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Redefining the Narrative of Women in Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Latina Leaders in K-12 Education

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Redefining the Narrative of Women in Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Latina Leaders in K-12 Education

Casie J. Dimsey

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Seattle University

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Abstract

Even with women outnumbering men in obtaining graduate and professional degrees in educational leadership, the representation between women and men in higher level positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendencies remains incongruent. Consequently, this incongruency is further exacerbated when we look beyond women as a monolith and see that women of color, and more specifically Latina women are significantly underrepresented in comparison to their counterparts and the population that they represent. Through using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the researcher explored intersectional factors in relation to the participants multiple identities. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to provide insight into Latina educational leaders lived experiences in K-12 settings to deepen the understanding between identity, role, and leadership. Participants were established through the researchers' current participation and network with the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS) and a graduate of the National Principal Leadership Academy (NPLA). Consequently, by centering the lived experiences of Latina women that hold higher level positions such as principals, district office executives, and superintendencies it allowed for a grounded lens in which Latino Critical Race theory (LatCrit), Social Identity theory, Role Incongruity theory, and Psychological Capital (PsyCap) theory explored the relationship between leadership and identity. Findings reflected the cultural and societal impact of Latina educational leaders' underrepresentation in K-12 education and the significance of mentors, networking, leadership development, amplifying voices and positive visibility.

Keywords: Latina, women, leadership, higher level, lived experiences, identity, incongruent, underrepresentation, role.

Acknowledgements

Throughout my journey, I have been able to laugh, cry, push limits that I didn't realize existed, and began to see myself in a new light. I have been able to explore how my own identity and the plethora of experiences have played a role in my own leadership development. These beautiful revelations and times when I leaned into my own discomfort was embraced through the many inspiring people that I had the honor to work with along the way. I want to acknowledge the deep connections and collaborative experiences that I have been able to share with my cohort, professors, and my committee every step of the way.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my phenomenal family, Sean, Mercedes, and Matthew. You are the life blood that keeps me going day in and day out. You are my dance and smile in life. I know that just as I had to make sacrifices over the years to meet my goal for myself and leave a legacy for our family (and future families), you have also had to make those sacrifices along the way through understanding why I couldn't always be as present as I wanted to be for our family. I love you with all my heart and soul and I couldn't have done it without you being by my side.

I also want to dedicate my dissertation to my mom, Linda. She was a person that gave her life to others in order to lift them up and make them realize their worth. She was a bridge builder of people and a shining example of a beautiful soul that wanted everyone to find justice and peace in this world. She is tremendously missed, but her words will always be remembered, “live simply, live honestly, and live with purpose, and that purpose is to help people find their voice in life.”

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Have you ever wondered or heard someone ponder, “where are all the women leaders in education?” This is often a question that I constantly ask myself and for the sake of painting a picture and to uplift the words of Dolores Huerta, “we as women have to put big lights around our accomplishments and around our ideas and not feel egotistical when we do that because it’s a way of letting the world know that, yes, we as women can accomplish great things” (*41 Dolores Huerta Quotes to Inspire You*, 2022). With that being said, for over a century, women have made significant progress in breaking barriers through leading in spaces parallel to their male counterparts, while also shedding light on the disparities of gender imbalances in K-12 leadership roles.

However, even with women’s rights movements and ongoing efforts, the gap between educational equity and leadership advancement has continued to transpire. Fischer and Ryan (2021) postulate that due to the already historical issues surrounding women as defined by social constructs, policies, cultural factors, and organizational systems there are a number of glaring gender inequalities that continue to emerge from contemporary research. With this in mind, the body of literature and research that exists in K-12 educational leadership continues to support that women are egregiously over-represented in lower-level positions in the education system dominating teaching positions, whereas men tend to hold leadership roles (Allred et al., 2017; Bailes & Guthery, 2020; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). Conversely, this emphasizes the under-representation of women in higher level positions and the stark gender imbalance this disparity creates systemically, where men continue to dominate the field of education (Allred et al., 2017; Bailes & Guthery, 2020; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014).

Much of the recent research around gender disparity is centered around leadership in the 21st century and focuses on identity, culture, politics, and the pandemic era (Vroman & Danko, 2020). As Fischer and Ryan (2021) propose, these inequalities exist across professional and private domains such as one's well-being, family relations and values, domestic violence, job status, and leadership roles. However, it is important to realize that the severity and prevalence of all of these issues differ between and within countries (Snaebjornsson et al., 2015). Consequently, the relevant socially constructed differences beget the justifications for political, economic, and social inequality due to the silence of the socially privileged to embrace and value marginalized groups (Adams et al., 2018; Kimmel & Ferber, 2017). In effect there are those that support social justice movements and disagree with the status quo but remain silent because of the repercussions of what might happen from the dominant societal values (Adams et al. 2018).

It is notwithstanding that due to the ideals and stereotypes of leadership being represented through masculine traits across a multitude of fields, it can both marginalize and isolate women (Allred et al., 2017; Bailes & Guthery, 2020; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Coleman, 2003; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). Thus, sending a message that the status quo favors the agency of masculine-oriented qualities, which can deter women from seeking or obtaining higher level administrative positions in education (Allred et al., 2017; Bailes & Guthery, 2020; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Coleman, 2003; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). Likewise, there is a necessity to not only "take note of gender issues in educational leadership, but within-group consideration," allowing for an equitable racial and ethnic representation (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 10).

However, it is important to note that even with bridged similarities among women educational leaders, differences still remain and need to be considered for women of color and

more specifically Latina leaders/leadership (Mendez-Morse et al., 2015). In this light, the Latina/o population continues to face homogeneous categorization, giving way to socially constructed labels that create perceived assumptions about Latino/a individuals, even though it is the one of the most diverse and fastest growing population in the country and the least represented in higher level leadership positions, in comparison to the K-12 student population and their counterparts (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Murakami et al., 2018; Parker et al., 2015).

Although there is a positive trend of Latina women going into the field of education as teaching professionals, the rate in which the Latina/o population is expanding and the increase of representation at entry level positions does not correlate with the scant amount of Latinas moving into higher level roles beyond the classrooms (Flores, 2017). Given that, it is important to realize that there are geographical differences in Latina representation and that the lack of research specific to Latina educational administrators leaves gaps in gaining a broader and more nuanced perspective (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse, 2000). Therefore, the incongruity in representation shines a light on the necessity of increasing the amount of research the focuses on Latina women in the education professional through one's multiple identities and roles, as a means to gain insight beyond a monolithic basis.

As Adams et al. (2018) supports, "we learn more about how dynamics of exclusion, privilege, and oppression come into play in our personal and community lives, how different individuals and groups are affected similarly and differently by these dynamics, and how these issues connect to larger national and global issues and systems" (p. 600). Therefore, this study will center around Latina women's lived experiences and perspectives based on their own

identities and perceptions of leadership advancement in K-12 education to redefine the narratives currently upheld by the dominant viewpoint.

Background of the Problem

As the United States population continues to grow and shift with demographic changes, the nation's racial and ethnic composition will look considerably different than it does now. For example, just in the past decade, the Hispanic or Latino population has grown from 50.5 million or 16.3% of the population in 2010 to 62.1 million or 18.7% in 2020 (Passel et al., 2022). During this timeframe, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that more than half of the total U.S. population growth was attributed by the Hispanic or Latino population (Passel et al., 2022). Based on the historical trends and research data, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2060 the Hispanic or Latino population will double and contribute to 29% of the U.S. population (Passel et al., 2022). Notably, as the diversity of the population continues to change, so does the composition of learners in public schools.

As an illustration, the National Center for Educational Statistics (2020) reported that in the fall of 2020, students in public elementary and secondary schools were comprised of a total of 49.4 million students to include 22.6 million White, 13.8 million Hispanic, 7.4 million Black, 2.7 million Asian, 2.2 million identifying as two of more races, 0.5 million American Indian/Alaska Native, and 180,000 Pacific Islander. As such, the percentage of public-school students between the fall of 2009 and 2020 who identified as Hispanic, or Latino increased from 22 to 28 percent. In contrast, there was a decline in both White (54 to 46 percent) and Black (17 to 15 percent) public school students during this time span (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022). Markedly, even with the increase in the number of Latina/o students in K-12 public schools, only 8.9 percent of principals leading in public schools are Latina/o, whereas

Black or African American leaders encompass 10.5 percent in comparison to their White (non-Hispanic) counterparts that represent 77.7 percent of all principals nationally in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Even with the increase and projected trends of the Hispanic/Latino population and student enrollment in public schools, the diversification of educational leaders in the K-12 system is undeniably incongruent to meet the cultural and diverse needs of the 13.8 million Latina/o students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022). It is important to realize that the "future of Latina/o children in successfully merging into the workforce will depend on the early investment of school administrators and educators in preparing these students," that are both representative and are held up as successful and contributing members of our society (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016, p. 4).

As Mendez-Morse (2004) postulates, the increase in the Hispanic population is not reflective in the number of Hispanic school leaders. Furthermore, the discrepancy is even more apparent between Hispanic men and women, where women who serve as school administrators are even fewer in number (Mendez-Morse, 2004). Consequently, diverse and inclusive leadership is imperative to challenge existing power structures and policies that parallel the broader society, in which Hispanic/Latina women have historically been underrepresented in higher-level positions in K-12 education. Thus, there is an urgency in our society to bridge the leadership gap that exist for women in the field of education and more specifically women of color.

Problem Statement

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2022), 78% of women achieve their Master's in the field of education in comparison to 22% of men recipients. Moreover, women are obtaining Doctoral level degrees in education at twice the rate

of men (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022). Even with women representing over 53% of principalships, only 8.9 percent of principals leading in public schools are Latino/a nationally in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Despite the positive trend of women outnumbering men in educational administration preparation programs and obtaining higher level degrees in education in every ethnic/racial group, women and more specifically Latina women, are not progressing at the same rate into leadership positions as their counterparts (Allred et al., 2017; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022; Shakeshaft, et al., 2007).

Consequently, there is a problem in K12 organizations in which there is a disparity in the number of Latina administrative leaders in higher level positions such as principalships, district office executive positions, and superintendency. A possible cause of this problem inherently stems from historical issues surrounding the intersectionality of women as defined by social constructs, policies, perceived stereotypes, biases, and cultural factors (Eagley, 2020; Fischer & Ryan, 2021). As a result, the lack of women in higher level leadership positions and the availability of robust research around women in educational leadership, can result in policies and organizational systems that perpetuate ethnic/racial inequalities and existing gender norms (Bailes & Guthrey, 2020; Eagley, 2020; Fischer & Ryan, 2021).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into Latina educational leaders lived experiences in K-12 administrative roles including principalships, district office executives, and superintendency positions to deepen the understanding between identity, role, and leadership (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the researcher explored intersectional factors in relation to the participants identity which tends to foster cross-

cultural practices through lived experiences that differ from main-stream and dominant culture peers (Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). Research questions are as follows:

1. What ways can organizations support women and more specifically Latina women to begin to shift the way society views women in roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents?
2. For women to ascend into leadership positions beyond assistant principals, are there perceived systematic barriers that inhibit progression based on gender and/or race/ethnicity?
3. To what extent does social identity and psychological capital play in women advancing in leadership positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendency?

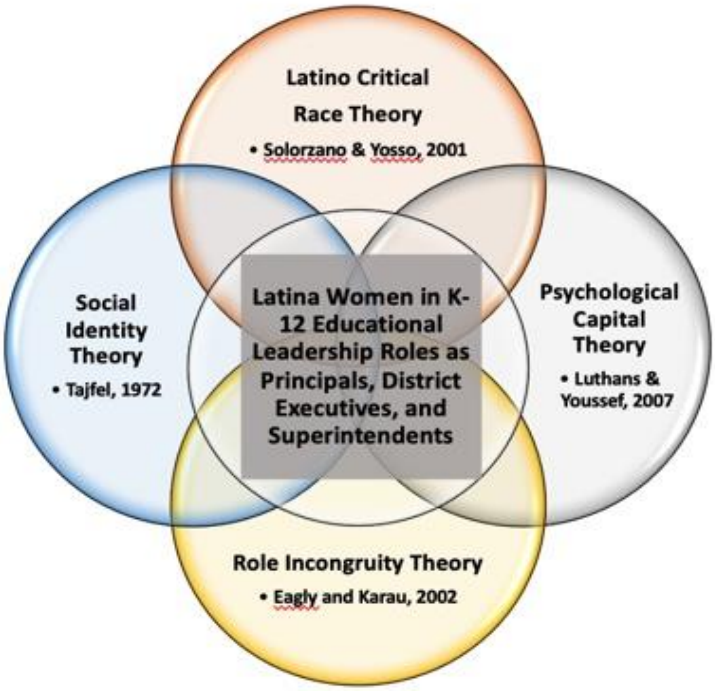
The theoretical frameworks revolving around LatCrit theory, Social Identity theory, Psychological Capital theory, and Role Incongruity theory was utilized in grounding the study in order to explore the intersections of Latina leaders root knowledge (personal identity), social identity, role incongruence, and leadership perspectives in K-12 public education.

Theoretical/Conceptual Frameworks

Through the interaction of four theoretical frameworks that support the studies research questions, as displayed in Figure 1, provided a holistic understanding of Latina educational leaders in K-12 public education that supports both personal and professional identities based on their own lived experiences.

Figure 1

Theoretical Framework



The theoretical framework was comprised of four components with Latina women in K-12 educational leadership roles at its core. By centering the lived experiences of Latina women that hold higher level positions such as principals, district office executives, and superintendencies it allowed for a grounded lens in which Latino Critical Race theory (LatCrit), Social Identity theory, Role Incongruity theory, and Psychological Capital (PsyCap) theory explored the relationship between leadership and identity. As Hernandez and Murakami (2016) explain, in order to develop a deeper understanding of leadership within communities of color, ascension, gender disparities, recruitment, retention, and development, there must be research that exemplifies Latina leaders' histories, challenges, contributions, and aspirations both personally and professionally.

