of Latina and Latino educational leaders through a critical race theory (CRT) lens (Alemán, 2009), and the ways in which cultural identity impacts minority leaders' leadership styles (Santamaria & Gaetane, 2014). However, few studies, these limited to exploration through exclusively qualitative methods, exist applying a critical race theoretical lens to the barriers faced by Latina women when ascending through leadership hierarchies as well as to the strategies they employ in order to overcome them.

Information gleaned from lived experiences of Latina educational leaders may not only serve to expand the knowledge base on Hispanic females, but may assist other Latinas seeking to acquire leadership roles or attempting an ascent through leadership hierarchies. Presenting data from the perspective of this marginalized group not only provides an opportunity to contribute to

the discourse on educational leadership, but may result in empowering educators to pursue careers in educational leadership, to promote and sustain diverse leadership, and to sustain socially just institutions whose practices are equitable and fair in spite of the racial makeup or gender of aspirants.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question: What are the experiences of Latina women who have ascended through educational leadership hierarchies? Four research questions directed the form and content of this study:

1. What do Latina school administrators perceive as barriers hindering their advancement through leadership hierarchies?

2. How do perceived barriers affect career advancement?

3. What are the strategies employed by Latina administrators in order to overcome the perceived barriers to advancement through educational leadership hierarchies?

4. Do race and/or gender benefit Latina leaders in their roles as public school administrators? If so, how?

Statement of Method

This study was conducted by utilizing a mixed methods approach. A mixed methods approach allows for more detailed understanding of a phenomenon than what may be revealed in a quantitative analysis alone. Landrum and Garza (2015) assert that "together, quantitative and qualitative approaches are stronger and provide more knowledge and insights about a research topic than either approach alone" (Landrum & Garza, 2015, p. 207). Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) define mixed methods research as "that in which the investigator collects and analyzes

data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative

approaches and/or methods in a single study or program of inquiry" (p.4).

In this study, a mixed methods mode of inquiry fills a gap in the body of literature that

until recently provided a limited understanding of the experiences of Latina administrators

(Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

The methodology utilized for this study allows for connecting data, whereby one type of

inquiry informs the other at a subsequent or concurrent time (Landrum & Garza, 2015).

Engaging in quantitative analysis allowed the identification of trends and patterns experienced by

Latinas who underwent the phenomenon of career transition from teacher to administrator. A

qualitative mode of inquiry provided meaning to this data and further informed the questions

under study.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Collecting and Organizing the Data</h3>

An eight-section Likert-scale questionnaire comprised of 77 categorical responses, open-

ended responses, and a voluntary short-answer section was generated. Identified through

publicly available data and through referrals, a total of 142 possible participants in six school

districts in central and southwest Florida received email correspondence inviting them to

participate in the study.

Collected survey data was populated into an Excel database. All statistical analyses were

completed using SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistical data were generated. Pearson Product

Moment Correlation coefficients were calculated at $p < .05$ to determine the relationships among

the variables, including demographic data. One-way ANOVAs and post-hoc tests using

Dunnett's T3 procedure were used.

T-tests at p <.01 were conducted to determine whether the mean value of a variable met or exceeded 2.5, identifying a significant barrier, significant coping tool, or significant consequence of a barrier.

Tables were created to aid in the identification of statistically significant data. Several tables were generated from descriptive statistics allowing rank-ordering perceived barriers, perceived effects of barriers, successful strategies, as well as data relative to the perceived impact of race and gender on ascension and leadership. A table of significant correlations stemming from Pearson Correlation coefficients was also generated. Two graphs were generated from the analysis of variance analyses on statistically significant coping barriers and coping strategies.

Case study participants indicated a willingness to be interviewed upon completion of the electronic survey. Four participants -- two assistant principals and two principals -- took part in an interview lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. The interview was comprised of 38 questions and designed to correlate with the research questions under study. All interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the interviewees in order to capture detailed, complete, and reliable interviews, reflective of each Latina administrator's personal experiences, feelings, and words.

All interviews were converted to an MP3 file and sent to a reputable transcription service provider. Each administrator's transcribed interview was emailed to her, affording interviewees opportunity for review, edits, and approval. Upon the completion of all interviews, the data were electronically organized to begin with data analysis and interpretation.

The researcher began examining transcriptions for common themes or patterns relevant to the research questions. Using a color-coding system, the researcher combed through interview data, identifying key words, key phrases, key sentences that were highly relevant to the research

questions under study. The researcher then created an electronic database of emergent major and minor themes.

Several questions were considered to assist with the development of the database:

- What is the subject of the identified quote/passage?

- Does a word or a phrase relate to a specific research question?

- Are there words or phrases which may relate to multiple or overlapping categories?

- Are there any unexpected words, quotes, or passages?

- Did any words, quotes, or passages generate a new category?

In studying the themes generated through interviews, it was essential for the researcher to question which were central to providing a clear understanding of the research questions under study.

Findings

Interpretation of the Data

Interpretation of the data was comprehensive, stemming from an in-depth examination not only of statistical analyses but a comprehensive look at themes generated from interviews which would allow for a critical, in-depth understanding of the research questions under study. Data interpretation stemming from quantitative and qualitative data was presented in relation to the four research questions under study and other significant findings were presented in subsequent separate sections as secondary findings.

To ensure accurate data analysis and minimize errors, quantitative data analysis was conducted in collaboration with an outside expert in research and measurement and further validation sought through collaborations with the researcher's dissertation committee members. To validate the themes and patterns emergent in the qualitative portion of the study, consensual

validation was sought, whereas a team of peer reviewers provided credence to the findings. Their role was to ensure that the personal biases of the researcher did not permeate thematic categorization.

Findings for Research Sub-Question # 1

What do Latina school administrators perceive as barriers hindering their advancement through leadership hierarchies? It was discovered that Latinas in educational administration contend with many gender and/or race-related barriers hindering their advancement through leadership hierarchies. Their challenges begin with differential treatment on the basis of race during the screening and selection process and a perceived preference for White administrators. The perception that differential treatment on the basis of race occurred during the screening and selection process lessened with age and the passing of time.

Upon their entry into leadership, the way in which they are perceived and responded to by colleagues due to the small proportion of Latinas in administrative positions was the barrier of greatest significance. Latinas in this study also contended with balancing the roles of wife or mother and career woman, stereotypic attitudes about their leadership abilities and capacities due to gender and race, and unspoken racial prejudice. Exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession ("Good Old Boy Network") and masculine and feminine forms of cronyism were barriers perceived to stifle Latinas' abilities to advance their careers.

As evidenced through interview data analysis, Latinas who took part in the qualitative portion of the study herein revealed barriers such as racism, racial stereotyping, deficit thinking, gender-role conflict, and a lack of support systems. Interview analysis was also indicative of barriers posed by a stressful career where Latinas struggle to maintain work-life balance, face

peer resistance, and due to the aforementioned lack of district support received, must establish their own mentorship and networking opportunities.

Findings for Research Sub-Question # 2

How do perceived barriers affect career advancement? Statistically significant effects of barriers were identified as career delay due to family responsibilities, limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias, aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing, applying less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered in advancing, exclusion from informal networks, denial of access to power groups that make important decisions, problems with finding balance between feminine identity and professionalism, having to accept less attractive and challenging jobs, and promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with one's abilities and experiences.

A multitude of correlations also revealed the effects which barriers may pose on Latinas' administrative careers. Beginning with entry into leadership, the more Latinas applied in order to obtain their first leadership position, the more they perceived that they would not be promoted into positions correspondent with their expertise and experiences. The barrier of racially-based differential treatment during the screening and selection process was perceived to relate to exclusion from informal networks and correlative to aspirations and motivations being thwarted. Furthermore, the barrier of teachers, parents, and community to preference for male rather than female administrators was perceived to lead to exclusion from informal networks, as well as promotion into dead-end positions not commensurate with abilities and experiences.

Supervisors' negative attitudes about Latinas' competency and effectiveness in administrative positions correlated with promotion into dead-end positions, having to accept less

attractive and less challenging jobs, and being excluded from informal networks. When supervisors were perceived as having the same negative attitude about women's capacities in general, even more adverse effects were evidenced. These effects were perceived as denial of access to power groups which make important decisions, aspirations and motivations thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing, as well as applying less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered.

The findings of this study indicated that when Latinas contend with stereotypical attitudes about their appropriate roles in society due to race, higher indices of exclusion from informal networks, denial of access to power groups that make important decisions and having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs were observed. These very same consequences were observed when the barrier was unspoken racial prejudice.

The masculine and feminine forms of cronyism were both linked with applying less frequently for administrative positions because of obstacles encountered and with exclusion from informal networks. The feminine form of cronyism appeared to be linked to more consequences than its masculine counterpart, with denial of access to power groups which make important decisions and having to accept less attractive and challenging jobs relative to this barrier.