Latino Critical Race Theory

Latino Critical Race theory (LatCrit) is a framework that parallels Derrick Bell's Critical Race theory (CRT), in which they both explore policies and structures that "perpetuate racial

and/or ethnic and gender subordinator" (Bernal, 2002, p. 108). As an extension of the work around CRT, LatCrit builds upon the race-based perspective theoretical framework to include the multidimensional identities of the Latina/o experience (Bernal, 2002; Franco, 2021; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Huber 2010; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Hence, LatCrit examines the intersectionality of race, sex, class, gender, and other forms of oppression, while incorporating more nuanced experiences in the Latina/o communities such as immigration, language, ethnicity, and culture (Bernal, 2002; Franco, 2021; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Huber 2010; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). This theory is imperative in K-12 education, for the reason that it offers a counter story to dominant ideology through providing an intersectional perspective of Latina educational leaders' multiple identities (personal and professional) within the larger context of educational politics, policies, and systemic inequities (Cho et al., 2013).

Social Identity Theory

In 1972, Taijfel introduced the concept of social identity to understand and theorize how people understand their place in intergroup contexts and the variability of social categorization (Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000; Hann Tapper, 2013). According to Hogg (2001) social identity is based on one's self-concept as it relates to their membership in certain social groups, while also producing biases through social comparisons between in-groups and out-groups. Furthermore, social identities become socially constructed labels that people utilize as a means to categorize or identify themselves and others as representative members of differing groups (Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000; Hann Tapper, 2013). Within the social identity theory, it illuminates that in a myriad of social situations people tend to think of themselves and others as tied to a specific group context instead of distinctive individuals (Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000; Hann Tapper, 2013). As an example, some social identities that are boxed into groups in

society by dominant ideals include race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, profession, and socioeconomic status (Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000; Hann Tapper, 2013). With this in mind, culture plays a crucial role in shaping and influencing social identity.

As social identity focuses on the part of an individual's self-concept that is housed from their membership in the differing social groups, culture then adds the framework within which these groups are defined and their significance in understood (Feitosa, Salas & Salazar, 2012; Halloran & Kashima). Ultimately, culture and social identity are deeply intertwined with each other. Halloran and Kashima (2006) explain that culture provides the foundation for the formation and expression of social identity, and therefore social identity reinforces and perpetuates cultures norms and practices. Consequently, through comprehending the essential role of culture, it supports the understanding of how one perceives themselves in relation to their social groups and how they interact within a broader cultural context (Feitosa, Salas & Salazar, 2012; Halloran & Kashima).

When viewing social identity theory and cultural perspectives through a K-12 education viewpoint, it is important to gain the foundation of how a Latina leader can form one's multifaceted identities based on both in-group and out-group categorizations. As research and studies have revealed, categorization lends itself to the formation of bias, stereotypes, power imbalances, prejudice, and competitiveness between groups, where an individual of a non-dominant group can experience oppression and discrimination in various forms (Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000; Hann Tapper, 2013). Therefore, by incorporating the voices of Latina women in higher level educational leadership roles, it highlighted the basis that each individual

person has multiple social identities that influence one's personal and professional identity through their individual and unique lived experiences.

Role Incongruity Theory

Role incongruity theory is based on the presumption that women leaders are faced with prejudice and stereotypes on descriptive aspects of their gender and gender roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). With this in mind, in a study by Eagly and Karau (2002), the authors theorized two types of disadvantages that are salient for women leaders to include: (a) when looking at the descriptive aspects of constructed gender roles, there is a perception that women possess less leadership ability then men and (b) when women enact behaviors more reflective of men in a leadership role, a less favorable evaluation of behavior is prescribed, due to the violation of perceived gender roles. Hence, the merging of gender and socially constructed gender roles produces a stereotypical judgement that women possess less agency and more communion, therefore giving the perception that they are less qualified for leadership roles and more specifically higher-level executive positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

This theory was essential in analyzing the gender and racial/ethnic disparity as it relates to Latina women pursuing and maintaining higher level leadership roles in K-12 education. Consequently, as Hernandez and Murakami (2016) explain, if role incongruent stereotypes and prejudice exist in society and organizations, then as a Latina woman in a male-dominated role, there is the potential for the perception of incongruence where "co-workers and the public will see faults more than accolades in their role and performance" (p. 72). Thus, potentially deterring Latinas from ascending to roles beyond entry level administrative positions even if they hold the experience, credentials, and educational expertise (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse et al., 2015).

Psychological Capital Theory

Psychological capital, also known as PsyCap is rooted in both positive psychology and positive organizational behavior that addresses one's efficacy in succeeding in a challenging task, optimism in the success of present and future goals, hope in persevering towards goals, and resilience in attainment through adversity (Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021). Consequently, women in educational leadership, and more specifically marginalized women often face challenges and barriers including stereotypes, cultural biases, and systemic inequalities. Enomoto, Gardiner, and Grogan (2000) support that "the double jeopardy of being a woman of color takes its toll in the terms of an individual's self-esteem as a leader", which inherently is compounded by discrimination and unfair treatment that negatively impacts one's well-being and desire to rise further in leadership roles (p. 572).

Therefore, psychological capital can play a crucial role in women's leadership effectiveness and success by cultivating and leveraging one's experience power. Ali Salih and Salman Al-Dulaimi (2017) explain that experience power, in which women "gained knowledge through experience," is crucial in the development and improvement of psychological capital variables because they are state-like and malleable. Therefore, Chawla and Sharma (2019) suggest that psychological capital is of great benefit to marginalized groups in organizations, for the reason that it can provide them with the necessary skills and confidence to seek out social support and advice from others while also enhancing one's own well-being.

Markedly, theory is crucial to supporting women in educational K12 leadership positions to continue their forward trajectory into higher level roles and understand the unique intersectional factors that arise from their experiences (Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021). Overall, by strengthening confidence, resilience, and the ability to navigate

the complexities in higher-level educational roles, psychological capital can empower Latina educational leaders. As Chawla and Sharma (2019) state, “it is pivotal for women to feel confident about the skills, abilities, and knowledge that they bring to the workplace, considering the societal skepticism about their efforts and abilities to perform” (p.5).

Significance of the Study

As a means to foster representative equity in literature, this dissertation provided additional research through focusing on Latina women leaders lived experiences in K-12 educational spaces that have held positions such as principalships, executive district roles, and superintendencies. Vroman and Danko (2020) propose that with the rapidly expanding and chaotic uncertainty of today’s contemporary society, communal responses that women leaders provide are effective in fostering adaptive frameworks in organizational change and gender parity efforts. Above all, women leaders encourage participation, share power and information, and strive to improve the self-worth of their subordinates (Early & Johnson, 1990; Snaebjornsson et al., 2015). It is based on this understanding that women leaders play an important role in transforming current and future organizations to not only uplift equitable gender practices and bridge the opportunity gaps, but to inspire a change in how society views leadership.

This acknowledges the continual need to foster an alliance between genders to overcome the imbalance and underrepresentation of women (more specifically marginalized women) in places of power in K-12 positions that can support concerted efforts of change and shift the dominant representative narrative (Adams et al., 2018; Kimmel & Ferber, 2017; Macias & Stephens, 2017; Northouse, 2018). In the growing body of cross-cultural and gender-based research, it continues to shine a light on the inequities of what support can be given to up and coming leaders to be their most successful self and provide culturally relevant development for

future generations (Macias & Stephens, 2017; Manongson & Ghosh, 2021; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). Therefore, continuing the perpetuation of who gets to mentor and thus who has the power and influence in mentoring relationships. In order to support these efforts, organizations must effectively manage local and globally inclusive workforces to develop a successful and sustainable competitive edge through proactive identity work, mentoring, coaching, and intentional sponsorships (Macias & Stephens, 2017; Manongson & Ghosh, 2021; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010).

Delimitations

The following delimitations in this study included the following:

- Participants were accessed through the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents membership through volunteer participation.
- The sample of participants was delimitated to Latina/Hispanic women in higher level administrative/leadership positions (i.e., principals, district executive office roles, and superintendents).
- The population of participates was established at a national level, which can leave out representation in geographical locations or regions depending on the outcome of participants.

Limitations

Based on the type of study executed, the following limitations were recognized:

- Since the researcher and interviewer is a Latina woman, the conduct of the participants might be affected either positively or negatively.
- Due to the researcher being the primary investigator, personal and professional biases can influence data analysis.

Definition of Terms

In order to gain a common language of the terms discussed in the study, definitions are defined below:

- **Gender Inequality:** This term references the unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender and the socially constructed differences in relation to gender specific roles (United Nations, 2020).
- **Hispanic or Latina/o:** The term *Hispanic* or *Latina/o* refers to a wide range of ethnic cultures. According to Mendez-Morse (2000), both terms can be used in reference to Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Dominicans, and South or Central Americans. To further expand, *Hispanic* specifically concerns the Spanish-language-speaking Latin American countries and Spain. Whereas *Latino* and *Latina* specifically concerns those from Latin American countries and cultures, regardless of whether the person speaks Spanish (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019).
- **Underrepresentation:** This term reflects the inadequate representation of women in a group or organization, where the representation in numbers is disproportionally low in comparison to their counterparts and educational attainment in K-12 leadership positions in education (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Cambridge Dictionary, 2023).

Summary

This chapter focused on the underrepresentation of women, more specifically Latina women, in leadership positions in proportion to their representation in the field of education. Even though women are procuring educational certifications and post bachelor's degrees at a higher rate than men, women face gender-based social constructs and intersectional stereotypes that continue to perpetuate male dominance in the profession. This chapter presented the

background of the issue, problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, and the significance of the problem. This chapter also highlighted the theoretical frameworks guiding this study including LatCrit theory, Social Identity theory, Psychological Capital theory, and Role Incongruity theory. The next chapter examines the three frameworks that will guide the development of the study's methodology. Additionally, chapter 2 presents a review of literature surrounding women in educational leadership with a focus on Latina women in leadership roles in the K-12 field.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Chapter 2 explores the literature that encompasses the lived and perceived experiences of Latina women in higher level K-12 roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendencies. The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding between identity, role, and leadership as it pertains to the Latina experience in the K-12 education field. Therefore, this chapter is organized in a way that maximizes a broader perspective of how gender, race, ethnicity, roles, responsibilities, and historical factors gives a balcony view of how society and organizations can impact Latina women leaders throughout their careers and development. The chapter is organized as follows: (a) identity, gender, and role as a social construct, (b) dimensions of intersectionality and stereotypes, (c) organizational based inclusive leadership practices, (d) historical influence of the Latino/a population in the United States, (e) Latina women in K-12 educational leadership roles, and (f) theoretical frameworks.

Identity, Gender, and Role as a Social Construct

Throughout a person's lifetime, one constantly asks themselves the question, "Who am I?" This ponderance occurs not only in an individual's personal realm of thought, but also unfolds in identifying how a person is viewed by the world at large. Identity at its most simplistic form is impacted by various internal and external factors. Elements such as ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender, ability, socioeconomic status, experiences, values, and beliefs shape the way in which others see us, and in turn how we see ourselves (Steele, 2010). With this in mind, social identity becomes a focal point when looking at how a person conceptualizes themselves in intergroup contexts and their place in society as viewed from one's own perspective (Hogg, 2001).

Consequently, what becomes apparent for women aspiring to higher level leadership roles in K-12 education arena, and more specifically women of color, is the dominant societal views and barriers that continue to ensue based on conflicting literature of what leadership should be and look like (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Even more, the lackluster research and publications that would bring voice, a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives into the realm of educational leadership that challenges the status quo, is just as disproportionate in the number of literary sources than that of the representation of women in higher level roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents.

The ability to truly start to understand how social and gender identity comes into play within the arena of leadership supports a broader perspective. It awakens the idea of how a person's culture, background, experiences, and a plethora of intersectional aspects blend into the perpetuation of oppression and bias (whether conscious or unconscious). Thus, it is not just about how leaders and organizations can support a better tomorrow, but to start educating the "system" and "structures" of oppressive and "ism" type of behaviors (Adams et al., 2018). Despite the urgency to shift the way society views women in differing roles based on the long held socially constructed stereotypes, there are those that agree and support movements or disagree with the status quo but are "silent" because of the repercussions of what might happen from the dominant societal values (Adams et al. 2018).

As an illustration, gender in many ways has been thought of as a process in which humans create distinguishable social statuses in order to delineate rights and responsibilities by defining a binary construct of what a women and man entails (Adams et al., 2018; Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Moreover, expectations and norms from these socially imposed standards create the views and assumptions we generate about one another. Structurally, gender based

social constructs put into place presumptions of how women and men should engage in their daily lives within and outside of the workforce no matter what role they hold (Adams et al., 2018; Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021; Vroman & Danko, 2020).

Societal perception then transpires in which men are viewed with more masculine attributes and seen as more agentic (independent, decisive, aggressive, and achievement oriented), whereas women are expected to display feminine behaviors and thus more communal based attributes (sympathetic, helpful and kind) (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Snaebjornsson et al., 2015; Vroman & Danko, 2020). In consequence, through centuries of being conditioned to these social constructs and stereotype threats, implicit and unconscious bias become engrained in the organizational and system cultures (Snaebjornsson et al., 2015).

For instance, the embedded social judgements not only effects differing genders, but also can encroach into intergroup dynamics where women leaders may show prejudice and competitive behaviors against other each other (Bearman et al., 2009; Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Vroman & Danko, 2020). In this light, multiple studies have shown that women, just as much as men, can foster unconscious bias and/or beliefs from internalizing societal based stereotypes that show up in how women tend to judge one another (Bearman et al., 2009). Specifically, this internalized sexism that encompasses the internal dynamics among an oppressed group, in this case women, lends to the perpetuation of systematically denying power, therefore reinforcing resentment, competitiveness, and a sense of powerlessness and is further exacerbated for women of color (Bearman et al., 2009; Ely & Rhode, 2010; Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Vroman & Danko, 2020).

For instance, in the workplace, it can create a culture in which women distance themselves from other women as a way to increase their standing in the organization or in

societal circles to show that they can be successful leaders. However, as the ingroup vies over such limited positions of power, the backlash is the competitive behaviors associated with getting ahead such as social exclusion, gossip, mistreatment of others to make one self-look better, and zero-sum comparisons that creates a psychological glass ceiling (Bearman et al., 2009; Ely & Rhode, 2010). In effect, causing women to feel a need to prove themselves to be considered for key leadership roles and positions, which in turn can provide to be discouraging and counterproductive in supporting more equitable organizational outcomes.

It is important to realize that these behaviors can show up differently in organizations based on the number of women in higher level leadership roles. Compelling evidence in educational research has shown that men continue to hold a disproportionate amount of higher-level roles (i.e., principalships, district executive offices, superintendencies) in comparison to the number of women in the overall field in K-12 education (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). When looking at the top of the K-12 educational realm of leadership, the School Superintendent Association (2020), reports that nationally these top roles are still filled by self-identified white males despite shifts in demographic changes in the United States. The research and data support that even though female superintendents continue to move in an upward trend, there has only been a meager increase from 24.1% in 2010 to 26.68% in 2020. In contrast, for superintendents of color, the progress in reaching the upper echelons continues to move at a slower rate, with only 8.6% representation in 2020 (The School Superintendent Association, 2020).

Thus, when there are a scant amount of women holding positions of power or prominent roles, there is a hyperfocus on women in such positions and therefore are subject to higher levels of scrutiny and evaluations by both men and women (Ely & Rhode, 2010). Explicitly, this

hypervisibility can be exacerbated for women of color, for the reason that under focal surveillance, mistakes and incongruence of normative leadership styles can be utilized to confirm negatively based stereotypes (Buchanan & Settles, 2019). Conversely, when individuals are hypervisible, their personal identities are consequently rendered invisible. As a result, individuals that are subject to hypervisibility are seen within their marginalized group membership, thus inherently denying a person of being perceived accurately as a unique and complex person beyond the dominantly normed narrative (Buchanan & Settles, 2019).

Snaebjornsson et al. (2015) reinforces that a leader tends to be encoded by others based on one's gender (and other intersectional characteristics) and then followed by behavioral factors. As a result, one can experience cognitive dissonance if the individual is holding conflicting ideas of the leader and how they should perform or act within the organization. Therefore, as a consequence of the social processes built into the structures over time, it creates inequalities and the devaluation of the person as an individual as seen through less power, privilege, and economic success (Adams et al., 2018; Vroman & Danko, 2020). So much that, women in many instances are given fewer challenging tasks, have less opportunities to participate and provide input in decision-making meetings, and receive less recognition and accolades for their accomplishments. That being the case, even when women are given equal access to positional power and performance requirements as men, women are held to higher standards and rated at a lower effective level (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Ely & Rhode, 2010; Pew Research, 2015; Vroman & Danko, 2020).

To expand, in organizational settings, women continue to reach the metaphorical glass ceiling, but continue to face what's known as a double bind in the execution of their authority where they are either too aggressive or not aggressive enough (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Ely

& Rhode, 2010; Vroman & Danko, 2020). More often than not, women often stand against the dilemma of either being seen as competent, respected, or likable based on the traits they are displaying in their leadership positions. In essence, the effect of such accumulative circumstances is that women are more likely to have a lower sense of self-confidence and are more readily to see their gender as a barrier to advancement (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Studies to date have found that women are markedly as driven as men in their respective professions, however when asked about confidence levels in reaching higher level positions, there was a significant discrepancy (Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021). Accordingly, women had a confidence level of 58% in comparison to men that felt that they could reach top executive levels at a rate of 79%, thus meaning that fewer women are likely to seek out advancement or promotion (Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021).

Incidentally, women generally experience a broad range of stereotypical reactions in society, however as we start to factor in race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and age, the stereotypes and identity contingencies become intertwined and can further monopolize advancement in educational and leadership opportunities (Vroman & Danko, 2020; Fitzgerald, 2006; Steele, 2010). Even with women being the majority of graduate and professional degree holders, when presented with an opportunity in their organization or shifting to a new role, women are less likely to put themselves forward (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Ely & Rhode, 2010; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021). As a result, the lack of gender and cultural diversity in leadership positions feeds into the dominant narrative and limits the number of role models, available mentors, potential sponsorships, and the amount of literature dedicated to identity, gender, and role as a means to understand the complexities that arise when the factors of intersectionality are salient.

Dimensions of Intersectionality and Stereotypes

With this in mind, marginalized women face a multitude of barriers and continue to remain underrepresented in higher education and higher-level leadership positions (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Fitzgerald, 2006; Manongsong & Ghosh, 2021; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). By the same token, women of color risk being lumped into the "gender matters" narrative that aligns one to think of women as a collective identity housed within gender-based experiences and struggles (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Fitzgerald, 2006; Manongsong & Ghosh, 2021). However, what it leaves out is the power and privilege that encompasses the ethnocentric viewpoint of gender and the community expectations from cultural responsibilities (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Fitzgerald, 2006).

Intersectionality considers the many social identities one identifies with and how a community identifies them. Depending on the situation or setting, the dominance of the individual identity will change. Adams et al. (2018) describe the formation of identity as a lifelong process that includes forgetting, discovery, synthesis, and/or recovering a sense of identity. Intersectionality is, therefore, the relationship between the different senses of identity. Hence, intersectionality embodies the interaction of multiple social identities in shaping the reality of oppression and privilege (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Kimmel & Ferber, 2018). Primarily, the reduction of complex identities is used to make clear boundaries between communities, therefore enforcing systems of oppression and privilege by classifying individuals with less desired groups.

In effect, through navigating the multiple challenges that encompass the intersectional stereotypes, it can be psychologically taxing because one feels like they have to constantly prove themselves to be worthy of the space in which they learn and lead (Hernandez & Murakami,

2016; Steele, 2010; Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). As Manongson and Ghosh (2021) disseminates that aspiring marginalized women leaders, tend to face intrinsic conflicts in which there is a discrepancy between one's personal, social, and leader identity, inherently dampening the aptness to transcend in their professional careers (Manongson & Ghosh, 2021). Which can then lead to the susceptibility of imposter phenomenon, where one can harbor feelings of intellectual phoniness and fear of being a fraud in the space where others are accelerating (Manongson & Ghosh, 2021). Given these points, both structural and attitudinal barriers can inhibit the formation and development of an individual's identity as strong viable leader, where one can get stuck in the doing phase, instead of embracing their lived experiences and multifaceted assets that add value to the organization (Ely & Rhode, 2010; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016).

Intersectionality Theory

The ability to embrace an intersectional approach that analyzes social problems, ultimately can lead to the development of a more effective social movement response (Buchanan & Settles, 2018; Kimmel & Ferber, 2019; Roberts, Mayo & Thomas, 2019). However, Ferber (2019) coined the idea of "oppression-blindness," which is an umbrella term that allows for privileged areas beyond just race to be rendered invisible (ability, class, gender, race, ethnicity, etc.). Thus, by looking more closely and diving deeper into the intersectionality perspective while focusing on culture it "gives meaning to our experiences and shapes the way we make sense of the world" (Kimmel & Ferber, 2019, p. 246).

This theory is important in the K-12 educational context to understand and uplift the complexity of Latina leaders lived experiences, because as Kimmel and Ferber (2017) support that in order to redesign social systems, "we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen

dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and...dominance" (p. 39). In essence, social dominance orientation may not capture a general desire to maintain status hierarchies but rather a specific desire to maintain hierarchies in which one's in-group stands to benefit. When efforts are made that encompass both the framework and actual praxis within the organization that effectively supports the importance of racial and cultural change, then it will begin to shift the power imbalance allowing for a greater representation of marginalized groups (Macias & Stephens, 2017; Wingfield, 2019). On the whole, when educational leaders have the opportunities and access to stand on equitable grounds for the populations that they represent, it changes the landscape and power to bring a diversity of perspectives into the policies and practices to bridge a path forward. By and large, making way for a more inclusive organizational environment that supports an increase in the representation of diverse women in higher-level leadership roles and positions in the realm of K-12 education, and more urgently Latina women.

Organizational Based Inclusive Leadership Practices

In order to implement inclusive leadership in an organization, one must understand the meaning behind what inclusive leadership entails. According to Randel et al. (2018), inclusive leadership is a set of leadership behaviors that values team members, invites diverse perspectives, and creates an atmosphere where people feel their opinions and contributions improve the company’s cultural health and well-being. In this way, inclusive leadership is supportive within organizations through the facilitation of group members to feel a sense of belonging and at the same time allowing for the retention of one’s uniqueness in contributing to

group processes and outcomes (Randel et al., 2018). Therefore, inclusive leadership is important to leverage and motivate a diverse team with different viewpoints, ideas, and perspectives.

For individuals to truly feel like they work in an inclusive environment, they must believe that they are treated fairly, valued for who they are, and included in core decision making where the inclusion climate is high (Mor Barak et al., 2021). Based on research, when looking at inclusive leadership and its effectiveness, there must be a symbiance between both the diversity and inclusion policies and the practices implemented throughout the organization (Mor Barak et al., 2021; Randel et al., 2018). If there is a gap between the policies that support an inclusive environment and the practices of the leadership, people in the organization will be less likely to feel that there is an inclusive environment (Mor Barak et al., 2021; Randel et al., 2018).

This gap is known as decoupling, where there is a discrepancy between the adoption of policies to value employees and the actual enactment of practices, such as accessing information networks, informal relationships, and decision-making processes (Mor Barak et al., 2021). However, before an organization can establish an inclusive environment, there needs to be an understanding of the community at large within the organization, the culture, climate level, and climate strength (Mor Barak et al., 2021). Essentially, to create an environment that supports combating decoupling when initiating, implementing, and sustaining inclusive practices, the organization's identity must be inclusive of all its members.

Hence, inclusive leadership is needed to establish a new vision that emphasizes the desired direction to support and sustain effective diverse and inclusive organization behaviors for team processes (Randel et al., 2018). This can be done by providing a platform for sensemaking, where people are given the space to learn and build awareness in understanding people’s differences in perspectives in the organization (Murrell, 2019). Another way to lead forward as

an inclusive leader is by building community and bringing people together for a common goal in a cohesive, impactful way with the ultimate outcome of connection (Murrell, 2019). By ensuring that one is a steward for aligning the policies and processes where everyone deserves a seat at the table, it supports embracing people that are different from each other while also supporting an environment that addresses micro-inequalities, while uplifting micro-affirmations that opens the door for opportunities, caring, and generosity through various supportive acts of inclusion (Rowe, 2021; St. John, 2016).

Inclusive Leadership as a Team Process

While the many principles of inclusive leadership embody an allusion to a sense of belonging and the application of its dynamic elements, leaders and scholarly practitioners must work to establish stewardship perspectives to build trust, where everyone has a seat at the table (Murrell, 2019). Thus, in a team process, genuinely inclusive leaders in an organizational environment minimize policy-practice decoupling as all group members perceive, not just historically dominant or high-status members. Additionally, in diverse groups, through cross-cultural competencies, leaders reinforce organizational level, clarify, and translate those espoused beliefs into what it means for everyday work behaviors that are coherent and respectful of the diversity within teams concerning gender, race, and ability.

For this ideal or concept to be viable, the organization must articulate and enact the adopted expectations and implement them through role modeling of inclusive behaviors while continually navigating intersectionality as part of their policy-practice outcome, thus "minimizing policy-practice decoupling and elevating climate for inclusion" (Mor Barak et al., 2021, p.23). Generally speaking, when K-12 educational organizations "walk their talk" and provide opportunities that leverages expertise and talent, increases the number of role models that are representative to the diversity of the population in higher level roles, and leans into the

development of underrepresented groups, it creates space to challenge stereotypes and re-defines the dominant narrative. By learning the history and really speaking to the heart of the matter through the lived experiences of Latina women, it can inspire growth and change. Of course, any type of change can produce anxiety as we are creatures of habit, thus it's the process and steps we take as leaders and organizations that will ultimately make the path to make change (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002). Although this may be true, there is still a long way to go in order to achieve a semblance of equitable representation due to the historical systems and policies that have encompassed marginalized populations.

Historical influence on the Latino/a Population in the United States

As a means to be conscious of the many facets that is the Hispanic and Latino/a population and various communities, we must explore the historical factors that have contributed to the oppression of students and their education in the United States. As the largest representative group of Latinos/as in the United States, Mexican children and their families faced the deculturalization of their native language and customs in order to be "schooled" dating back to the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty in 1848 (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Consequently, other Hispanics and Latinos/as from other countries tended to be entangled in the same oppressive actions enacted by the dominant culture, such as limitations with voting rights, school attendance, and segregation among schools (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Notably, Hispanic and Latino/a student's not only experienced schooling in segregated areas in many states nationally, but most were also discouraged from applying to college as well (Murakami et al., 2015).

Throughout the course of United States history for the Hispanic and Latino/a population, as it relates to unfair educational practices, lawsuits supported shifts in educational attainment

and historical advancement such as the Del Rio Independent School District vs. Salvatierra, Alvarez vs. Lemon Grove, Mendez vs. Westminster, and Edgewood Independent School District vs. Kirby (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). These particular lawsuits slowly shifted where Hispanic and Latino/a students could attend school and shined a light on the gross funding inequalities between schools that students of color attended versus predominately White students (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016).

Equally important is the repercussions of anti-immigration policies that has impacted the Hispanic and Latino/a population over the course of Western history. Societal views of immigration and issues that revolve around the topic tend to hold a political charge and lead to discriminatory practices toward Hispanic and Latino/a populations (even for those that are US born) (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). As noted by Pew Research Center data reports, Hispanic individuals have a higher rate of reported discrimination at 38% or 1 in 4 incidents to include being called "offensive names, being told to go back to their home country, being criticized for speaking Spanish in public, or experiencing discrimination or unfair treatment because they are Hispanic" (Lopez et al., 2018).

As a result of long held oppressive practices and discriminatory behaviors by the dominant culture in the United States, several scholars report that school is one of the entry points in which Latino/a student's experience discrimination and stereotyping (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Murakami et al., 2018). In effect, there is concern that attitudes towards Hispanic and Latino/a students by non-Latino/a educators and school leaders can deter students academically and emotionally thus creating a culture of invisibility and insignificance (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Consequently, when Hispanic and Latina/o students are not represented among teachers and school leaders, their cultural identity and their tribulations can

go unnoticed or might not be addressed, therefore continuing a perpetuating cycle of oppression (Murakami et al., 2015).

Latina Women in K-12 Educational Leadership Roles

Due to the fact that a majority of the research revolving around Latina women in K-12 educational leadership roles are housed in unpublished dissertations, it leaves a gap in available literature to review (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Murakami et al., 2015). Markedly, literature around Latina leaders wasn't recognized until that latter part of the 1980's and typically focused on the narrative around barriers instead of identity formation and their contributions (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Despite the scant literature available around Latina women educational leaders, several studies and researchers have begun to tip the scale.