Latinas who perceived a lack of support and encouragement within their organizations seemed to also perceive exclusion from informal networks and promotion into dead-end positions not correspondent to their abilities and experiences. Lack of professional networking opportunities positively correlated with being denied access to power groups that make important decisions, aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing, and applying less frequently for available administrative positions due to obstacles encountered.

Exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession ("Good Old Boy Network") was positively correlated with lowered aspirations and motivations, as well as to a tendency to apply less frequently for available administrative positions.

Consequential of many race-related barriers faced by Latina administrators is the frequency with which Latinas have to prove themselves and their leadership abilities. Furthermore, it was revealed through case study analysis that race-related barriers were perceived to likely hinder career advancement.

Findings for Research Sub-Question # 3

What are the strategies employed by Latina administrators in order to overcome the perceived barriers to advancement through educational leadership hierarchies? Latina educational leaders successfully utilize a variety of strategies in order to overcome perceived barriers. The most successful strategies employed by Latina administrators in order to overcome challenges are seeking advanced training and certification, obtaining support from family, learning to cope with multiple roles -- wife/mother/professional -- setting career goals and formulating plan of action, attending seminars and administrative training workshops to improve professional and interpersonal skills, improving professional image, obtaining support from peers, being more assertive in pursuing career goals, becoming professionally visible, ignoring stereotypical attitudes about Latina administrators, confronting stereotypical attitudes about female administrators, developing/utilizing "New Girl Network," and enlisting influential mentors.

Interviews with Latina educational leaders were consistent with many strategies identified through quantitative analysis. In order to overcome their perceived challenges, these Latinas engaged in ignoring, disassociating from, and confronting many of the race-related

barriers with which they contended. They also sought and created mentorship and networking opportunities whenever possible and sought out and provided professional support. Additionally, they exercised being professionally visible as a strategy to overcome barriers to career advancement.

Findings for Research Question # 4

Do race and/or gender benefit Latina leaders in their roles as public school administrators? If so, how? Descriptive analysis revealed that race and gender were significant barriers when it came to Latinas attaining their current leadership roles. Further data analysis found that gender and race may have played an equal role in hindering Latinas from obtaining their current roles. This was made evident through the positive correlations existent between the perceptions that gender hindered the participants in obtaining their current position and that race/ethnicity hindered them in obtaining their current position.

Race, as evidenced through descriptive analysis, was perceived as a greater barrier to career advancement than gender, although both of these variables were of statistical significance. There is more evidence to suggest that gender and race may be inseparable factors limiting career advancement. Positive correlations between the perception that gender hindered educational leadership advancement and the perception that race/ethnicity hindered Latinas in obtaining their current positions assist in corroborating this theory. A positive correlation between limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias and limited opportunities to advance professionally due to racial bias also substantiates the inseparable relationship between race and gender and their limiting effects on career advancement. Only one statistically significant correlation was found to counter the perception that race/ethnicity hinders

leadership career advancement; this perception was lessened the higher the number of years the administrator had been teaching prior to obtaining a leadership position.

Latina administrators interviewed for this study further supported the quantitative findings of this study when they revealed their perceptions that race/ethnicity would likely hinder career advancement. Interviewees were equally divided in their perceptions on whether gender would benefit career advancement.

Survey results indicate that Latinas view their race/ethnicity and gender to equally affect leadership practice/style. This perception was further demonstrated through interviews with practicing administrators who indicated that their race and gender play a critical role in their everyday leadership roles, their leadership practice and their style. Race was perceived to guide the response in certain situations; allowed for a connection with students, parents, and the school community; afforded an opportunity to model leadership success; provided a greater sense of cultural awareness; and enhanced the ability to adapt to the different roles that must be undertaken as administrators.

Qualitative analysis on gender and the role it plays in the careers of Latina administrators revealed that just as race impacts leadership practice for these Latinas, so too does gender. Findings in this case study suggest that these Latina administrators perceive themselves to have gender-specific leadership characteristics which they often employ in their administrative roles. These characteristics are identified as maternal, sensitive, empathetic, soft, emotional, and receptive.

Secondary Findings

Menial Job Assignments

The identification of a newly identified barrier to career ascension, not pervasive in research related to Latina leadership, was made through qualitative data analysis. This was relative to assignment of tasks which could be perceived as menial, or outside of what could be perceived as customary functions of educational leaders. There were many accounts of menial responsibilities, as evidenced by interviewee quotes presented in the qualitative findings in Chapter Four.

Religious Faith and Leadership

A surprising finding related to strategies for coping with perceived barriers arose from qualitative case study data. The theme of religious faith as a strategy to overcoming challenges was made evident through interview data analysis stemming from two participants.

Second-Language Skills and Latina Leadership

The benefit that second-language skills pose on the careers of Latina administrators was an unexpected finding of the case study herein. Data on how second-language skills influence career advancement for Latina educational leaders has been, until now, limited in scholarly research. Second-language skills were perceived as a benefit for all the Latinas interviewed; these skills were perceived to have facilitated entry into a leadership position, allowed for positive connections with parents and students, facilitated functions required of administrators, and was perceived to have the ability to facilitate ascension. Rank-ordering indicated foreign-language skills posing greater benefits to the current roles of Latina administrators than gender or race.

Conclusions

Many of the findings and themes discovered throughout this study are of great importance to the study of Latinas' educational leadership career experiences. However, several themes echoed throughout the four research questions as Latina administrators shared their perceptions through survey completions and their thoughts, reflections, and experiences during the interviews. These themes are organized by the four research questions.

Research Question # 1

What do Latina school administrators perceive as barriers hindering their advancement through leadership hierarchies?

Theme: Race. Race is a major factor limiting career advancement for Latina administrators. The small numbers of Latinas in administrative positions exacerbate many of the challenges faced by Latina administrators. Differential treatment on the basis of race during the formal application, screening and selection process raises questions as to whether Latinas are being given fair and equitable opportunities to gain entry into leadership positions. So too does a perceived community preference for White administrators. It should be duly noted that all administrators who took part in interviews were placed in high-minority schools.

Latinas who completed the survey indicated that their race had both hindered them from obtaining their current role and would likely hinder career advancement. Unspoken racial prejudice was a theme which permeated quantitative analyses and was prevalent in conversations with Latina administrators. Experiential accounts indicate that many Latinas are subjected to racism while in their administrative roles. Latina administrators are often made to feel like an outsider due to their race; perform administrative functions not assigned to others; and experience racial stereotyping from colleagues, members of the community, and at times, from

persons of their own race. It can be surmised that race-related barriers would likely challenge

career mobility or, in the best case, facilitate career mobility due to the need to have token

minorities.

Theme: Gender and cronyism. Statistical results indicated that the careers of practicing

and future Latina administrators may be jeopardized by the practice of cronyism, whereas

persons of one gender refer persons of the same gender for jobs. Evidence suggests that both

feminine and masculine gendered-forms of cronyism are equally statistically significant barriers

faced by the Latina administrators who completed the survey.

Theme: The inseparable factors of race and gender. Race and gender are relative and

significant barriers perceived to challenge Latinas when attaining their current leadership roles.

Both variables are also perceived to hinder career advancement, although race was a more

statistically significant barrier to career advancement, as indicated in the findings of this study.

Evidence suggests that gender and race may be inseparable or at least related factors affecting

leadership role attainment, advancement, and affecting leadership practice for Latinas.

Latina administrators interviewed for this study further support the theory that for

Latinas, race and gender are inseparable factors affecting leadership careers. Latinas shared

experiences suggesting that race/ethnicity would likely hinder career advancement, although they

were equally divided in their perceptions on whether gender would benefit or hinder career

advancement.

Theme: Role conflict. Latina administrators find challenge in balancing their roles of

wife/mother and career woman, as evidenced by statistical analysis. Most of the interviewees in

this study indicated this as a significant challenge to their careers. The role of school

administrator was characterized as demanding and often stressful, requiring long work hours

coupled with laborious emotional and physical work. Given the many hours spent away from family, some interviewees expressed emotions of guilt, while all indicated having supportive families who help them ameliorate this struggle.

Theme: Professional support systems. Case study analysis revealed this theme. All interviewees indicated having benefitted from informal mentorships as well as from informal opportunities for networking. However, lack of formal, systematic, mentorship and networking opportunities was evident. A perceived lack of district support was evidenced through interviews with several Latina administrators. It was clear that despite limited systematic opportunities for mentorship and networking, Latinas were establishing informal mentor-mentee relationships and creating their own opportunities to network with other educational professionals.

Research Question # 2

How do perceived barriers affect career advancement?

Theme: Challenging career mobility. It was noted that race and gender-related barriers could challenge career mobility for Latinas. A positive conclusion resulting from this study, however, reveals that for these Latina administrators, there are few other insurmountable challenges. As was evidenced in the descriptive statistics for perceived consequences of barriers analysis, other possible effects presented to survey participants yielded not a single mean score higher than a 2.5. Latinas who took part in this study possess tenacity and were able to persevere and overcome challenges which they faced during their careers.