A research study by Murakami and Mendez-Morse (2015), reported that "the participants in this study showed that there is more to leadership than being task oriented. They showed the importance of voicing values such as cultural relevance, community, and family focus when describing their duties. Latina/o leaders also considered their challenges and successes as related to several managerial, human relations and programmatic issues" (p. 18). To follow up, several studies about Latinas in educational administration report the strong influence of family in encouraging, supporting, and assisting Latina leaders as they progress into higher level positions and roles (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse, 2000; Murakami & Mendez-Morse, 2015; Murakami et al., 2018). Moreover, a number of studies that center identity and the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and language, explore the socially constructed attributes and labels connected to those attributes that continue to "situate Latino/a identity in marginalized contexts" (Murakami et al., 2018, p. 3). This perception inherently produces inequalities within

an ethnoracial hierarchy for people of color, thus limiting access to successful roles or positions in society (Murakami et al., 2018).

Even more, when delving into the findings reported by the National Latino Leadership Project (NLLP), it showed that leaders that identified as Latina were grossly represented in urban area elementary schools, where out of 132 respondents, 73 were principals and 59 were assistant principals (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Additionally, respondents in the NLLP survey shared that they began their career as volunteers, instructional assistants, or library specialists prior to moving into the classroom and obtaining their credentials (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). In fact, according to the NLLP survey, 50% worked as school counselors and served on average 10.4 years before moving to assistant principal or principalship (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Consequently, the most common pathway for NLLP respondents to principalship at a staggering 62%, was roles such as athletic coach or athletic director (which is more typical of male athletic coaches) (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016).

Even with the Latino/a population growing exponentially, where in 2021, Hispanics made up nearly one-in-five people in the United States, and the continual increase in the Latino/a student population in K-12 public schools, there is a glaring underrepresentation in the number of Latina/o educational leaders nationwide and more noticeably Latina leaders (Allred et al., 2017; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; NCES, 2022; Shakeshaft, et al., 2007). As Mendez-Morse (2004) supports, the increase in the Hispanic population is not reflective in the number of Hispanic school leaders. Furthermore, the discrepancy is even more apparent between Hispanic men and women, where women who serve as school administrators are even fewer in number (Mendez-Morse, 2004). In case, the amount of Latina educational leaders in positions such as principals in K-12 public education is lumped into an overall percentage of 8.9 percent to include

their male counterparts, due to the unreportable representative small amount for Latinas (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019).

Explicitly, even with the increase and projected trends of the Hispanic/Latino population and student enrollment in public schools, educational equity is undeniably incongruent to meet the cultural and diverse needs of the 13.8 million Latina/o students (National Center for Educational Research, 2022). It is important to realize that the "future of Latina/o children in successfully merging into the workforce will depend on the early investment of school administrators and educators in preparing these students," that are both representative and are held up as successful and contributing members of our society (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016, p. 4). Consequently, diverse and inclusive leadership is imperative to challenge existing power structures and policies that parallel the broader society, in which Hispanic/Latina women have historically been underrepresented in higher-level positions in K-12 education. Thus, there is an urgency in our society to bridge the leadership gap that exist for women in the field of education and more specifically women of color. Ultimately, to make a viable systematic change for Latina leaders to achieve equitable representation in higher level K-12 educational roles, Latina leaders need to hold positions and roles that give them the opportunities and resources to re-define the dominant and socially constructed narratives.

Theoretical Frameworks

As a means to provide the context in which this study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of Latina women's lived experiences in K-12 higher level educational leadership positions, four main theories are presented including Latino Critical Race theory, Social Identity theory, Role Incongruity theory, and Psychological Capital theory.

Latino Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory is the foundational framework that has been espoused from women's studies, sociology, history, ethnic studies, and critical legal studies that encompasses the exploration of race-neutrality and color blindness as it relates to a sociocultural context (Bernal, 2002; Franco, 2021; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2016). Granted, race and racism are at the root of the critical race theory (CRT), academic scholars have looked beyond the initial framework to the intersections of gender, race, and class to gain a broader understanding beyond the Black/White binary (Bernal, 2002; Franco, 2021; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2016). As Yosso (2016) contends, by only "offering a two-dimensional discourse, the Black/White binary limits understandings of the multiple ways in which African Americans Native Americans Asian/Pacific Islanders, Chicanas/os, and Latinas/os continue to experience, respond to, and resist racism and other forms of oppression" (p. 72).

Therefore, by focusing on the Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit) which extends the foundational critical race theory, it substantiated a deeper understanding of the multidimensional identities of Latina women in this study, while also addressing the intersections of "racism, sexism, classism and other forms of oppression" (Bernal, 2002, p.108; Franco, 2021; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2016). As Bernal (2002) mentions in their study, that the Latina/o critical race theory and critical race theory gives way to shifting the dominant narrative of what counts as knowledge and traditional ways of knowing. Thus, allowing researchers to "embrace the use of counter stories, narratives, testimonios, and oral histories" to give voice to the lived experiences of people of color and their multifaceted intersections (Bernal, 2002, p.109; Franco, 2021; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2016).

Social Identity Theory

Identity at its most simplistic form is impacted by various internal and external factors. Elements such as ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender, ability, socioeconomic status, experiences, values, and beliefs shape the way in which we define ourselves and how others see us (Cawla & Sharma, 2019; Steele, 2010). Social identity then can then be defined as an "individuals' knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p. 293 as cited in Hogg, 2001, p. 186). Granted that social identity builds on one's place in the world through identification and categorization, the critical aspect of social comparison ensues. As individuals, we look to others as comparison standards, evaluating ourselves and constantly gaining information about how to think, feel, and behave (Cawla & Sharma, 2019; Enomoto et al., 2000; Mendenhall et al., 2018).

Conversely, culture inherently affects social identity in the way categories are established and used to define social groups. As Feitosa, Salas, and Salazar (2012) suggests, the way cultures define and emphasize differing social categories can significantly impact how one perceives and identifies with these groups. For example, cultures prescribe values, behavioral expectations, and norms for their members, making them a part of an individual's social identity and how individuals see themselves within their cultural context (Feitosa, Salas, & Salazar, 2012; Halloran & Kashima, 2006). This can be seen through culturally based defining roles individuals occupy within their social groups. For instance, traditional gender roles in one's culture can influence how individuals view themselves and their place in their community (Feitosa, Salas, & Salazar, 2012; Halloran & Kashima, 2006).

When individuals from one culture come begin to become a part of another culture, a process known as acculturation occurs (Padilla & Perez, 2003). In effect, acculturation involves

adopting some elements of the culture that one was exposed to while also preserving characteristics of one's original culture. Padilla and Perez (2003) discuss how this process influences individuals in how they form their social identity as they navigate their multiple identities and try to find a balance between the differing cultural influences. This notion allows an individual to understand their place in society as viewed from one's own perspective, which is imperative in understanding Latina leaders' viewpoints and perspectives in the realm of K-12 education and how it encompasses one's self-identity, social identity, and professional identity (Cawla & Sharma, 2019; Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Murakami et al., 2018; Shakeshaft et al., 2007).

Role Incongruity Theory

In educational leadership, studies have showed that race, ethnicity, and race do matter when navigating the complicated and nuanced terrain of walking between two worlds (Fitzgerald, 2006). As Hernandez and Murakami (2016) support, leaders of color that identify as women, carry double minority roles and tend to be seen as not belonging or competent in male-dominated leadership spaces. Thus, when the perceptions of women in leadership roles misalign with societal expectations, it leads to a type of prejudice known as role incongruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Hernandez & Murakami, 2006; Ritter & Yoder, 2004). To elaborate, Eagly and Karau (2002) illustrate that

> "When a stereotyped group member and an incongruent social role become joined in the mind of the perceiver, this inconsistency lowers the evaluation of the group member as an actual or potential occupant of the role. In general, prejudice toward female leaders follows from the incongruity that many people perceive between the characteristics of women and the requirements of leader roles" (p. 574).

To this end, women and especially women of color face the challenge of not only the "glass ceiling" phenomenon, but also have to continuously adapt and change their behaviors when interacting with others from different cultures, backgrounds, and the dominant culture in order to move into higher level leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Hernandez & Murakami, 2006; Ritter & Yoder, 2004).

Psychological Capital Theory

Given these points, the influence of psychological capital can come into play when encompassing one's complex intersectional identity and one's willingness to move into more prominent leadership roles. Psychological capital theory (PsyCap) in this light is based in positive psychological conceptualization and shifts the focus from a trait-based perspective to a more state-like represented construct which can be malleable throughout one's career trajectory (Cavas & Kapusuz, 2015; Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021). The PsyCap theory was conceptualized by Luthans and Youssef-Morgan as four distinct but interlinked pillars that include hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Cavas & Kapusuz, 2015; Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021).

As an instrument in providing a ground or means to mitigate negative influences in society or organizations, PsyCap gives insight into providing a positive approach that adds value to the outcomes of both the person and the organization (Cavas & Kapusuz, 2015; Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021). Therefore, when there is a strong relationship between the four pillars within an organization for individuals to thrive, it supports a container that allows for a diverse environment that supports one's dignity and well-being, thus inspiring upward mobility (Cavas & Kapusuz, 2015; Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Gist, 2020; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021).

These positive psychological resources play a crucial role in shaping one's behaviors, responses to challenges and opportunities, and overall mindset. Hence, as it relates to Latina women leaders, psychological capital can potentially provide the skills necessary to buffer against the negative effects of stereotypes, biases, and discrimination they may face due to their social identities. Thus, giving way for Latina/Hispanic women leaders to overcome barriers, combat imposter syndrome, and stay motivated and forward thinking in the face of adversity (Cavas & Kapusuz, 2015; Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021).

As an example, when an individual has high self-efficacy it allows them to believe in their abilities as a leader irrespective of their social identities and the stereotypes that encompass those identities, and thus they are more likely to challenge those societal expectations and demonstrate their capabilities (Ali Salih & Salman Al-Dulaimi, 2017). Additionally, when looking at optimism and hope, it allows for an individual to envision a more inclusive organizational framework and maintain a positive mindset that can support a higher level of perseverance and enthusiasm to be a change agent even in the face of societal bias and discord (Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Feitosa, Salas, & Salazar, 2012). Equally important, resilience, supports an individual's ability to renew one's strength or rebalance when they encounter prejudice or discrimination related to their social identities and "overcome them successfully and sustainably" (Ali Salih & Salman Al-Dulaimi, 2017, p. 4).

By and large, the PsyCap theory and the pillars it represents can stimulate a reflective and deeper understanding of how hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism are viewed, perceived and fostered through the eyes, hearts, and minds of Latina leaders navigating the K-12 organizational realm in education.

Summary

Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature surrounding the social constructs around both gender and roles, the multiple dimensions of intersectionality and stereotypes as it relates to women (more specifically Latina women), and inclusive organizational leadership practices that supports a supportive environment for women in leadership. Additionally, this chapter discussed the historical influences for Latina/o populations in education and Latina women in K-12 leadership roles in the United States. In order to gain the foundation and framework for this study, an examination of three theories was employed including the Latina/o critical race theory, social identify theory, and role incongruity theory. Chapter 3 highlights the phenomenological qualitative method that supported this study, thus illuminating the lived experiences of Latina women leaders in higher level K-12 education roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendencies.

Chapter 3. Method

This qualitative study was a means to explore, examine, and describe a phenomenon into that of Latina educational leaders lived experience in K-12 administrative roles including principalships, district office executives, and superintendency positions. Educational leadership research focused on Latina/o leaders, their intersectional challenges, personal stories and histories, career aspirations, contributions, roles, and responsibilities continue to go unreported, thus perpetuating the limited amount of research around one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the researcher explored intersectional factors in relation to the participants identity which tends to foster cross-cultural practices through lived experiences that differ from main-stream and dominant culture peers (Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014).

This study's qualitative research design included interviews with participants that identify as Latina/Hispanic K-12 educational leaders through semi-structured open-ended questioning to capture an overall essence of all experiences (Creswell, 2013). The six interviews were set up through a scheduling application between the participant and the researcher. Each of the individual 30–60-minute sessions were realized through the virtual platform Zoom with all six participants to allow for more participation nationally (Creswell & Creswell,2018). However, participants also had the option to participate in face-to-face and telephone interviews.

Significance of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into Latina educational leaders lived experiences and root knowledge in K-12 administrative roles including principalships, district office executives, and superintendency positions to deepen the understanding between identity, role, and leadership (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the

conceptual frameworks revolving around LatCrit theory, Social Identity theory, Role Incongruity theory, and Psychological Capital theory was utilized in understanding the lived experiences and intersections of Latina's root knowledge (personal identity), social identity, role incongruence, and leadership perspectives. The following research questions supported and guided the proposed study:

1. What ways can organizations support women and more specifically Latina women to begin to shift the way society views women in roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents?
2. For women to ascend into leadership positions beyond assistant principals, are there perceived systematic barriers that inhibit progression based on gender and/or race/ethnicity?
3. To what extent does social identity and psychological capital play in women advancing in leadership positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendency?

This chapter detailed the study's research method to include the overall context and importance of the study, the researcher's role, research design and rationale, and methodology.

Research Methodology

In order to investigate the research questions in this study, a qualitative phenomenological research design to understand participants lived experiences was employed. There is significance when exploring participants experiences through their personal and professional worldviews, as Mills and Gay (2019) postulate, qualitative research encompasses different methods in which give an in-depth look into the social phenomenon. Since qualitative research is primarily exploratory research, it is used to gain an understanding of underlying

reasons, opinions, and motivations of individuals or groups “to a social or human problem” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4). It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research (Creswell, 2013).

Additionally, this method in particular allowed for a flexible structure and relies on an inductive style that focuses on individual meaning (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013), when thinking about a qualitative research study, it can be looked at as interconnected circles. These circles that Creswell (2013) describes, include the approach of inquiry intended, the research design procedure, and the philosophical and/or theoretical frameworks. Each design has distinct differences and can pose similarities that overlap and interconnect with each other depending on the study and questions being conducted.

Whereas a narrative study reports the life of a single individual, a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell (2013) points out that in a phenomenology study, the researcher(s) looks at their own assumptions to differentiate between prior beliefs that the researcher(s) and the participant(s) hold.

This allows for the researcher to position themselves while recognizing that they can’t truly discard their own thoughts from the situation. After the collection of data, which comprises of primarily of interviews in a phenomenological study, the researcher looks for patterns or themes that emerge from the significant statements (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, this type of research focuses on the meaning of the individuals experience, finding significant quotes or statements that revolve around the phenomenon or experience (Creswell, 2013).

Population

The population of participants in the research study was based on the phenomenon encompassing the lived experiences of Latina women in higher level K-12 educational leadership positions, such as principals, district executives, and superintendents. Participants were established through my current participation and network with the National Principal Leadership Academy (NPLA) and the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). The ALAS National Principal Leadership Academy's mission is to "improve and expand opportunities for emerging school system leaders to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to serve all children with an emphasis on historically marginalized students" (Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, n.d.).

As a member of cohort 2 in the NPLA, the enrollment encompassed 16 total members including both men and women. To clarify, the number of NPLA members in cohort 2 is one facet of the overarching association of the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). Participants were realized on a national scale including the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico through direct participation from ALAS members to support a larger population of potential participants. Participants were required to hold high level leadership roles in the K-12 setting with at least 1 year of experience in those levels/roles. The qualifying criteria for such leadership roles include principalships, district executive positions, and superintendencies. Additional criteria for eligibility for this study entailed that participants needed to self-identify as Latina or Hispanic women.

Sampling

This qualitative study used both purposeful and snowball sampling. As a means to gain a deeper insight into a specific set of participants based on the proposed research questions,

purposeful sampling was deployed. In order to utilize purposeful sampling, a list of pre-determined criteria was developed to find participants relevant to the study. Creswell (2013) suggests that in a qualitative study, by purposefully selecting the participants or sites, a researcher will better be able to understand the problem and the research questions. Therefore, in a criterion-based sampling, it works well with participants that are representative of the people experiencing the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013).

Accordingly, the criteria for selection focused on women that identified as Latina or Hispanic and held higher level roles for over one complete year in K-12 education, such as principalships, district executives, and superintendencies. Consequently, to increase the sample population, the use of snowball sampling, which is a considered a non-probability sampling technique, supported a broader range of participants that is difficult to identify or locate (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through identifying initial participants or known individuals that the researcher established through professional and social networks, it increased the sample by inviting initial participants to identify others that could participate in the study based on the proposed criterion (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participant Selection

The process for attaining participants for this study began when exemption was obtained from the institutional review board (IRB) from Seattle University. In order for participants to participate in the study, they had to meet specific criterion as a means to ensure that the phenomenon being studied was relevant to the population of interest (Creswell, 2013). That being the case, to following criteria needed to be met: (a) identify as a woman, (b) identify as Latina or Hispanic, (c) have worked for at least one complete year in higher level role, (d) have worked as a principal, district executive, or superintendent in K12 education.

After procuring IRB exemption, the researcher sent an email to the current National Principal Leadership Academy members and the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents point of contact that outlined the proposed study, IRB consent form, a demographic questionnaire, and a scheduling application for individual interviews with potential participants. Participants were interviewed through a videoconferencing platform named Zoom. However, alternative options were available for participants to participate in interview sessions such as in-person or via phone communications. Additionally, participants were required to verbally consent to be recorded during the interview session, regardless of the platform (i.e., videoconferencing, in-person, or phone).

Data Collection

In this qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher collected data through a series of stages conducive to qualitative interview inquiries. Conducting interviews can be taxing and in studies that require a greater need for an in-depth understanding of the participants such as a phenomenological study, multiple interviews with follow up questioning can benefit both the researcher and participant (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the data collection process was divided into three phases.

The first phase incorporated gathering demographic information (Appendix A) from the pool of participants that met the prescribed criteria. In the second phase, the participants engaged in individual semi-structured open-ended questioning interviews that lasted no longer than 60 minutes per session. The open-ended questions (Table 1) were pre-written and designed carefully to render a more robust dialogue about the participant's lived experience of the phenomenon. During the second phase the researcher transcribed the interviewees responses from the confidential recordings for accuracy purposes.

Table 1

Open-ended research questions

Interview Questions	Research Questions	Connection to Literature
1a. Does your organization foster specific practices to promote and sustain diverse and inclusive leadership? 1b. Are there people in your organization that have provided coaching, mentorship, or sponsorship for Latina women to ascend to higher level positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents? 1c. Are there processes or programs in your organization that supported you in transitioning between roles/or positions such as from teacher to administrator or assistant principal to principal? 1d. In what ways has your organization supported Latina women to shift the dominant narrative of how society views women in leadership roles? 1e. What do you believe are the key factors required for leadership development for Latinas?	1.What ways can organizations support women and more specifically Latina women to begin to shift the way society views women in roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents?	As Bernal (2002) mentions in their study, that the Latina/o critical race theory and critical race theory gives way to shifting the dominant narrative of what counts as knowledge and traditional ways of knowing. Thus, allowing researchers to "embrace the use of counter stories, narratives, testimonios, and oral histories" to give voice to the lived experiences of people of color and their multifaceted intersections (Bernal, 2002, p.109; Franco, 2021; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2016).
2a. Do you believe that ethnic background, race, or gender had an impact on your professional growth and attainment? Why?	2. For women to ascend into leadership positions beyond assistant principals, are there perceived systematic barriers that inhibit progression based	As Hernandez and Murakami (2016) support, leaders of color that identify as women, carry double minority roles and tend to be seen as not

2b. Have you experienced any biases, stereotypical behaviors, or oppressive actions in your career as a leader in K-12 education settings? What was the outcome? 2c. Describe any professionally based interactions that you have had that made you feel "othered" or excluded, due to gender and/or race/ethnicity. 2d. In your opinion, do you believe Latina women are underrepresented in educational leadership positions in K-12 education? Why?	on gender and/or race/ethnicity?	belonging or competent in male-dominated leadership spaces. Thus, when the perceptions of women in leadership roles misalign with societal expectations, it leads to a type of prejudice known as role incongruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Hernandez & Murakami, 2006; Ritter & Yoder, 2004).
3a. In what ways has your culture and identity played a role in your personal and professional journey? 3b. What personal triumphs are you proud of in your professional journey as a leader? 3c. What personal challenges have you faced in advancing in leadership roles/or positions? 3d. Are there any significant life experiences that have either been a barrier or have contributed to your success as a woman advancing in leadership positions?	3.To what extent does social identity and psychological capital play in women advancing in leadership positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendency?	According to Hogg (2001) social identity is based on one's self-concept as it relates to their membership in certain social groups, while also producing biases through social comparisons between in-groups and out-groups. Furthermore, social identities become socially constructed labels that people utilize as a means to categorize or identify themselves and others as representative members of differing groups (Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000; Tapper, 2013). Psychological capital, also known as PsyCap is rooted in both positive psychology and positive organizational behavior that addresses one's

3e. Do you plan to continue your role/or position? If not, what is the reason? If so, would you consider advancing into a higher-level position or taking on other endeavors (such as mentoring, consulting, etc.)?		efficacy in succeeding in a challenging task, optimism in the success of present and future goals, hope in persevering towards goals, and resilience in attainment through adversity (Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021).

The third phase incorporated giving participants the option to engage in follow up questioning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As a follow up to correctly capture the findings from the interviews, a copy of the transcript was provided via email to the participants to review and clarify any misinformation or misconceptions (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Analysis Plan

In a qualitative study, appropriate steps to make sense out of the information being provided through the interview process is imperative to capturing the essence of what is being shared by the participants lived experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell (2013) suggests that data analysis is predominately intuitive and custom built, that moves in spiral analytic cycles in leu of a fixed linear approach. Therefore, even though there are appropriate steps to take in processing or analyzing the information, the researcher has the flexibility to go back to a step to dive deeper into the acquired data (Creswell, 2013). Consequently, there are multiple levels of analysis that is sequential in nature in a qualitative study ranging from organization and preparation for analysis to representing the data and themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The initial step in the qualitative data analysis process involves the organization and the preparation of data to gain a sense of the information being provided, while reflecting on the

overall meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). During this step, the transcription of the interviews or other materials necessary to capture the lived experiences of participants is imperative to gathering the data for further review. Whereas the next step incorporates reading and looking at the data shared by the participants. Creswell (2013) proposes that writing notes or memos in the margins is helpful, while also reading the transcripts in their entirety multiple times to gain clarity. After moving along the spiral in the analysis process and once the data has been read and reviewed, the data needs to be coded (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Forming codes and categories is considered to be the heart of a qualitative study in which researchers describe, classify, and interpret the data (Creswell, 2013). During the formation and analyzation of coding, the researcher will divide up the codes into three categories to include expected codes, surprising codes, and codes of conceptual interest (Creswell, 2013). Consequently, in the coding process, the data in bracketed into chunks and involves the generation of a description of the setting or people including categories or themes for analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

As Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that the themes should exhibit multiple perspectives from all the participants, while being upheld by a variety of quotes and specific evidence that was collected. For this phenomenological study, the themes or categories were shaped into general descriptions identifying six overall themes (Creswell, 2013). For clarity, the interpretative phenomenological analysis framework (IPA) was utilized to support a strong bonding relationship between the participant and researcher, where the participant was in control of the narrative through their subjective expression of lived experiences (Alase, 2017). Once the themes surfaced and were identified, the interpretation of the themes was addressed. In this phase

of the process, the researcher goes beyond the codes and themes to interpret the broader picture of the data being represented (Creswell, 2013).

Measures of Quality

In order to establish a sense of trustworthiness in a qualitative study, the researcher must take into account the ethical issues the might arise before, during, and after a study, while also recognizing one's own positionality as a researcher (Creswell, 2013). Due to the nature of this study and the participants involved specifically revolving around the lived experiences of Latina women in K-12 higher level leadership roles, the researcher put the following protocols in place (Creswell, 2013):

1. Obtaining institutional review board exemption
2. Contact participants and inform them of the general purpose of the study
3. Obtain appropriate consent for study participation
4. Discuss the detailed purpose of the study and how data will be utilized
5. Assign fictitious names or aliases
6. Use composite stories to protect participants information
7. Provide copy of transcript to participant for review and accuracy

To follow up, trustworthiness can be obtained through a level of confidence as marked by the credibility, dependability, and transferability of a qualitative study (Nowell et al., 2017).

Positionality

Positionality is a means for a researcher to share their own position that may influence any aspect of the study being executed (Stringer & Aragon, 2020). Additionally, by being upfront about one's own position in relation to the study it sheds light on any bias's that potential could shape interpretations during the process (Creswell, 2013; Stringer & Aragon, 2020).

Therefore, I come into this study as a Cuban American women (second generation) born in the United States that is a first-generation college graduate. As a seasoned educator of 19 years in K-12 education, I currently hold the position of an assistant principal and hold a socioeconomic status of upper middle class. Additionally, I am a graduate of the National Principal Leadership Academy and current member of the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, where I personally have been acquainted with potential participants. I hold several similar characteristics of the potential participants and acknowledge that this study is a personal passion to gain a deeper understanding into the lived experiences of Latina women in higher level positions in K-12 spaces.

Credibility

In this study, in order to establish credibility, the researcher will ensure that member checking is embedded in the analysis process. Member checking is defined as sharing a brief summary or final findings of a research study (Herr & Anderson, 2015). However, for the purposes of this phenomenological qualitative study, participants received a copy of their transcript to review as a means of member checking. This allowed for the participants to have the opportunity to check the transcript for accuracy, add more information, and make deletions if they chose.

Dependability

Dependability is a means for a researcher to establish trustworthiness in which their findings are consistent with the raw data collected and are repeatable (Nowell et al., 2017). This type of structure tends to rely on an outside interpretation or triangulation. In consequence, due to the nature and timeframe of this study, the ability to incorporate an external audit was not plausible. Thus, in order to establish dependability, the researcher used the qualitative techniques

of journal writing and memoing along with interview transcripts to provide clear and established documentation (Creswell, 2013; Nowell et al., 2017).

Transferability

The capability to transfer findings from a research study from similar situations or individuals is known as transferability (Nowell et al., 2017). In other words, the findings can be transferred or applicable to other contexts. One method of transferability is utilizing rich thick description, where the researcher accounts for participants experiences through a robust and contextual account to give an element of shared experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This was realized through offering multiple perspectives about a theme and detailed descriptions of the participants accounts and settings.

Control for Bias

As a researcher in this study, my own background such as my gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin was provided in an open and honest means as necessary to clarify the bias I bring into this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). During the interview process with participants, I remained cognizant of my verbal and nonverbal communication that could possibly influence or impact the participants responses (Stringer & Aragon, 2020).

Delimitations

Delimitations is this study included participants that were accessed through the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents membership through volunteer participation. Another delimitation revolves around the population of participates established at a national level, which can leave out representation in geographical locations or regions.

Summary

In summary, chapter three revolved around an overview of the proposed phenomenological qualitative study, the significance of the study and research questions, the research methodology that were used for this study, and an explanation of the research design. Subsequently, this chapter included a description of the population of participants, sampling protocols, and participant recruitment. Specific data collection methods and a data analysis plan were also shared in detail. Moreover, the quality and rigor of this study was outlined through incorporating several measures of trustworthiness to include positionality, credibility, dependability, and transferability. Lastly, bias was considered and explicitly stated while recognizing the delimitations of this study.

Chapter 4. Results

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into Latina educational leaders' lived experiences in K-12 settings to deepen the understanding between identity, role, and leadership. The first three chapters of this dissertation offered an introduction to the problem surrounding the underrepresentation of women in higher level leadership roles in educational spaces, specifically focusing on Latina women. Next, a review of the literature was addressed as outlined in the conceptual and theoretical frameworks proposed in chapter 2 encompassing four main theories including Latino Critical Race theory, Social Identity theory, Role Incongruity theory, and Psychological Capital theory. Whereas, chapter 3 revolved around an overview of this phenomenological qualitative study, the significance of the study and research questions, the research methodology that was utilized, and an explanation of the research design. As such, chapter 4 unveils the findings that surfaced from the qualitative data collection and analyzed through the use of the conceptual framework designed for this study.

For this phenomenological study, the themes or categories are shaped into general descriptions identifying overall emerging themes (Creswell, 2013). For clarity, the interpretative phenomenological analysis framework (IPA) is utilized to support a strong bonding relationship between the participant and researcher, where the participant is in control of the narrative through their subjective expression of lived experiences (Alase, 2017). Once the themes emerged, the interpretation of the themes were addressed. In this phase of the process, the researcher goes beyond the codes and themes to interpret the broader picture of the data being represented (Creswell, 2013).