Theme: Menial job assignments. It is concluded that Latina administrators perform tasks which could be perceived as menial or non-traditional of educational leaders. It is theorized that many of these assignments are a result of deficit thinking.

Interviews revealed accounts of such tasks performed in place of more traditional administrative functions. Translating appeared as a frequent undertaking for at least a couple of interviewees. Other tasks were related to overseeing facilities, custodial issues in the school building, and overseeing non-academic core departments.

Research Question # 3

What are the strategies employed by Latina administrators in order to overcome the perceived barriers to advancement through educational leadership hierarchies?

Theme: A multitude of strategies. Latina administrators successfully employ a variety of strategies in order to overcome perceived barriers to educational leadership advancement. These strategies include seeking advanced training and certification, obtaining support from family, learning to cope with multiple roles, setting career goals and formulating plans of action, attending seminars and administrative training workshops to improve professional and interpersonal skills, improving their professional image, obtaining support from peers, being more assertive in pursuing career goals, becoming professionally visible, ignoring stereotypical attitudes about Latina administrators, confronting stereotypical attitudes about female administrators, developing/utilizing "New Girl Network," and enlisting influential mentors and creating networking opportunities. It was determined that religious faith may be utilized as a coping mechanism.

Research Question # 4

Do race and/or gender benefit Latina leaders in their roles as public school administrators? If so, how? Data analyses suggest that race and gender both play integral roles in Latinas' administrative roles and impacts their leadership styles. Shared experiences by Latina administrators reveal how race/ethnicity and cultural identity (inclusive of foreign-

language skills) afford opportunities for leaders to connect with their students, allow them to serve as role models of successful minority educational leaders, enhance their personal sense of cultural awareness, and enhance their situational leadership skills. Race/ethnicity was perceived to provide Latina leaders the opportunity to engage parents in the educational process. These are parents who would otherwise feel inhibited due to cultural and linguistic barriers.

As evidenced in this study, gender impacts Latinas in their leadership practice/style as much as race. Interviews further suggest that Hispanic females may hold specific leadership characteristics. These characteristics were identified as maternal, sensitive, empathetic, emotional, and receptive.

Connections of Findings to Literature Review

A growing body of research attests to the challenges faced by Latinas seeking to enter the field of public school administration. Limited recruitment, targeted placement in elementary or curriculum areas, being held to a higher degree of scrutiny than non-White candidates, and being judged as less qualified based solely on ethnic status are all phenomena accounted for in the literature (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015).

Gaining Entry into Leadership

Latinas interviewed for the study could not identify any district-specific processes to increase minority representation of school leaders. This finding is consistent with literature which indicates that few districts have systematic succession processes in place, particularly for school leadership positions, and highlights a need to implement focused recruitment strategies in order to attract Latina educational leaders (Fernández, et al., 2015; Myung, Loeb & Horng, 2011).

Differential treatment on the basis of race during the screening and selection process was a major barrier to entry and advancement in Latinas' educational leadership careers. A perceived preference for White administrators, also found to be a major barrier for Latinas in educational administration, supports the existence of deficit thinking, a set of assumptions that one possesses about certain groups of people which automatically makes them inferior or less capable than others (Garcia & Guerra, 2004).

Furthermore, findings in this study were consistent in identifying gendered and unequal hiring processes, aiding in maintaining and perpetuating the status quo —the predominance of White males in school administration positions. Current research indicates limited access to resources and opportunities, to institutional power, and to networking and mentoring opportunities to those who do not meet a specific racialized and/or gendered profile (Alemán, 2009). The findings in this study are in concordance with the aforementioned research.

Placement

Literature asserts that the placement of minority women predominates in elementary schools and schools with heavy concentrations of minority students (Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Ortiz, 1998; Richards, 2000; Sánchez, et al., 2008. Findings of this study are consistent with the literature as all of the Latina administrators who took part in this study were employed in high-minority school districts while the four Latinas interviewed for the study were employed in high-minority schools. Sixty-three percent of all the Latinas who participated in this study were employed at the elementary school level, a statistic also consistent with the literature.

Barriers to Career Advancement

Support, mentorship, and networking. A finding of this study was a perceived lack of district support leading Latina administrators to establish their own mentorship and networking

opportunities. These findings are inconsistent with the literature which has not given credence to an overall perceived lack of school district support, but rather to elements within a school district. Still, the findings this study are in accord with the literature which identifies a lack of role models, mentors, and sponsorship which limits networking opportunities and necessary guidance to those aspiring to the administrative ranks (Byrd-Bake, 2004; Fernández, et al., 2015; Gardiner et al., 2000; Haven et al., 1980; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015; Richard, 2000; Tallerico & Tingley, 2001).

Many significant findings were made in this study with regards to exclusion from informal networks and networking. Exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession ("Good Old Boy Network") was a barrier perceived to stifle Latina's abilities to advance their careers, a barrier which in turn correlated with lowered aspirations and motivations of Latinas as well as to a tendency for Latinas to apply less frequently for available administrative positions.

Findings in this study concur with literature which finds that gender and racial minority aspirants to leadership positions are not automatically included in networks that have developed out of male organizations, thus limiting their opportunities for ascension (Byrd, 1999; Byrd-Blake, 2004; Grogan, 1999, p. 529; Méndez-Morse, 2000).

Race-related barriers. In this study, it was discovered that Latinas in educational administration contend with many race-related barriers to career advancement. In fact, race/ethnicity was found to pose a greater barrier on career advancement than gender. Interviews with four Latina administrators were also indicative of a perception that race/ethnicity would likely hinder career advancement. Such indications were made evident through the emergent themes of racism, stereotyping, deficit thinking, and targeted placement.

Differential treatment on the basis of race during the screening and selection process, a perceived preference for White administrators, the negative way in which Latinas are perceived and responded to by colleagues due to the already small proportion of Latina women in administrative positions, and stereotypical attitudes related to Latinas' appropriate roles in society were also barriers identified in this study. These barriers help paint a bleak picture of Latina's opportunities to both enter and ascend through educational leadership hierarchies.

Consequential of race, the perceptions of the Latinas who took part in this study support research which indicates that racial discrimination is a latent barrier with which Latina administrators contend (Brooks & Brooks, 2013; Byrd, 1999; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Findings of this study are also consistent with studies which suggest that Latina administrators contend with racial stereotyping (Steele, et al., 2002; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

Many studies have evidenced that developing/aspiring leaders affected by deficit thinking. Deficit thinking has also been identified as a factor affecting the hiring of minority educational leaders. The findings in this study are consistent with these previous research findings (Hernández & Marshall, 2009; López, 1996; Quiocho & Ríos, 2000).

Gender-Related Barriers

Gender and career advancement. Two of the most significant quantitative findings on the role of gender and Latina leaders' careers were that gender was perceived to have hindered participants from obtaining their current position and that it was perceived to have hindered career advancement. These findings are consistent with prior research which has indicated that gender has a negative effect on a female's ability to move up through the leadership ranks

(Deangelis, 2003; Scollay & Logan, 1999; López, 1996; Méndez-Morse, et. al, 2015; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

     Role conflict. A major barrier identified in this study exposed that Latina administrators contend with balancing the roles of wife or mother and career woman. Not only was this barrier identified as significant in quantitative data analysis, but it was also an emergent theme arising from interviews with Latina administrators who openly shared the many challenges they faced with balancing their personal lives with that of public school administrator. Prior research conducted on Latina administrators has also identified role conflict as a struggle for this group of women (Byrd, 1999; Byrd-Blake, 2004; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Whitaker & Vogel, 2006; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

Dual-Marginalization

     As indicated in the literature, Latinas often contend with challenges stemming from dual marginalization often leading to them being overlooked for leadership positions (Hernández, 2005; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). To overcome barriers stemming from both race and gender, Latinas often have to work twice as hard and with more diligence than other women in order to join the leadership ranks; they must then prove themselves in order to maintain their positions (Santamaria & Gaetane, 2014; Steele, et al., 2002).

     Evidence purported in this study support the literature and reveals the interconnectedness of race and gender to Latina's educational leadership careers; descriptive analysis revealed that race and gender were both significant barriers when it came to participants attaining their current leadership roles and identified race and gender as significant barriers perceived to hinder career advancement. Positive correlations between the perception that gender hindered educational leadership advancement and the perception that race/ethnicity hindered Latinas in obtaining their

current position assists in supporting prior research. Additionally, a positive correlation between limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias and limited opportunities to advance professionally due to racial bias also substantiates the inseparable relationship between race and gender and their limiting effects on career advancement.

Lastly, although Latina administrators interviewed for this study were equally divided in their perceptions on whether gender would pose a benefit to career advancement, many of their accounts revealed the theme of having to prove oneself once in a leadership role.

Strategies to Overcoming Barriers to Career Advancement

Research has been successful at identifying specific characteristics which have aided Latinas in attaining career success. For instance, drive and determination coupled with a passion for education have been characteristics linked to career success (Fernández, et al., 2015; Méndez-Morse, 2004). Through interviews with four Latina administrators, it was evident that they too possess characteristics identified in the literature.