This chapter presents the findings from six Latina/Hispanic women leaders that participated in Zoom interviews for a duration of up to 60 minutes using semi-structured

interview questions. The areas that will be covered in this chapter include: (a) summary of the research design, (b) overview of phenomenological study settings, and (c) the study's findings. A qualitative phenomenological approach was used to illuminate and understand the lived experiences of Latina women in higher level K-12 educational leadership positions, such as principals, district executives, and superintendents.

During the interviews, each participant was given a pseudonym to protect her identity. Moreover, information that was obtained by the researcher that may have compromised the identity of the participant has been intentionally excluded from this dissertation and member checks were instituted for participants to delete identifying information as well. The findings represented in this chapter revolve around the following research questions proposed in this study:

Research Question 1: What ways can organizations support women and more specifically Latina women to begin to shift the way society views women in roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents?

Research Question 2: For women to ascend into leadership positions beyond assistant principals, are there perceived systematic barriers that inhibit progression based on gender and/or race/ethnicity?

Research Question 3: To what extent does social identity and psychological capital play in women advancing in leadership positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendency?

Summary of the Research Design

The data were drawn exclusively from my current participation and network with the National Principal Leadership Academy (NPLA) and the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). Emails were provided directly by the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents liaison based on the qualifying criteria needed for this study. The researcher determined that 6 participants was the maximum number allowable during the time frame required for the completion of the dissertation study. Participants were required to have held high level leadership roles in the K-12 setting with at least 1 year of experience in those roles. The qualifying criteria for such leadership roles include principalships, district executive positions, and superintendencies. Additional criteria for eligibility for this study entails that participants needed to self-identify as Latina or Hispanic women.

Data Collection Process

An email encompassing a brief explanation of the study, the IRB consent form, a demographic questionnaire to determine eligibility with the study's inclusion criteria, and a calendar link of available dates for scheduling of interviews was sent to potential participants. The demographic survey contained specific criteria as a means to ensure that the phenomenon being studied is relevant to the population of interest to include: (a) identify as a woman, (b) identify as Latina or Hispanic, (c) have worked for at least one complete year in higher level role, (d) have worked as a principal, district executive, or superintendent in K-12 education.

Data Collection Instruments

Numerous instruments were used in the data collection process. The demographic data were collected through the use of Qualtrics online survey. In addition, semi structured interviews

were administered with each individual Latina/Hispanic woman leader using a predetermined interview protocol to collect data based on the research questions for this study. A thematic analysis of responses from the open-ended questions as conducted by the researcher was employed to identify themes in the transcribed text. This was done by analyzing the interpretation of words, sentence structure, and deeper meaning within the context of the narrative provided by the participant. Through an interpretive phenomenological analysis approach, it allowed for a subjective expression of the participants' lived experiences and their own understanding of their personal and social contexts (Alase, 2017).

Study Setting and Participants

This section presents background information on the study setting and participants of the study.

Study Setting

This qualitative phenomenological study was realized on a national scale through direct participation from ALAS members to support a larger population of potential participants from multiple geographical locations. The invitational email containing the demographic questionnaire was sent to ten potential participants identified by the researcher and ALAS liaison as meeting the prescribed criteria for the study. Out of the ten potential participants, only six Latina women in leadership roles followed through to schedule an interview due to personal and professional conflicts. Each of the interviews ranged from 30-60 minutes in length and was conducted virtually using the Zoom video and audio-conferencing platform. Interviews were recorded and each participant's individual responses were transcribed and sent back to the participant for review. Only one participant responded with edits to exclude some identifying text in the transcripts. The transcript was then edited based on the participants' recommendations. The six

transcripts were coded, and themes were identified based on commonalities amongst the lived experiences from the individual Latina/Hispanic women leaders participating in the study.

Participants Profiles

Ten individuals began the Qualtrics demographic survey but two were excluded because they did not meet initial criterion. Of those remaining eight individuals who completed the survey, two did not provide a follow up for an interview. A total of six research participants completed their one-on-one interviews, and interview transcripts review.

The following section provides an overview of the six Latina/Hispanic women in this study. The participants were given a choice to choose their own pseudonym or allow the researcher to give them one instead for use in the dissertation study. Out of the six participants, four selected their own pseudonyms. Interestingly, five out of the six pseudonyms were reflective of a woman family member. All six participants identified themselves as Latina/Hispanic women, held higher level positions in K-12 educational settings to include principals, district office executives, or superintendents, and have had at least one year in one of those roles.

The participants' ages ranged from 30-69 and all were either first or second generation either generationally and/or academically. The participants identified as either Cuban and Puerto Rican, Colombian, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, or Venezuelan. All six of the participants speak both Spanish and English and two speak other languages to include Portuguese, some Italian, and sign language.

Of the participants interviewed, one leader has a doctoral degree, five have their master's degree, and one is also a current doctoral candidate. Geographically, the participants current

leadership roles range from California, Maryland, Oregon, Puerto Rico, and on a national level (undisclosed). As a point to note, the six participants have had other positions/roles in varying geographical locations throughout their careers as leaders to include Florida, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Washington D.C. Table 1 shows participant demographics and study setting characteristics.

Table 2

Latina/Hispanic Women in K-12 Leadership Roles Participant Information

Pseudonym	Age Range	Educational Level	Highest Leadership Level
Mercedes	30-39	Doctoral Candidate	Principal
Zoraida	50-59	Master's	Associate Superintendent
Ines	60-69	Doctorate	Superintendent
Trina	60-69	Master's	Interim Superintendent
Rosi	30-39	Master's	Principal
Columbia Manaus	Undisclosed	Master's	Executive Director; National Consultant

Research Participant Demographic Introductions

Mercedes is a second-generation Latina, that has Mexican and White heritage, however she identifies primarily as Latina that speaks both English and Spanish. She is a doctoral candidate that started her path as a high school teacher, then assistant principal, and now a sitting principal at a high school. She has been in education for over 10 years.

Zoraida, also a second-generation Latina, identifies as Cuban, Puerto Rican, and White that speaks Spanish and English. She holds two master's degrees and has been in education for over 30 years moving through the system starting as a teacher, program developer, director, executive director, and now holds a position as an associate superintendent.

Ines considers herself a Latina, specifically Puerto Rican. She is second-generation Latina, and a first-generation college student that speaks both Spanish and English. Ines holds a

Doctorate degree, mid-management certification, and superintendent certification. Ines started her pathway to leadership as a substitute teacher holding several positions along the way to superintendency including a bilingual teacher, assistant principal, principal, central office executive, and has been in education for over 30 years.

Trina identifies herself as a Hispanic and White first-generation woman that was born and raised in Venezuela. She speaks Spanish, English, some Italian and some sign language. She holds a master's degree in special education and several credentials including math, Spanish, counseling, and administrative. Trina began her career trajectory as a special education teacher, counselor, assistant principal, principal, district office executive, and finally an interim superintendent. She has over 30 years in education and is currently an executive coach.

Rosi aged 39 is a second-generation Latina that identifies as Mexican American. She speaks both English and Spanish and is a first-generation college student. She holds a master's degree in elementary education along with a teaching credential and second master's in administrative services. Rosi taught for 13 years in elementary programs before moving into the role of an assistant principal and now is a principal going into her second year.

Columbia Manaus identifies as White and Hispanic/Latina. She also identifies as a first generation American that speaks several languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, and English. She holds a master's degree and certificate of advanced graduate study. In her journey in leadership, she has been a teacher, an assistant principal, a principal, a district coach, and a district leader overseeing over 40 schools. She is currently a national consultant in education.

Findings

With the demands of the current state of affairs in the educational setting across the United States, scheduling times was difficult and cumbersome for the participants and the

researcher. Some of the participants that originally wanted to participate felt overwhelmed with adding one more meeting to their plate and others relayed that they were anxious and scared that their stories might be recognizable since there are so few Latina leaders in higher level positions such as principals, district office executives, and superintendents. Nevertheless, the six Latina/Hispanic women that participated yielded significant findings that bring a nuanced perspective by defining their own lived narratives through their individual lenses and experiences as educational leaders in K-12 administrative roles, thus adding to the existing literature deepening the understanding between identity, role, and leadership.

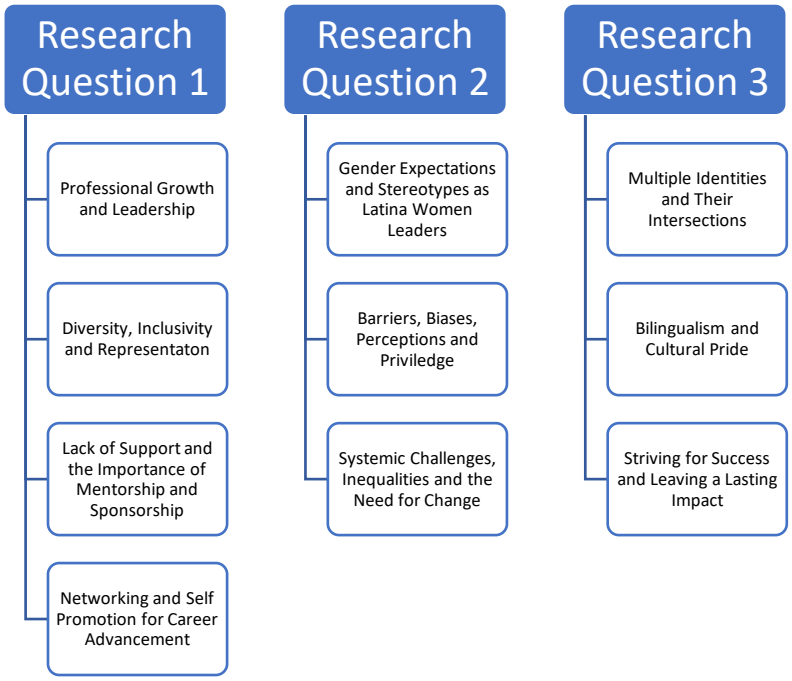
Emerging Themes

Participants in the study provided insights into individual personal identities, experiences, and perspectives as a Latina/Hispanic women leader in education. All participants shared their journeys as educators while emphasizing the role of mentorship, sponsorship, and networking for growth and development specific to the challenges faced by underrepresented groups in educational leadership spaces. Additionally, participants accentuated their work ethic, dedication, commitment, and advocacy to the students that they serve and the advancement of the profession especially for a more inclusive and diverse leadership cohort of Latina/Hispanic leaders. Moreover, most participants spoke to the difficulties of balancing work and family responsibilities and leaving a legacy for future generations to rise up and succeed in their endeavors without in and out group competitiveness. With this in mind, a set of detailed findings collected from the six participants related to each research question that guided the interview are now represented through overarching themes and the Latina/Hispanic leaders' respective voices.

Through exploring the intersections of Latina leaders root knowledge (personal identity), social identity, role incongruence, and leadership perspectives in higher level K-12 educational roles it supported a deeper understanding between identity, role, and leadership. The grounding in the theoretical frameworks of LatCrit theory, Social Identity theory, Psychological Capital theory, and Role Incongruity theory supported a holistic lens into the individual perspectives provided by each Latina leader. Thus, defining their own narratives with their lived experiences and the ten emerging themes that came from their personal stories. The ten emerging themes are categorized by research questions (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Emerging Themes



Research Question 1

Research question one for this study was: What ways can organizations support women and more specifically Latina women to begin to shift the way society views women in roles such

as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents? Based on the participant responses to the open-ended interview questions, the following emerging themes surfaced that aligned with the first research question: (a) professional growth and leadership, (b) diversity, inclusivity, and representation, (c) lack of support and the importance of mentorship and sponsorship, and (d) networking and self-promotion for career advancement.

Professional Growth and Leadership

Each of the six Latina/Hispanic women leaders shared detailed accounts of their educational journeys, ranging from dropping out of high school to obtaining various degrees, certifications, and highlighting experiences as teachers, administrators, and the significance of their roles as a Latina in these positions. It was clear that professional growth and leadership were important factors for participants. For example, Rosi shared that she was a first-generation college student that received a bachelor's degree in Chicano studies, a master's degree in Elementary Education along with a teaching credential and a second Master's in administrative services. She taught for over 13 years in elementary school and then became an assistant principal for two years before moving into a principal position. Rosi shared:

> I happen to have been a former student of the school that I'm currently working at…so I look like the students that I serve…the majority of my student are Latino…this role is important to me because I want to show them that it's possible to be in a leadership role…for them to see teachers that look like them. And right now, the emphasis is on leadership.

The leadership pathway and professional growth was no easy feat for many of the Latina educational leaders as Ines shares, "the first thing you need to know is that I dropped out of high

school." Ines graduated with her high school diploma from a Washington community college at the age of 21 as a military wife stationed in Germany. Her journey and path continued with getting her Associate, Bachelor, and master's degree in Texas. Ines spoke to the necessity of getting a mid-management administrative certificate post Master's in order to advance into roles such as principal. Ines made it clear that, "I also have my superintendent certification from Texas that was another 15 credit hours. Got that in 1999…and then I pursued my Ph.D. in 2000 and finished in 2004." It was important for Ines to note that it took her over 20 years to rise to positions of superintendency, but started as a food service worker, motor vehicle dispatcher, and vehicle driver that made her knowledgeable in her journey.

Ines stated, "that's important because of the role that I took as a superintendent, understanding the role of the cafeteria staff, and knowing the role of the transportation department. Those positions that I had early on in my career were very important for me for the trajectory of my career as an educator." Her professional growth from her humble beginning grew into other areas in the educational sector that added to her rise to leadership including a substitute teacher, bilingual teacher, multi-age teacher, lead teacher, assistant principal, principal, education specialist, and superintendent (just to name a few). However, Ines argued:

> I was the first Latina AP or the first Latina principal in my position. So, I've always been the first…so one of the things I want you to know is that I moved to promote myself…because one, if you stay in one place, you stay stagnant and no one's going to promote you. So, you have to promote yourself as a Latina.

The theme of professional growth and leadership tended to incorporate the notion of perseverance and the acknowledgement of the need to continue moving forward no matter the

length of time needed to make a difference for both the leader and the students they serve. Like Zoraida said, “you need to be constantly re-newing, refreshing, re-entertaining, and re-engaging.”