Limited, specific strategies have been identified in the literature as attaining familial support, finding mentors and role models in their families, or even creating mental representations of a mentor, in the absence of one (Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015; Morie & Wilson, 1996). The findings in this study extend beyond what is currently available in the literature and identifies a series of successfully employed strategies, as perceived by study participants and as evidenced in interview data analysis.

Successful strategies found to be used with success include seeking advanced training and certification, obtaining support from family, learning to cope with multiple roles, setting career goals and formulating plans of action, attending seminars and administrative training workshops to improve professional and interpersonal skills, improving their professional image,

obtaining support from peers, being more assertive in pursuing career goals, becoming

professionally visible, ignoring stereotypical attitudes about Latina administrators, confronting

stereotypical attitudes about female administrators, developing/utilizing "New Girl Network,"

and enlisting influential mentors and creating own networking opportunities. It was concluded

that religious faith may also be utilized as a coping mechanism.

The Roles of Race or Ethnicity and Gender on Latina Leadership

Limited studies have been conducted on the impact of race or gender on Latina's

leadership careers. Even fewer studies have been conducted to examine the perceptions of both

the roles of race and gender on career ascension and leadership practice, inseparable factors

associated with limiting career attainment and advancement.

Prior research conducted on Latina administrators found that some Latinas have

perceived race/ethnicity to have impacted their leadership practice. Evidence was also available

to support that leadership practice is influenced by gender (Méndez-Morse, et al., 2015).

Additional research conducted on school administrators has asserted a link between

cultural identity and leadership practice (Evans, 2007; Santamaria and Gaetane, 2014).   For

instance, in their study of female principals of varying ethnicities, Santamaria and Gaetane

discovered that race (as well as class) inspired leadership practices more so than did gender

identity. Evans (2007) similarly asserted that both race and gender impact minority educational

leaders' daily practices and added that minority educational leaders are sensitive to the

challenges of the oppressed because they are able to "mediate their own racial identities with that

of their students" (p. 165).

Research findings on the study conducted herein reveal findings which are somewhat

consistent and more in-depth than currently available data. Race/ethnicity and gender, for

instance, were found to be statistically equal factors perceived to affect leadership practice/style. This perception was further demonstrated through interviews with practicing administrators who indicated that their race and gender play a critical role in their everyday leadership roles, their leadership practice and their style. Race was perceived to guide the way in which certain situations were responded to, allowed for a connection with students, parents, and the school community, afforded an opportunity to model leadership success, provided a greater sense of cultural awareness, and enhanced the ability to adapt to the different roles that must be undertaken as administrators.

 Findings in this case study also suggest that these Latina administrators perceive to have gender-derived characteristics often employed in their administrative roles. These Latina-characteristics were identified as maternal, sensitive, empathetic, emotional, and receptive.

Recommendations

This study suggests implications for aspiring and practicing Latina administrators, educational policy makers, school boards, superintendents, school-level administrators, human resource personnel, recruiters, leadership preparation programs, and for others interested in furthering the study of Latina leadership and promoting issues of social justice.

It was evident that Latinas taking part in this study perceived differential treatment due to race during the screening and selection process as well as a perceived preference for White administrators. These findings have the following important implications for educational policy makers, school boards, superintendents, school-level administrators, human resource personnel, and recruiters who may wish to take concrete steps to avoid the permeation of racial biases and assumptions in their hiring practices:

- Masculine and feminine forms of cronyism were barriers perceived to stifle Latina's abilities to advance their careers. For this reason, the establishment of formal succession and leadership preparation programs is recommended.

- Findings indicate a concern about other people's perceptions, this in part due to the low number of Latinas in educational administration positions. In order to ameliorate this challenge for aspiring and practicing Latina administrators, concerted efforts must be taken to increase minority representation in school leadership positions. Partnerships with high schools, colleges, and universities should be considered as strategies to increase minority representation in educational leadership programs and positions.

- School boards, superintendents, school-level administrators, and educational policy makers should closely examine the extent to which the numbers of practicing administrators racially represent their student bodies. Concerted efforts should be taken to increase administrative diversity in instances where the equation is off-balance. In cases where diversity cannot be increased through formal succession and leadership preparation programs, opportunities to establish partnerships with in and out-of-state colleges and/or universities should be sought.

- Exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession ("Good Old Boy Network") indicates a need for school boards, school districts, and individual schools to examine their cultures and climates and assess whether these are inclusive or alienating.

- Latinas who took part in this study revealed instances of racism, racial stereotyping, and deficit thinking. This has major implications for administrator preparation programs that could devote time to these issues, aiding aspiring and practicing administrators to examine their own racial and gender biases and assumptions and how these affect or could potentially affect their leadership practices.

- Latinas who took part in this study revealed race-related barriers during their careers as administrators. This has major implications for the development of district-led professional development programs for practicing administrators.

- A perceived lack of district support and formal mentorship and networking opportunities suggests a need to examine and/or examine the availability of formal mentorship programs and networking opportunities.

- School boards, superintendents, school-level administrators should closely examine their faculties' perception of district support for formal mentoring and networking opportunities.

- The limited availability of demographic data on public school administrators has major implications for all stake-holders and decision-makers involved in the hiring and promotion of minority administrators as well as those interested in studying and promoting diversity in educational administration. Suggested is the development of a systematic, national database whereas school districts would annually report comprehensive demographic data (inclusive of gender and race) on their practicing administrators. Expansion of the existent, national database is also recommended.

Theoretical Implications

Critical race theory (CRT), described by Creswell & Clark (2007) as a framework by which the researcher exposes the experiences of persons of color and offers solutions to end racial, gender, and class subordination in societal and institutional structures, guided this study.

CRT in education highlights the aspects of society, institutions, schools, and classrooms which inform on the functions, meanings, causes, and consequences of racial inequality; it also highlights the extent to which race and racism are embedded within society (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Zamudio et al., 2011).

The aims of CRT are to present information from the perspective of people of color, eradicate racial subjugation while at the same time recognizing that race is a social construct. In addition, "CRT addresses other areas of difference such as gender, class, and any inequities experienced by individuals" (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p. 32).

Critical race scholarship in education is guided by five themes which form the basic perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy. Solórzano & Yosso (2001) itemize these five principles:

1. The centrality of race and racism and other forms of subordination

2. A challenge to the dominant ideology

3. A focus on the experience of persons of color

4. Commitment to social justice in order to promote the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty as well as the empowerment of underrepresented minority groups

5. A transdisciplinary perspective to better understand racism, sexism, and classism in education (pp. 472-473)

Critical Race theory was used in this study to help examine the perceptions and experiences of Latinas in educational leadership. This theory provided a foundation for examining the barriers faced by Hispanic women in administrative roles and for investigating the roles which race and gender play on career advancement and leadership practice. In addition, critical race theory helped guide the development and interpretations made for this study and aided in the development of recommendations for practice, implementation, and future research.

Exposed in this study were many race and gender-related barriers to career advancement faced by Latina administrators. Dual marginalization due to gender and race was also evidenced throughout this study. As noted in Chapter Four, this marginalized group of women is faced

with many challenges inhibiting their entry into the field of educational administration and impeding career advancement. Racism, racial discrimination, stereotyping, deficit thinking, being relegated to menial administrative functions, are merely a few significant findings which highlight the extent to which racial and gender biases and assumptions permeate systems of public education.

Direct accounts and survey results also demonstrated the positive contributions that Latina administrators make to the field of educational leadership. For instance, this study concludes that Latinas' experiences with race heightens their sense of cultural and linguistic awareness, consequently enhancing their situational leadership skills, allowing them to better connect with and serve diverse students, parents, and school communities. Their experiences as Hispanic females affords them characteristics such as sensitivity, empathy, emotional awareness, and responsiveness, all of which allow them to be adaptive in their daily interactions and decision-making. Latinas in leadership positions are also able to model leadership success which can positively impact the educational experiences of the students they serve and can assist in encouraging minority students to pursue careers in education and/or pursue higher education degrees.

The aforementioned findings are exemplary of why school districts, educational administrators, policy makers, human resource personnel, colleges and universities, should make concerted efforts not only to increase the numbers of Latina administrators but work to eradicate the impact that racial and gender bias, racism, racial discrimination, stereotyping, and deficit thinking has on aspiring and practicing Latina administrators.

Researcher's Reflections

The number of minority students in the U.S. has continued to increase while the number of Latina school administrators has remained relatively unchanged (Gates, et al., 2003; Murakami et al., 2015; Sánchez, et al., 2008). With profound interest, the researcher engaged in finding possible answers as to the underrepresentation of Latinas in education, specifically within positions of school leadership. The reason for this personal interest was that the researcher is a Hispanic educator who observed that she never had a Latina teacher or administrator as a K-12 student or in 10 years as a working educator. In fact, Latinas were absent in all aspects of her formal education, inclusive of teacher and leadership preparation programs. The researcher was vested in the study since educational leadership is an area of expertise as a result of her many years of educational leadership preparation and practical administrative experiences. The researcher was also keenly interested in the study's implications to share recommendations with aspiring and practicing Latina administrators, educational policy makers, school boards, superintendents, school-level administrators, human resource personnel, recruiters, leadership preparation programs, and others interested in furthering the study of Latina leadership and promoting issues of social justice.

Taking the researcher's background and experiences into consideration, she entered the study with a great concern for controlling personal bias and from preventing personal bias from entering the study. Perhaps the most challenging time for the researcher was during interview data interpretation. Due to the researcher's personal perceptions and experiences as a Latina educator, the researcher assumed a determined perspective of objectivity, so as not to influence data interpretation.

To assure that the study was not affected by personal bias, the researcher sought validation and feedback related to the methodology, emergent themes, and findings of this study. Dissertation committee members paid close attention to all aspects of this study, increasing its validity.

The researcher had great interest in the findings from this study. Based on her personal experience, some findings did not produce new revelations. For instance, Latinas lack mentorship and networking opportunities. This is the case in the researcher's own educational career.

Another finding that was not new was the deficit thinking experienced by the Latinas in this study. The researcher believes that this type of behavior has become normal practice within institutions of learning. Not only is this behavior unacceptable and damaging, it can and should be stopped. The researcher was saddened to learn of and discover many instances of deficit thinking in her study.

Other findings in the study were of great surprise to the researcher. For instance, the possibility that Latina administrators were being assigned to menial jobs, was startling. The consideration that deficit thinking could be responsible for these types of menial assignments was thought provoking, propelling the researcher to consider actions which could be taken in order to impede this type of behavior within organizations.

A second surprising discovery was that religious faith seemingly helped some Latinas to cope with many of the challenges they faced. This finding prompted reflection on the role that spirituality plays on leadership practices.

Of all the findings made evident in this study, none affected the researcher more than the undeniable roles of race and gender not only in career attainment and advancement, but in the

daily professional endeavors of Latina administrators. Latinas will inevitably face challenges to career advancement. However, through the stories of four Latina administrators who demonstrated a strong sense of self-efficacy and a keen sense of awareness of what it takes to be successful, as well as the perceptions of many others who participated in this study, a message of inspiration and hope surfaces.

It was demonstrated that Latina administrators were able to utilize the very barriers that challenge their careers and transcend these into their daily practices, positively impacting the lives of those who they encounter, including this researcher. These accounts may provide the needed impetus for aspiring and practicing Latina administrators to overcome the challenges they too will face. These stories may also assist young Latinas who may consider education as their career of choice.

Limitations of the Study

There are important limitations that need to be recognized.

- The first limitation is the geographical location for this study. This study was limited to 6 public school districts in central and southwest Florida.

- Surveys yielded only thirty responses from Latina administrators. Responses from these administrators did not represent all ethnicities under the Latino or Hispanic groups.

- Only four Hispanic women were interviewed for this study. The four Latinas did not represent all represent all ethnicities under the Latino or Hispanic groups.

- The terms Latina/o and Hispanic were used to represent a range of ethnicities.

- Only assistant principals and principals holding district positions participated in the study. Those holding other administrative positions or administrators from private schools were not selected for participation in the study.

- Understanding that personal and professional biases may influence data gathering and interpretation, the researcher, primary instrument for data collection and analysis of this study, purposefully and consciously attended to and reflected on her subjectivity. Purposeful and conscious monitoring of subjectivity during all phases of the study allowed the researcher to bracket out personal experiences which may have otherwise inaccurately represented the study participant's perspectives.

Recommendations for Future Research

In conducting this study, many other questions essential to future studies of the perceptions of barriers to career attainment and advancement as well as the role of gender and race on the careers of Latina educational leaders have arisen. This study merely investigated a small part of the important insights that can be gleaned by studying the perceptions and experiences of Latina public school administrators.

Future research may provide more in-depth understanding, allow for other important insights to arise, and assist in filling the literature gaps which exist about the Latina school administrator.

- How would this study differ if conducted on women of varying races? On Latino men?

- How do perceived barriers to career advancement differ with women of other minority groups?

- How do successful strategies to overcoming barriers compare to those employed by women of other minority groups?

- How do the perceptions of other minority women compare to Latina's perceptions of the role of race and gender on leadership practice?

- Is there a relationship between Latina leadership practices and the academic outcome of minority students?

- Is differential treatment on the basis of race during the screening and selection process a current district practice? Do persons of other races perceive this practice?

- Do Latina administrators perceive themselves to be assigned menial administrative roles?

- Is there a relationship between religious faith and leadership practice?

- Is there a relationship between self-efficacy and career success?

- Do district policies and practices include training on racial and gendered biases and assumptions?

- Do leadership preparation programs address issues of race and gender?

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Informed Consent

Florida Southern College

Informed Consent Form

Project Title:

A Study of Latina K-12 Public School Administrators: Barriers and Strategies to Career

Advancement and the Impact of Race and Gender on Ascension and Leadership

Principal Investigator: Lisandra Tayloe

Phone: (941) 483-6137   **E-mail:** lisandra.tayloe@gmail.com

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Steven Petrie

Department: Education

I am a graduate student at Florida Southern College. You are being invited to participate

in a research study because you are a Latina woman who is operating in a leadership position in

public education. The purpose of this study is to itemize and illuminate barriers that hold Latina

women back from ascending through leadership hierarchies and identify strategies they employ

in order to overcome them. In addition, this study seeks to identify the extent to which gender

and race are related to ascension and leadership practices.

As part of this study you will be asked to complete a Likert scale survey and participate

in one to three interviews. Each interview will be approximately one hour in length. It will take

you an estimated four hours over a period of six months to complete the study.

You will not be paid for taking part in this study. The benefit of this study will be in providing information to help future leaders who want to become administrators in public education. The goal of this study is to illuminate the cultural, racial, and institutional biases existing for Latina women in K-12 educational leadership and present a framework which institutions could employ on the ground-level to diversify educational leadership so that it mirrors the races and ethnicities of the diverse student population served throughout the U.S..

There are no anticipated risks to you.

All data will be stored in a secured file in the investigator's office. Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the FSC Institutional Review Board may inspect the records from this research project.

The results of this study may be published. However, only group results will be reported. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you in any way.

Your decision to take part in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions about this study, contact the Primary Investigator at the phone number or e-mail at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as an individual

taking part in a research study, you may contact the Chair of the Florida Southern College

Institutional Review Board (863-680-6205) or the FSC Vice President for Academic Affairs

(863-680-4124).

I have read the Informed Consent Form and agree to participate in this study. I

understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. I understand

that I will not receive payment for my participation. Additionally, I understand that this form

will be renewed annually for research projects lasting longer than one year.

Name of Participant (please print) _____

Signature of Participant _____ Date_____

Signature of Investigator or Witness _____ Date_____

Appendix B. Interview Protocol

1. What is your race and ethnic background? Generation?

2. What is your educational background/experience?

3. What is your current position at your school?

4. Did you elect to teach at the grade level(s) that you did prior to becoming an administrator? If so why? Were you ever interested in teaching any other grades?

5. What other types of positions have you held, even if outside the field of education? What about leadership positions?

6. What led you down this road of education? What motivated you to become an administrator?

7. Were there persons within your organization who encouraged you to become an administrator? How so?

8. Were there persons in your personal life who encouraged you to become an administrator? How?

9. At your place of employment were there any persons who provided you with guidance, support, or mentorship as you became an administrator? How?

10. Were there any persons or processes that made your transition from teacher to administrator difficult?

11. In your personal life, who provided you with the most support as you transitioned from teacher to administrator?

12. Who would you say are your biggest role models?

13. What were some personal challenges you faced when transitioning from teacher to administrator?

14. What were some challenges you faced at work when becoming an administrator? How did the challenges affect you? How did you overcome them?

15. Have you benefited from a mentor? Did this person motivate you to move upwards? What was this experience like?

16. Would Latina leaders benefit from a mentorship? If so, how?

17. Have you benefited from networking opportunities? If so, how? If not, how should the nature of networking evolve to better suit your needs?

18. What would you say is your greatest strength and weakness as a leader?

19. What is it like to be a Latina administrator?

20. Has your gender helped or hindered you in your career? What effect did it have on your transition from teacher to administrator? How will it affect your ability to move up through the leadership ranks?

21. Has your race/ethnicity helped or hindered you in your career? What effect did it have on your transition from teacher to administrator? How will it affect your ability to move up through the leadership ranks?

22. Have you ever been made to feel like an "other" in regards to your gender or race? If yes, how did you react/respond? If not, why do you think this was not an issue?

23. How did/does the school community, parents for example, react to you when they learn or learned of your administrative role? Does your race/ethnicity affect your leadership style or practice? If so, how?