Diversity, Inclusivity, and Representation

The six participants highlighted the importance of diversity in the education system and the need for a more diverse staff. The six Latina/Hispanic women educational leaders spoke to the efforts to recruit and promote individuals from diverse backgrounds, particularly Latinas and Latinos into leadership roles. They also addressed the challenges faced by underrepresented groups in education. Furthermore, multiple participants expressed the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in education. They discuss the need for conversations and actions related to equity, disciplinary practices, restorative justice, and supporting diverse student populations.

When thinking about recruitment and hiring to bring in more diverse representation in educational organizations, Columbia Manaus stated:

> So, on the face of it they supported it by some hiring practices and being diverse in some of their hiring practices. However, there was not support there for retention that had to be done by networking on your own once you had the position. So, they were hiring for diversity, but they weren’t supporting internally.

Based on her experiences, Columbia Manaus saw diversity in the hiring phase as being more of a “checklist.” In turn, Zoraida’s experience in a large school district in California, provided multiple outlets for recruiting a more diverse staff in which the organization had an entire recruitment team. Zoraida supported that there are multiple systemic ways that people get

"encouraged to join certain ranks" To elaborate, Zoraida noted that there is an internal pipeline and around four "programs in the organization that an employee can be tapped into." However, on that same page, Zoraida did share, "can we do better at diversifying the pool? Absolutely. Yes. So, we're working with outside organizations to help support…so we are looking at every angle possible." To follow up, Zoraida argued that:

> What I have noticed is Latinas or Latinos tend to be waiting to be invited to meetings and to the tables where decisions are being made, where other folks feel a sense of entitlement and they just walk into meetings. So, I think for Latinas is understanding your skill set, understanding that for the most part, the school system needs us more than we need them in terms of we bring that diversity, that other perspective, that background knowledge and lived experiences to change the single story they have of Latinos in their mind, which seems to be very immigration feeling. They feel we all came in by boat. Escaping something and the majority male. And we just continue to challenge that perspective. The single story that they have. So, I think we just need to own it. So, you need to be able to speak in spaces like that. I think we need to be very knowledgeable about race and equity, because those are the conversations that we usually get invited for and the ones that they think we have something to say about. So, if we get invited, we need to know what it is. We need to be knowledgeable and be able to speak about ethnicity and the differences in our ethnic profile of Latinos. We definitely need to feel comfortable around leading and taking projects. Very focused on students and what equitable teaching and learning means for students. I think as a leader, you need to be

> able to build teams that feel welcome. So that those teams can also work with schools in the same sense to make them feel welcome to students and our parents.

Albeit there was a theme of needing to promote more diversity in differing organizations in K-12 educational spaces, Mercedes argued that in her current district, "before when the principals quit this year, it was all principals of color, and the superintendent is an African American man and the people in the cabinet." Mercedes went on to say, "So I think, like for me, it's a difference. What's different? I've never had this experience working in the district I've worked in, so I think what they helped me do is they helped, like affirm me…my identity was seen and valued."

Lack of Support and the Importance of Mentorship and Sponsorship

A point of recurrence throughout the interviews from all six Latina/Hispanic women leaders revolved around mentorship and sponsorship. Numerous participants acknowledged that there were no available mentors and sponsors to support them through their transitions from differing roles throughout their trajectories. Thus, there was an emphasis on the role of mentorship and sponsorship in their professional development. Conversely, only three participants mentioned mentors from their past and current positions who have provided guidance, insider tips, and support during the interview process. They credit mentorship programs for their growth and assert the importance of building diverse teams and the role of mentorship in career progression.

Zoraida had mixed reviews when speaking to mentorship, coaching, and sponsorship in her career when ascending from lower-level positions to executive roles. In two different large school districts Zoraida was a part of, she had mentorship programs that she felt a sense of support transitioning from roles. She voiced that, "they definitely had a mentor program for

us…so there was a higher up Latina that kept encouraging me to move from position to position…so definitely having a cheerleader and somebody that believes in your skills was very helpful." Zoraida also talked about how her other school district paid for her to join the nationally based Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents cohort.

Even more, her district also sponsored several others to join the principal cohort and superintendent cohort. In addition, Zoraida, being among the executive team of the superintendent, was able to hire outside coaching support for all of the executive team for multiple days of training. She did note that, "so there is definitely an investment when you're in a large school district." In contrast, Zoraida shared that in one of her former districts, which was smaller, that "I don't feel I got as much support there. The infrastructure wasn't built that way." In comparison, Trina's experience differed in that she mentioned:

> It was all about getting you in the position and letting you go on your own…and then you have to connect with other principals. They did have professional learning communities for principals, but the culture of the school district was a culture of competition. The superintendent would acknowledge a principal almost like you were running a race and so collaboration kind of was stifled because everybody didn't want to give out their little secrets.

On the other hand, Trina did share that she had mentors, but they were more fellow principals and friends that worked together and built their skills together, thus unofficially mentoring each other.

Rosi had a similar experience in which there was no formal or intentional coaching or mentorship system in place to build up Latino leaders, however she did mention that she was

able to learn from a former assistant principal when she was a teacher and the former and current superintendent. But that was based on informal means of learning and growing. Additionally, when looking at mentorship, sponsorship, or coaching Rosi did mention:

> There was one but he wasn't my mentor…he's like the program coordinator and he'll send different candidates' emails from time to time, kind of trying to match us up with roles that are opening up…like I think you'd be a good fit for this leadership position here because of X, Y, and Z.

This theme was consistent throughout others experiences as Mercedes had mentors and coaches that supported her through possible positions and the interview process, but shared that:

> As a teacher, I didn't have any support in terms of learning how to navigate leadership or anything like that…it was when I started joining the California Association of Latino School Administrators. They were the ones that really helped me navigate…they helped me navigate just what it means to be a Latino leader. How to sidestep all the issues that I have had to deal with…I wouldn't be here without that program, hands down.

On the other hand, Ines articulated that, "I made it through the support of my community…I think that my success was…because there was a supportive community and the community had systems of support for Latina women. You have to have systems and support."

Networking and Self-promotion for Career Advancement

As the themes emerged from the six participants, one that stood out across all Latina/Hispanic women leaders was a lack of support systems and succession planning for retention within their professional environment, specifically noting the need for networking and development efforts to be self-driven, where Latinas needed to advocate for themselves. To

expand, participants stressed the value of building supportive networks and finding a tribe within the community. Five out of the six participants acknowledged the role of community support in their successes, but all six participants spoke to the importance of creating systems and support for Latina women in professional settings. For example, Trina stated:

> My experience has been that men network among themselves, and they connect with each other. And even with the little accomplishments that they make, it becomes a major celebration among themselves. We women we're very critical of ourselves. We allow others to be critical of our work and we do not celebrate it as we should. And sometimes when we celebrate it, then we see it like it's too much. You know when other people are celebrating it. I think an organization that is concerned about the representation of women at the level of administrator positions, I think that a way to start with would be, number one is to create a networking program for women that want to be aspiring administrators…I think we need to be highlighted in the in the institution and in the organization so that we can start connecting with one another and create a web that will help us to move forward.

Trina elaborates, "I felt that the promotions that I got, the few promotions that I got, they were all due to my hard work…I felt like I had to kind of push people out of the way and let me go in and I had to struggle and push…we just keep punching, right? Pounding, right?"

Rosi shared that in the way of support and networking, the amount of support that one receives depends heavily on the leadership in place. By being a member of the California Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, she was able to branch out and connect more with others that were Latino. At one of the events that Rosi attended she explained:

> It was really eye opening for me because…I want to say 99% of people in the room was Latino and I was just so inspired…it's really neat to see Latinos in leadership and you can see if they did it, I can too…this is possible…it's a lot of networking and meeting people…going to conferences and trying to make those connections.

Ines also shared that she had to shift and move from district to district meeting many people along the way to promote herself to provide more for her family, especially as a trailblazer for other Latina women moving up into higher leadership positions. She stated that:

> There had been many people in my positions that have provided me opportunities to grow because I applied and they saw me…they saw something in me and gave me a chance…so it's important to network and know people, even though I didn't know them before I applied for the jobs…they opened the door for me.

Likewise, Columbia Manaus stated, "there was no support for retention…that development or networking, you had to find it and do it on your own."

Research Question 2

The second research question for this study was: For women to ascend into leadership positions beyond assistant principals, are there perceived systematic barriers that inhibit progression based on gender and/or race/ethnicity? Based on the participant responses to the open-ended interview questions, the following emerging themes surfaced that aligned with the second research question: (a) gender expectations and stereotypes as Latina women leaders, (b) barriers, biases, perceptions and privilege, (c) systemic challenges, inequalities and the need for change.

Gender Expectations and Stereotypes as Latina Women Leaders

When asked about perceived systematic barriers inhibiting progression, all six Latina/Hispanic women leaders expressed some type of pressure to conform to traditional feminine qualities and the challenge of balancing assertiveness with the fear of being labeled negatively. Consequently, other challenges surfaced in the interviews in which women in leadership positions also faced gender bias, competition amongst other women, and differences in expectations related to gender and generational attitudes, particularly within the Latino community.

Trina voiced how gender was often brought forward from her lived experiences, she shared that:

> I actually feel that gender was more impacting that perhaps my race or ethnicity. I think that all the way from assistant principal, all the way to the last position that I held, it was a battle about not only on the moment of getting the job and pushing to show that I have the skills because somebody else didn't have the skill, but the job was offered to them, but also to keep the job. It was a constant concern about people just creating scenarios, just to create, to see if they could show that you had a weak area, that they can just get you out of the job. So, gender for me was very difficult.

During Rosi's interview she expressed that she always has to "work harder than maybe others do." She felt that she always has to prove herself as a Latina and shared:

> I've been working really hard. I mean, real hard leaving at like 9 p.m. almost every night. Yet, I'm having some people question me and they're literally saying that I'm not doing my job. And so, it's interesting because that was never questioned of my former principal who I worked with who was white and who I can say I worked with, and he did not work

> as hard as me. He left at 4 p.m. every day. And so, I definitely see that I have to work harder. And even though I am working harder, I'm still being questioned.

Even more, Columbia Manaus speaks to the bigger picture on her view of gender expectations for Latinas. She relayed:

> I think we have to wrestle a lot of things, right? We have to wrestle home. We have to wrestle work. We have to wrestle culturally what we value. We have to learn how to take a posture that may be incongruent with what we believe culturally. And so, we have to assume sometimes an identity…not that it's inappropriate, but that it's not as comfortable as it would be, because in a leadership role you suddenly shift how you poise yourself.

For Mercedes, she found that in her experiences as a leader that she was expected to be someone that she wasn't. She explained, "I felt like they were asking me to be more feminine, to be more caring and loving and nurturing. That's not my job. I'm not your partner. I'm not your mom. I'm not none of these things. But you're asking me to be that way, right?" The gender expectations and stereotypes show up even more so when you are in higher level positions, and Mercedes spoke to the idea that if a woman is hard, then they can get called inappropriate names such as "bitch" and in her experience this is an ongoing occurrence. She states, "Sure, it's going to happen continually because as a woman we can't show our weaknesses or our faults because then we're attacked even more."

Barriers, Biases, Perceptions, and Privilege

Each of the participants expressed multiple barriers they have encountered such as racism, sexism, microaggressions, and prejudice in their professional journeys. They recount experiences of facing racism from colleagues, dealing with sexism and gender expectations, and

the lack of formal support for Latina/Hispanic women in leadership positions. All six participants reflected on the biases they have encountered based on their accent, gender, and ethnicity, and how these biases have impacted their career. Even so, one participant brought to the surface her own privilege as a Latina who may not face the same level of discrimination due to their white facing appearance.

For example, Ines shared that in her experience she had encountered board members when she was a superintendent that were belligerent and would question her intelligence in which she would have to use the dominant culture "to express what I wanted to say because the board may not want to hear it from me, but they would be okay hearing it from someone that is of the dominant culture." This theme was apparent in several participants' stories such as Columbia Manaus were at her first administrative meeting she attended as an assistant principal filling in for the principal, where the overwhelming majority was men, and a few were women with her being the one of two women of color. She shared:

> I had been told by my principal, you know, this particular meeting, you won't have to speak up. But I watched the other women trying to speak up. And they were shut down. And later when I had to go to meetings and speak…You know, it was often, oh, you know, here she goes again. That was also true at district level meetings.

Zoraida's story leaned into how she has some privilege being a lighter skinned Latina because she looks white, with flat hair and green eyes, and therefore she has been able to come into spaces where there is not as much judgment of her. Consequently, Zoraida also expressed that as soon as she starts to speak or others see her last name, that privilege fades. She recalled from prior encounters that, "just because they saw my last name, the treatment was a bit different…I

still carry an accent, so I get the double look at meetings when I introduce myself and people just try to place me immediately as to where you could be from."

Moreover, it was expressed that even with being committed to advocating for students, particularly those from marginalized communities, such as Latino and Black students, that there were experiences of exclusion and criticism for advocating for specific groups. An interesting point in three participants' stories was that some of their experiences in which they experienced barriers and biases were both direct and indirect. Rosi, Mercedes, and Zoraida spoke of seeing discrimination and biases in their advocacy for students and families by their colleagues or others in the community. Rosi explained how one colleague she worked with would other Latino students expressing how low they were saying to Rosi, these kids are low, they're so low. Even while talking with her colleague, she continued to feel, "like my people, my students who look like me were excluded and so I felt that in some of my colleagues' conversations."

Mercedes shared that her advocacy for Latino students began to be turned against her in which she was told, "oh, like see all you do is care about the Latino kids. You don't care about any other kids." Which for Mercedes was a point of frustration and confusion. While at the same time, Zoraida recalled how she has experienced more discrimination through her husband and children due to their darker features and within the public school system. She stated, "So I think through my kids, I felt that more than for myself and through my husband…he runs a nonprofit and I think he definitely feels that people think less of the nonprofit because it's run by a Latino."

Systemic Challenges, Inequalities and the Need for Change

There was a strong acknowledgement that gender inequalities persist in leadership roles for women and more specifically Latina/Hispanic women and the need for women to support each other and challenge societal perceptions. Hence, it was highlighted and emphasized that there is a need for knowledge and awareness in the addressing issues of race, equity, and access in education, as well as the role of advocacy and pushing for change.