24. Does your gender affect your leadership style or practice? If so, how?

25. As an administrator, does your race/ethnicity help you connect with students? If so, how?

26. As an administrator, does your race/ethnicity help you connect with the school community? If so, how?

27. What are some challenges that Latina administrators face that other women in administrative roles do not face?

28. What are some challenges that you expect Latina women to face when entering into an administrative position or moving to a higher one?

29. What advice would you give to Latina women who aspire to be school leaders?

30. Is it important to you to have a diverse leadership team? Is it important to your district? If so, how do you know?

31. What are some specific practices that your district utilizes in order to promote and sustain diverse leadership? Are you satisfied with their efforts? If not, what changes would you like to see?

32. To what do you attribute the lack of Latinas in leadership positions in public education?

33. Do you have any suggestions for diversification in your district?

34. In general, how would you go about changing the face of educational leaders so that they are more representative of the students and the communities we serve?

35. Do you plan on continuing your ascent into higher administrative positions?

36. Where do you see yourself in five to ten years?

37. What are some other questions I could have asked?

Appendix C: Quantitative Survey

Adapted from Dr. Myrtle Campbell, University of Indiana (1985)

       I.   Personal Characteristics

1. What is your age?
[Drop down selection]

2.   With what ethnic group would you identify yourself?
[Drop down selection]

3.   Where were you born? (Indicate city, state, and country)
Short answer response

4.   Which immigrant generation are you?
[Drop down selection]

5. Is English your first language?
[Drop down selection]

6. What is your current marital status?
[Drop down selection]

7. How many children do you have?
[Drop down selection]

8. Do you currently have any children living at home?
[Drop down selection]

9. If you have children living at home, how many children?
[Drop down selection]

10. If you have children living at home, how old are they?
[Short answer response]

       II.   Professional Characteristics

11. What is the highest degree you hold?

[Drop down selection]

12. What is your current position?
[Drop down selection]

13. Do you consider your present position to be your ultimate occupational goal?
[Drop down selection]

14. At what type of school do you currently work?
[Drop down selection]

15. Counting the present year, how many years have you been employed in your current position?
[Drop down selection]

Appendix C (continued). Quantitative Survey, Adapted from Dr. Myrtle Campbell, University of Indiana (1985)

16. At what age were you appointed to your present position?
[Drop down selection]

17. Counting the present year, how many years have you been employed in your current school district?
[Drop down selection]

III. Professional Characteristics of School-based administrators & Teachers

18. How many years of teaching experience in public education did you have prior to obtaining your first leadership position?
[Drop down menu selection]

19. What grade level(s) did you teach prior to obtaining your first leadership position?
[Drop down menu selection]

20. Prior to obtaining your first school administrator role, how many times did you apply for a leadership position?
[Drop down menu selection]

Appendix C (continued). Quantitative Survey, Adapted from Dr. Myrtle Campbell, University of Indiana (1985)

21. Prior to obtaining your first school administrator role, how many times were you turned down for an administrative position?
[Drop down menu selection]

22. At present, how do you rate yourself professionally?
   a.   Very Successful
   b.   Moderately Successful
   c.   Unsuccessful

III. Barriers to Career Advancement

On the scales below, please circle the number which best approximates your perception of the degree to which the listed factors have been a barrier to you in pursuing your career goals as an administrator. Please circle only one number for each factor.

23. Lack of a professional network (i.e., a support group to develop strategies for career advancement, to address specific problems, to share experiences)

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

24. Teachers, parents, and community preferences for male rather than female administrators

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

25. Teachers, parents, and community preferences for White administrators

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

26. Lack of prior opportunities to qualify for higher level administrative positions

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

27. Differential treatment on the basis of sex during the formal application, screening, and selection processes

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

28. Differential treatment on the basis of race during the formal application, screening, and selection processes

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

29. Existence of "cronyism" or the "buddy system" where men refer their male associates to jobs

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

30. Existence of "cronyism" or the "buddy system" where females refer their female associates to jobs

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

31. Lack of career mobility (i.e., more place-bound)

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

32. Conflicts between the roles of wife/mother and career woman

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

33. Lack of role models (role model—defined as a person *outside* the field/career of education, i.e. a family member or friend)

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

34. Problems in overcoming stereotypic attitudes about women's appropriate roles in society

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

35. Problems in overcoming stereotypic attitudes about minority women's leadership capacities

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

36. Lowered aspirations because of limited opportunities for growth and advancement

1	2	3	4	5
Not a Factor				Serious Factor

37. Unsaid racial prejudice

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

38. Superior's negative attitudes about women's effectiveness in administrative positions

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

39. Superior's negative attitudes about Latina women's effectiveness in administrative positions

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

 40. Lack of encouragement or support from family

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

41. Lack of encouragement or support from peers

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

42. Exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession (i.e., the "Good Old Boy Network")

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

43. Lack of influential mentor (mentor—defined as a person *inside* the field/career of education, i.e. a peer or supervisor)

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

44. Small proportion of Latina women in administrative positions which affects how you are perceived by and responded to by colleagues (e.g., as "tokens")

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

45. Lack of motivation to pursue particular administrative positions because of past obstacles encountered

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

46. Higher level of training required in order to be competitive with male colleagues

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

47. Higher level of training required in order to be competitive with female colleagues of another race

1	2	3	4	5

Not a Factor   Serious Factor

IV. Further Perception of Barriers to Career Advancement

Please give your perceptions of how each perceived barrier has affected your career advancement by circling the appropriate number on the scale.

1—Not at All
2—To Some Extent
3—To a Moderate Extent
4—To a Large Extent
5—To a Great Extent

48. Career was delayed due to family responsibilities

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

49. Denied access to power groups that make important decisions

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

50. Aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

51. Interruption of career

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

52. Having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

53. Applied less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

54. Exclusion from informal network

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

55. Promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with abilities and experience

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

56. Problems with finding a balance between feminine identity and professionalism

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

57. Limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

58. Limited opportunities to advance professionally due to racial bias

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   To a Great Extent

V. Strategies to Accomplish Career Goals

Please check the column which best represents your perception of the success rate of each listed strategy in accomplishing career goals. Check *Never Used* if you have never used this particular strategy.

1—Very Successful
2—Successful
3—Somewhat Successful
4—Unsuccessful
5—Never Used

59. Setting career goals and formulating a plan of action

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

60. Developing/utilizing "New Girl Network"

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

61. Enlisting influential mentors

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

62. Seeking advanced training and certification

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

63. Being more assertive in pursuing career goals

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

64. Becoming professionally visible

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

65. Improving professional image

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

66. Attending seminars and administrative training workshops to improve professional and interpersonal skills

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

67. Learning to cope with multiple roles - wife/ mother/professional

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

68. Obtaining support from family

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

69. Obtaining support from peers

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

70. Confronting stereotypical attitudes about Latina administrators

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

71. Ignoring stereotypical attitudes about Latina administrators

1	2	3	4	5

Very Successful   Never Used

VI. Race and Gender as related to Ascension and Leadership Practice

Please select the response which best corresponds to your perceptions of how race and gender have affected you in your career.

72. My gender benefitted me in obtaining my current position

1	2	3	4	5
Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree

73. My race/ethnicity benefitted me in obtaining my current position

1	2	3	4	5
Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree

74. My foreign language skills language benefitted me in obtaining my current position

1	2	3	4	5
Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree

75. My gender is a benefit to me in my current position

1	2	3	4	5
Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree

76. My race/ethnicity is a benefit to me in my current position

1	2	3	4	5
Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree

77. My foreign language skills are a benefit to me in my current position

1	2	3	4	5
Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree

78. My gender affects my leadership practice/style

1	2	3	4	5
Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree

79. My race/ethnicity affects my leadership practice/style

1	2	3	4	5
Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree

VII. Open-ended response

Please utilize the space below for any additional comments on either the perceived barriers, the effects of the barriers, and/or the strategies utilized to overcome the barriers you encountered as an aspiring or established administrator.

[Short answer response]

80. Please indicate your willingness to participate in an interview related to this study.
[Drop down selection]

81. If you have indicated a willingness to participate in an interview related to this study, please provide your contact information below. Include your name, email, cell phone, and best time to call.
[Short answer response]

82. Please indicate whether you would like to receive updates as to the findings of this study.
[Drop down selection]

Appendix D. Variable Legend for Survey Questions

V = variable/survey question

V1= Participant age

V2= Immigration generation

V3= Number of children

V4= Number of children living at home

V5= Number of years in current position

V6= Age appointed to current position

V7= Number of years in current district

V8= Number of years teaching prior to obtaining 1st leadership position

V9= Number of times applied prior to obtaining 1st leadership position

V10= Number of times turned down prior to obtaining 1st leadership position

V11= Success rating

V12= Lack of professional network

V13= Teachers, parents, and community preference for male rather than female administrators

V14= Teachers, parents, and community preference for White administrators

V15= Lack of prior opportunities to qualify for higher-level administrative positions

V16= Differential treatment on the basis of sex during the formal application, screening and selection process

V17= Differential treatment on basis of race during the formal application, screening and selection process

V18= Existence of "cronyism" or the "buddy system" where males refer their male associates to jobs

V19= Existence of "cronyism" or the "buddy system" where females refer their female associates to jobs

V20= Lack of career mobility (i.e., more place-bound)

V21= Conflicts between the roles of wife/mother and career woman

V22= Lack of role models (role model—defined as a person outside the field/career of education, i.e. a family member or friend)

V23= Problems in overcoming stereotypical attitudes about women's appropriate roles in society

V24= Problems in overcoming stereotypical attitudes about Latina women's appropriate roles in society

V25= Lowered aspirations due to limited opportunities for growth and advancement

V26= Unsaid racial prejudice

V27= Supervisor's negative attitude about women's competency and effectiveness in administrative positions

V28= Supervisor's negative attitude about Latina women's competency and effectiveness in administrative positions

V29= Lack of encouragement or support from family

V30= Lack of encouragement or support from peers

V31= Exclusion from the informal socialization process into the profession (Good old boy network)

V32= Lack of influential mentor (mentor—defined as a person INSIDE the field/career of education, i.e., a peer or supervisor)

V33= The small proportion of Latina women in administrative positions affects how you are perceived by and responded to by colleagues (e.g., as "tokens")

V34= Lack of motivation to pursue particular administrative positions because of past obstacles encountered

V35= Higher level of training required in order to be competitive with male colleagues

V36= Higher level of training required in order to be competitive with female colleagues

V37= Career was delayed due to family responsibilities

V38= Denied access to power groups that make important decisions

V39= Aspirations and motivation thwarted because of difficulty encountered in advancing

V40= Interruption of career

V41= Having to accept less attractive and less challenging jobs

V42= Applied less frequently for available administrative positions because of obstacles encountered

V43= Exclusion from informal network

V44= Promotion into dead-end positions which are not commensurate with abilities and experiences

V45= Problems with finding a balance between feminine identity and professionalism

V46= Limited opportunities to advance professionally due to gender bias

V47= Limited opportunities to advance professionally due to racial bias

V48= Setting career goals and formulating plan of action

V49= Developing/utilizing "New Girl Network"

V50= Enlisting influential mentors

V51= Seeking advanced training and certification

V52= Being more assertive in pursuing career goals

V53= Becoming professionally visible

V54= Improving professional image

V55= Attending seminars and administrative training workshops to improve professional and interpersonal skills

V56= Learning to cope with multiple roles-wife/mother/professional

V57= Obtaining support from family

V58= Obtaining support from peers

V59= Confronting stereotypical attitudes about female administrators

V60= Ignoring stereotypical attitudes about Latina administrators

V61= My gender benefited me in obtaining my current position

V62= My gender hindered me in obtaining my current position

V63= My gender has benefited me in advancing my educational leadership career

V64= My gender has hindered me from advancing my educational leadership career

V65= My gender is a benefit to me in my current position

V66= My race/ethnicity benefited me in obtaining my current position

V67= My race/ethnicity hindered me in obtaining my current position

V68= My race/ethnicity has benefited me in advancing my educational leadership career

V69= My race/ethnicity has hindered me from advancing my educational leadership career

V70= My race/ethnicity is a benefit to me in my current position

V71= My foreign language skills benefited me in obtaining my current position

V72= My foreign language skills hindered me in obtaining my current position

V73= My foreign language skills have benefitted me
in advancing my educational leadership career
V74= My foreign language skills have hindered me
in advancing my educational leadership career
V75= My foreign language skills are a benefit to me
in my current position
V76= My gender affects my leadership
practices/style
V77= My race/ethnicity affects my leadership
practices/style

Appendix E: Significant Pearson Correlation Coefficients (p<.05) Presented in Findings.

Categorized by Survey Variables.

Demographic Variables/ Barrier-Related Variables	r	Demographic Variables/ Perceived Effects Variables	r	Demographic Variables/Race & Language-Related Variables	r	Perceived Barriers Variables/ Perceived Barriers Variables	r
v1/v2		v1/v2		v1/v2		v1/v2	
6/17	-.611	9/44	.563	8/67	-.520	19/24	.708
1/17	-.486			8/69	-.493	19/25	.797
7/13	-.428			8/74	-.405	19/26	.665
7/29	-.413					23/27	.660
7/23	-.403					18/19	.628

Perceived Barriers Variables/Perceived Effects Variables	r	Perceived Barriers Variables/Perceived Effects Variables	r	Perceived Barriers Variables/Perceived Effects Variables	r	Perceived Barriers Variables/ Perceived Barriers Variables	r
v1/v2		v1/v2		v1/v2		v1/v2	
34/42	.856	19/43	.635	24/41	.557	19/20	.593
25/42	.831	24/38	.619	27/42	.550	20/25	.565
12/38	.818	16/39	.613	14/43	.549	19/23	.551
25/43	.776	16/43	.612	19/38	.540	19/27	.517
27/38	.768	28/39	.610	34/44	.540		
12/39	.762	18/34	.609	26/38	.535		
30/44	.757	32/42	.607	27/41	.535		
25/38	.739	19/41	.602	26/41	.529		
27/43	.739	12/42	.599	34/44	.528		
19/39	.734	23/38	.596				
27/44	.722	34/41	.586				
32/43	.680	31/39	.580				
24/43	.654	19/42	.572				
23/43	.651	18/43	.567				
26/43	.647	18/42	.564				
27/39	.640	32/41	.561				

Perceived Effects of Barriers Variables/ Perceived Effects of Barriers Variables	r	Perceived Effects of Barriers Variables/ Gender-Related Variables	r	Perceived Effects of Barriers Variables/ Race & Language-Related Variables	r	Strategy-Related Variables/ Gender-Related Variables	r
v1/v2		v1/v2		v1/v2		v1/v2	
46/47	.802	49/65	.572	49/67	-.492	53/61	-.400
44/46	.797			45/63	-.415	51/76	-.362

Perceived Barriers Variables/ Strategy-Related Variables	r	Perceived Barriers Variables/ Race-Related Variables	r	Strategy-Related Variables/ Race-Related Variables	r	Gender, Race & Language - Related Variables/ Gender, Race, & Language Related Variables	r
v1/v2		v1/v2		v1/v2		v1/v2	
12/53	-.401	31/70	-.420	52/70	-.376	62/64	.935
		12/70	-.374			67/69	.870
		17/66	-.370			64/69	.769
						66/68	.761
						71/73	.753
						76/77	.704
						64/67	.674
						62/67	.562
						68/77	.539

Appendix F: Significant Pearson correlation coefficients (p<.05) among all the variables, including demographic data, perceived barriers to advancement, consequences to barriers, and coping strategies for overcoming the perceived barriers

v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r
1/5	.576	6/17	-.611	10/30	.442	12/31	.704	13/28	.741	14/26	.726
1/6	.697	6/23	-.396	10/44	.453	12/32	.644	13/30	.457	14/27	.634
1/7	.767	6/24	-.486	11/35	.388	12/33	.414	13/31	.550	14/28	.826
1/17	-.486	6/26	-.461	11/36	.371	12/34	.577	13/32	.393	14/30	.456
1/65	.389	6/33	-.404	11/45	.370	12/35	.468	13/33	.574	14/31	.537
1/66	.512	6/49	.569	11/46	.412	12/38	.818	13/34	.388	14/32	.464
3/4	.733	6/66	.497	11/47	.434	12/39	.762	13/35	.431	14/33	.638
3/11	.472	7/13	-.428	11/56	.399	12/40	.372	13/36	.371	14/34	.385
3/16	-.406	7/23	-.403	11/72	-.397	12/41	.383	13/38	.538	14/35	.491
3/17	-.629	7/29	-.413	12/13	.617	12/42	.599	13/39	.425	14/36	.506
3/26	-.491	7/66	.373	12/14	.578	12/43	.776	13/42	.365	14/38	.462
3/66	.378	7/71	.419	12/15	.771	12/44	.481	13/43	.591	14/39	.464
4/11	.419	7/76	.399	12/16	.809	12/53	-.401	13/44	.532	14/43	.540
4/17	.418	8/29	-.382	12/18	.590	12/70	-.374	13/47	.374	14/44	.411
4/30	.447	8/37	.411	12/19	.536	13/14	.658	13/52	.450	15/16	.675
4/46	.368	8/67	-.520	12/20	.589	13/15	.464	13/58	.392	15/18	.561
5/6	.516	8/69	-.493	12/21	.365	13/16	.763	14/15	.545	15/19	.623
5/17	.370	8/74	-.405	12/22	.682	13/17	.558	14/16	.701	15/20	.534
5/30	.387	9/10	.731	12/23	.638	13/18	.577	14/17	.524	15/21	.383
5/42	.347	9/28	.391	12/24	.648	13/22	.387	14/17	.429	15/22	.615
5/49	.399	9/30	.532	12/25	.698	13/23	.803	14/19	.609	15/23	.638
5/65	.371	9/38	.411	12/26	.609	13/24	.665	14/22	.528	15/24	.721
6/7	.432	9/43	.449	12/27	.725	13/25	.419	14/23	.611	15/25	.754
6/16	-.399	9/44	.563	12/28	.710	13/26	.721	14/24	.744	15/26	.632
6/17	-.611	9/56	-.393	12/30	.470	13/27	.777	14/25	.443	15/27	.558

v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r
15/28	.727	16/32	.512	18/24	.392	19/32	.473	20/40	.446	22/36	.610
15/30	.382	16/33	.542	18/25	.614	19/33	.400	20/41	.385	22/38	.765
15/31	.571	16/34	.449	18/26	.481	19/34	.713	20/42	.577	22/39	.616
15/32	.613	16/35	.431	18/27	.576	19/35	.506	20/43	.542	22/41	.561
15/34	.505	16/38	.578	18/28	.542	19/36	.614	21/22	.446	22/42	.692
15/35	.595	16/39	.613	18/31	.774	19/38	.535	21/23	.376	22/43	.721
15/36	.537	16/40	.473	18/32	.384	19/39	.734	21/24	.380	22/44	.467
15/38	.696	16/41	.395	18/34	.609	19/41	.602	21/29	.377	23/24	.785
15/39	.589	16/42	.384	18/38	.416	19/42	.572	21/35	.501	23/25	.682
15/41	.474	16/43	.612	18/39	.676	19/43	.635	21/36	.410	23/26	.826
15/42	.595	16/44	.406	18/40	.430	19/47	.404	21/40	.446	23/27	.660
15/43	.742	16/52	.398	18/41	.432	20/21	.571	21/75	-.393	23/28	.737
15/44	.389	16/70	.407	18/42	.564	20/22	.491	22/23	.550	23/30	.411
16/17	.696	17/23	.502	18/43	.567	20/23	.421	22/24	.685	23/31	.535
16/18	.697	17/24	.514	18/44	.398	20/24	.415	22/25	.674	23/32	.545
16/19	.561	17/26	.712	19/20	.593	20/25	.565	22/26	.620	23/33	.606
16/20	.409	17/27	.424	19/22	.537	20/26	.412	22/27	.672	23/34	.481
16/22	.521	17/28	.548	19/23	.551	20/27	.375	22/28	.613	23/35	.660
16/23	.765	17/33	.583	19/24	.708	20/30	.365	22/29	.594	23/36	.688
16/24	.705	17/51	.466	19/25	.685	20/31	.626	22/30	.537	23/38	.596
16/25	.602	17/55	.391	19/26	.665	20/32	.425	22/31	.470	23/39	.429
16/26	.819	17/66	-.370	19/27	.517	20/34	.556	22/32	.616	23/40	.441
16/27	.689	18/19	.628	19/28	.664	20/35	.434	22/33	.564	23/41	.494
16/28	.766	18/20	.595	19/30	.428	20/38	.447	22/34	.706	23/42	.466
16/31	.687	18/23	.490	19/31	.724	20/39	.581	22/35	.764	23/43	.651

v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r
23/44	.406	25/27	.584	26/38	.535	27/47	.411	30/39	.486	32/43	.680
23/47	.366	25/28	.697	26/39	.454	27/64	-.445	30/42	.467	32/50	.449
23/52	.376	25/30	.388	26/40	.471	28/30	.509	30/43	.617	32/52	.443
23/75	.421	25/31	.627	26/41	.528	28/31	.574	30/44	.757	33/34	.364
24/25	.622	25/32	.681	26/42	.390	28/32	.587	30/46	.617	33/35	.577
24/26	.854	25/34	.764	26/43	.647	28/33	.586	30/47	.458	33/36	.515
24/26	.742	25/35	.624	26/44	.457	28/34	.545	31/32	.742	33/38	.466
24/28	.794	25/36	.543	26/47	.399	28/35	.594	31/33	.397	33/43	.467
24/30	.547	25/38	.739	26/52	.392	28/36	.568	31/34	.549	34/35	.602
24/31	.538	25/39	.693	27/28	.776	28/38	.739	31/38	.501	34/36	.491
24/32	.511	25/40	.407	27/30	.617	28/39	.610	31/39	.580	34/38	.635
24/33	.695	25/41	.720	27/31	.500	28/41	.520	31/41	.490	34/39	.829
24/34	.518	25/42	.831	27/32	.410	28/42	.544	31/42	.534	34/41	.586
24/35	.708	25/43	.776	27/33	.506	28/43	.786	31/43	.594	34/42	.856
24/36	.748	25/44	.467	27/34	.597	28/44	.594	31/50	.428	34/43	.744
24/38	.619	25/47	.365	27/35	.632	28/46	.385	31/52	.480	34/44	.557
24/39	.476	26/27	.645	27/36	.518	28/47	.370	31/58	.371	34/50	.401
24/40	.377	26/28	.753	27/38	.768	29/35	.394	31/70	-.420	35/36	.893
24/41	.549	26/30	.412	27/39	.640	29/72	-.483	32/33	.407	35/38	.609
24/42	.409	26/31	.610	27/40	.461	30/32	.368	32/34	.458	35/39	.493
24/43	.654	26/32	.549	27/41	.529	30/33	.388	32/35	.410	35/40	.528
24/44	.469	26/33	.719	27/42	.550	30/34	.546	32/38	.639	35/41	.524
24/46	.380	26/34	.463	27/43	.739	30/35	.618	32/39	.339	35/42	.549
24/47	.426	26/35	.661	27/44	.722	30/36	.589	32/41	.561	35/43	.626
25/26	.561	26/36	.656	27/46	.506	30/38	.596	32/42	.607	35/44	.623

v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r	v1/v2	r
35/45	.383	39/44	.538	46/47	.802	50/77	-.407	54/75	.552	63/65	.694
35/46	.471	40/41	.445	46/64	-.489	51/52	.744	55/57	.535	64/67	.674
35/47	.383	40/44	.431	46/69	-.540	51/54	.772	55/58	.601	64/69	.769
36/38	.472	40/46	.452	46/70	.414	51/55	.737	55/71	.486	64/74	.431
36/39	.363	41/42	.636	47/69	-.539	51/56	.408	55/73	.399	65/68	.489
36/40	.427	41/43	.513	48/51	.457	51/57	.506	55/75	.484	66/68	.761
36/41	.453	41/44	.397	48/52	.457	51/58	.722	56/57	.626	66/70	.466
36/42	.378	41/45	.427	48/54	.547	51/76	-.362	56/58	.629	67/69	.870
36/43	.536	41/46	.474	48/55	.538	52/54	.719	56/59	.515	67/70	-.402
36/44	.464	41/47	.625	48/56	.519	52/55	.563	56/60	.562	67/74	.434
36/46	.393	42/43	.791	48/57	.748	52/56	.508	57/58	.568	68/76	.519
36/47	.432	42/44	.485	48/58	.618	52/57	.365	57/59	.645	68/77	.539
36/69	-.410	42/50	.416	48/59	.650	52/58	.785	57/60	.654	69/70	-.412
37/49	.410	43/44	.688	48/60	.625	52/59	.481	58/59	.524	69/74	.459
37/74	-.459	44/46	.459	49/59	.513	52/60	.474	58/60	.512	71/73	.753
37/77	.393	44/45	.385	49/60	.374	52/70	-.376	58/75	.468	71/75	.482
38/39	.471	44/46	.797	49/65	.572	53/61	-.400	59/60	.924	73/75	.426
38/41	.550	44/47	.627	49/67	-.492	54/55	.666	59/65	.409	76/77	.704
38/42	.791	44/64	-.533	49/69	-.483	54/56	.576	60/65	.374		
38/43	.843	44/69	-.472	49/74	-.412	54/57	.481	61/63	.571		
38/44	.564	45/46	.472	50/51	.424	54/58	.752	61/65	.636		
38/46	.371	45/47	.484	50/52	.559	54/59	.411	61/68	.416		
39/41	.476	45/63	-.415	50/54	.385	54/60	.426	62/64	.935		
39/42	.750	45/67	-.490	50/58	.582	54/71	.453	62/67	.562		
39/43	.719	45/69	-.478	50/68	-.545	54/73	.412	62/69	.638		

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lisandra Tayloe is a Spanish language teacher at Florida SouthWestern State College. She is an alumnus of East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, having earned her graduate degree in Educational Administration and undergraduate degree in Secondary Foreign Language education in 2008 and 2006, respectively. Lisandra is an active member of many organizations, including the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), and the Critical Race Studies in Education Association (CRSEA). Lisandra's research interests include social justice issues in education, multicultural education, racial and gender minorities in educational leadership, and sociolinguistics, this interest brought about by her graduate studies in Spanish language and linguistics at New Mexico State University. Lisandra enjoys learning about the historical and political influence of diverse cultures in the Americas, traveling, and engaging in new cultural experiences. Lisandra Tayloe may be contacted via email at: lisandra.tayloe@gmail.com