Several participants felt strongly that Latina/Hispanic women leaders in K-12 education. Zoraida shared, "absolutely underrepresented, especially since it's the largest growing population…we represent so many different countries and cultures." Trina's interview supported this view, where she spoke to Latina's being underrepresented starting in the classrooms were the majority is Caucasian and the higher up you go in grade levels "you see more males in those positions and then I believe that it's 1% of the superintendents are Latina women nationwide." She goes on to say that in the central office there is a heavy presence of men. When thinking about systemic challenges and inequalities, Ines reflected:

> I was certified in 1999, but I didn't get my first superintendency until 2015 because it was the job of the white male…if it wasn't the white male, then it was the white female and then the African American male, the African American female, the Latino male and then the Latina. So, we're at the bottom of the totem pole when it comes to hiring.

This was also a sentiment with Mercedes where she mentions that in one organization she left:

> There was no path forward. What I felt that the organization was asking me to do was…stick it out, stay in the position that you're in. Eventually one day you'll be a principal when we feel like talking to you about it and right now stay in the position

> you're in because you know we need you to be the equity person, but you need my brownness. You don't actually want me.

Mercedes shared that she left that organization because, "I didn't feel like being the token brown girl who needed to be the warrior for everyone."

Trina recalled the immense lift it took in her lived experience in moving forward in her journey as a leader and how she had to confront other leaders and fight for her positions along the way, especially as a trailblazer for Latina women. She exclaimed:

> I had to push for it, and I had to fight for it. And so sometimes it surprises me when people have opportunities and then they decline. Female leaders have opportunities, and they decline it. And I'm on that stage in which I want to value their ability to say, No thank you, I don't want it. I'm not. I cannot handle it right now or I'm going to wait. But on the other hand, after some of us have fought so much to get there, you get the feeling like, come on, you have this opportunity, take it. Right? But I do also understand that the new generation that are really taking care of their mental health and trying to have a balanced life.

Based on Ines' perspective and experiences she stated on the system level that:

> There is racism in the entire system. And I was naive back when I was a principal thinking that I could change the system. But I can't. It's under the iceberg kind of work. And I want to live till I'm 100. So, I don't. I don't have any plans on trying to change under the iceberg because I can't do it alone. And until everyone is willing to do it, not just talk the talk, but walk it, then we'll see the change.

Research Question 3

The third and last research question for this study was: To what extent does social identity and psychological capital play in women advancing in leadership positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendency? Based on the participant responses to the open-ended interview questions, the following emerging themes surfaced that aligned with the third research question: (a) multiple identities and their intersections, (b) bilingualism and cultural pride, and (c) striving for success and leaving a lasting impact.

Multiple Identities and their intersections

All of the six Latina/Hispanic women participants reflected on the complexity of multiple identities inclusive to their heritage and the significance of their cultural backgrounds in shaping their identity and how it influences their work in education. As a Latina/Hispanic woman navigating work-life balance with a high regard for family, there were several touch points during the interviews where family rose to the top.

For example, Trina, who shared when asked about her race and ethnic background, stated "I am Hispanic and white?…I never write it. I just write in Hispanic when they ask me. I don't even mark white." She explained that her culture and identity played a role in her personal and professional journey as one of six siblings growing up in middle class Venezuela. She stated that, "it wasn't like maybe you're going to school, it was like you're going to school, you're going to the university, you're going to graduate." However, she recalled how culturally her father supported her brothers more readily than the females in the family in which her mother would hide money to pay for the schools and try to give them the best education that she could have given to them.

Trina vividly remembers her mom saying, “you need to have your degree and make your own money so that you don’t have to depend on any man…so all of us have a degree…and so my mom and dad felt proud and accomplished that they supported us on that.” Trina felt that the way she was raised by her mom is what moved her forward to keep going even with the gender inequalities for women in Venezuela and the United States. At the same time, Trina mentions that with her own family she had to focus on her career at points to make money to give them the resources that she didn’t have. She stated, “all my decisions were always based on the well-being of my kids.”

Likewise, Ines, who identifies as Puerto Rican and a Latina spoke about how her culture had a lot to play in her identity because of the strength she saw in her mother. She expanded in that her mother only had a sixth-grade education, owned her own bodega in the United States and took over her father’s business in Puerto Rico. She stated, “So that alone, hands down, it gave me the strength and the courage to move on.” Ines also shared that as a single mom, she had to personally make sure that she had made enough money to support her own child's aspirations. Thus, as a first-generation college student in her family, Ines wanted to be able to “pay it back, pay it forward.”

Zoraida expressed that her personal path has been one that has always been one to try to change the story. She shared her race and ethnic background as White, Hispanic, Cuban and Puerto Rican. Zoraida explained that even though her parents didn’t attend school in the US, there was an expectation that she would go to college and have a career. She knew from an early age she was going to be a teacher as it was a part of her family lineage and upbringing. She shared, “I think it was the way I was raised. It wasn’t out of necessity. It was more because that’s

what my calling was…I was very centered since a very young age that I wanted to be in the profession."

Rosi who identifies as Mexican-American, shared a different story in which she expressed:

> My parents didn't go to college. They were both illegal immigrants at one time, and then they became US citizens…one thing that really helped me understand their story was storytelling. And so how my dad would always tell me about when they crossed the border and their hardships, right? And how back in the 70s they were deported, and they kept on coming back and they kept on coming back for a reason. And so, they were persistent and there was a reason for that. And so that made me want to be persistent when I was a student…and not giving up when things were hard. And so, I became the first in my family to graduate from college. My dad did graduate from high school and my mom went up to a sixth grade education in Mexico…being the first born, I always felt like a drive to just do well for my family, make my parents proud…I think that's, something that I really see in a lot of our second generation students, that drive to make our parents proud, make sure that their story is not in vain. Their hardships are not in vain…it's like we really understand the struggle and we want to make sure that…we're able to get to a place. That's because that's what they want for us too. We want to get to a place that's more financially stable than what they were able to provide for us.

Mercedes' story and path leaned into her multiple and complex identities. When identifying her personal identity, she stated "I'm biracial…my mom is Mexican and my dad is white, but I identify primarily as Latina." In her words she recalled:

> I always talk about being biracial as bringing a unique set of strengths and challenges…I went to college… I chose to be part of a community organization that helps support kids. And that's kind of how I even got started in teaching. I knew about teaching before, but that's really how I got started because I was in the local schools and during that time I sharpened my own view of what it means to be Latina. And that's led to a lot of personal conflicts in my life because I'm biracial. There's conflicts with my non-Latino parent who cannot understand my perspective…even my brother who cannot understand my perspective because he is white passing. He doesn't speak Spanish…So I would say that's barriers to overcome. There are still days that I cannot talk to my parents or my brother about things that really matter to me…I'd say that's a unique perspective. But then also because of that, people continue to say, well, you're not Latina enough, you're not white enough, or how I talk is I talk white or you're not Latino because every single word that is Spanish, you don't understand.

Mercedes felt that her culture and identity contributed to her wanting to be in the field of education and moving into higher levels of leadership. She expressed:

> I became a teacher because of my identity…I went back to work with people that looked like me, with kids that looked like me…what got me to rise to leadership was not that I didn't like teaching, it was that I saw an option to have a bigger voice to advocate for kids that look like me, that talk like me…that have similar family backgrounds.

Overall, based on the lived experiences of the participants the influence of family helped shape personal values, career choices, and high expectations in regard to education. Moreover, it

was noted that participants spoke to the difficulties of balancing work and family responsibilities, including sacrifices made by both themselves and their family.

Bilingualism and Cultural Pride

Of significance was a throughline of being bilingual in English and Spanish highlighting the impact of their language skills in their professional role for all six participants in the study. To illuminate, participants attributed cultural connection, resilience, determination, strength, and pride in their cultural background as a source of motivation in professional pursuits. In Rosi's interview she spoke passionately about the topic of bilingualism and cultural pride, she stated,

> "Bilingualism is huge for me. Huge. Huge. I mean, my first language was Spanish and I was a strong reader in Spanish. And so that helped me to learn how to read in English too, and speak in English. And so, I'm bilingual and I know the importance of bilingualism and having that strong connection with your culture and being able to connect with different family members too. So, my parents taught me that it was rude to not respond back in Espanol to my grandma… so I ended up getting my bilingual credential and I student taught in different bilingual schools... I was part of the committee to spearhead our dual language program at our school…it's something that I'm so proud of and…I feel like I became bilingual intentionally because my parents really instilled that in me. But also, by chance, because I was not formally educated in two languages, right? I want to make sure that we're able to provide that for our students and our population…Bilingualism and my drive to make sure that I give our community that opportunity…and the power of storytelling and hoping that students can see themselves in me as well."

Consequently, Trina spoke to the complexities and adjustments when moving from Venezuela to the United States and learning a new language while adapting to both the dominant culture and other Latino/Hispanic cultures. Trina expressed,

> "I came from Venezuela to California…I struggled with moving into a country with a language that I did not speak and what I knew very little about and trying to learn the culture and the processes and, you know, everything. Everything that you face when you go into being a migrant to a country that you're not connected with. But then at the other time also I struggled greatly trying to feel like I was part of a family of Latinos. At work, professionally, there was a disparity of my values. There was a disparity over how I behave socially. So, I had to adjust to that."

Columbia Manaus had a similar perspective in that, "it's sort of knowing how to have the dominant culture perspective while not losing your own cultural perspective and knowing how to balance those."

Striving for Success and Leaving a Lasting Impact

Each Latina leader that I interviewed has paved the way for others with their personal triumphs including bringing in 1:1 technology, uplifting programs into districts nationally such as culturally responsive summer programs, shifting curriculum to meet the needs of the diverse student populations, creating language access units, writing grants and legislation, bridging college ready initiatives to elementary schools, receiving international and national awards for team innovation, coaching up, starting networking chapters across the United States, and authoring books, just to name a few.

What I found to be humbling was the beauty and song within the words that were said by the six Latina/Hispanic women leaders in response to the last research question. For instance, Trina said "we're going to make the decision that is best for the kids. It doesn't matter that we're going to be uncomfortable. It doesn't matter that somebody is going to lose something and somebody else is going to gain something. It's about the kids. That's what we're here about…so very proud of that." She continued relating her identity, role, and leadership in which she relayed:

> My style was if I see a wall, I'm going to punch it and break it…I don't think we're going to move forward if we continue as leaders standing in the sidelines and letting things happen just because either we're afraid or we don't think it's appropriate to step up. I think we need to open our mouths and I think we need to say when things are not happening or that they're not appropriate. On the other hand, I also think that we need to develop the relationships and the connections and build collegiality.

Another participant, Zoraida, spoke to some challenges and triumphs that gave way to journey in advancing in leadership roles. She states, "I think people wanted to move me faster than I felt I was ready for. So, it's kind of like taking that leap. That leap of faith that I was ready for the next move. I think we follow that little imposter syndrome that people talk about, right? Like, am I ready? Is it time for me? Is it now?...I would tell you; you have to sacrifice a lot to be in leadership positions like this. Zoraida also mentions in this regard that:

> I think what has contributed is having had other Latino leaders in my life that were kind of dragging me along…Dragging me up. Not dragging me, like pulling me up.

> I think that has definitely been a plus. We know that we are more successful when somebody else is telling us…yes, you should be able to do this. And I believe that you can.

On that same note Columbia Manaus emphasized, "I think the most important thing is don't try to do it by yourself…this is not a competition. This should really be about sisterhood."

Rosi's lasting impact encompasses her long held community in her life where she wants to "help maximize everyone's potential" and being able to support them in having options for their futures, where it's the student's choice and not a barrier that stands in their way. She highlighted that, "I'm trying to…build a culture of inclusion and diversity and bilingualism and trilingualism and beyond…being as worldly as possible…and then also knowing that they are contributors of this world…so I'm proud of that as well." Even with hardships and challenges, Rosi was upfront about how personal moments can leave a lasting impact in her identity, role, and leadership. She shared a time when her family member was diagnosed with cancer and the impact it had on her in her trajectory. Rosi confided that:

> That was so impactful. Thank goodness he's okay…but at that moment I just wanted to throw in the towel and quit. I just wanted to be there for him. I think that those moments really make you think of enjoying every moment, no matter how busy you are. Truly, those life experiences really make you think and be grateful for every day. I try to approach life that way and just my job that way, no matter how busy or crazy things are, you know, just being happy and choosing to be happy…so I try to greet everybody with a smile. I try to always be kind because you never know what other people are dealing with as well…That's something that impacted me and just my perspective on daily life.

For Mercedes, she felt pride in herself for staying in education, she exclaimed “I’m proud of myself for still maintaining my voice no matter what comes at me.” She goes on to share:

> I mean, I think no matter how strong you are, there's always that sense of self doubt that comes in your mind because you get attacked so many times. It's hard not to question yourself at times…Like in order for me to be a leader, do I really have to change to fit what everyone else says I need to be? Or do I have to tone down to have to be less Latina. So, I have to have a different voice when I walk into a space of how to talk and what to say? I haven't whether that's to my detriment or not. It is what it is. I haven't. But then there is self-doubt even as a leader, right? Like I keep getting hit with different things and …it bothers me because to me, it also makes me wonder, is it my leadership? Am I the reason that these people are acting crazy…But all these things that are happening. They're not personal, but it feels personal.

Even with that being brought to light, in her reflection related to identity, role, and leadership for making an impact for current and future Latina/Hispanic leaders in K-12 education, Mercedes supports:

> I would love for the local roots to figure out a way how to get Latinas into the communications, networking, and supporting on a more systemic level and that school districts could identify, view, and value Latino leaders as someone who continued to rise. They may need support in how they talk or how they're perceived or what they say…but at the end of the day, support them in their authenticity. That's what has supported me, is that I've been supported in my authenticity. And my mentors have said, you know, check yourself, think about this, think about that. But I've never been told, like you as a person are not enough or you as a leader are not enough. They give me the

> support I need. They tell me when I'm wrong, but they do it in a supportive way. And I think that's the key…if we can have someone in our corner that just values us as ourselves and doesn't try to take things away from us then that would change the whole view of Latino leadership.

Striving for excellence, aiming to be a role model for marginalized students, maximizing students' potential, creating opportunities, commitment to improving education, and having a strong work ethic were common phrases from all the Latina/Hispanic women educational leaders in leaving a lasting impact for future generations.

Chapter Summary

Conclusively, this qualitative study aimed to provide insight into Latina educational leaders' lived experiences in K-12 settings to deepen the understanding between identity, role, and leadership. Capturing the voices of the Latina/Hispanic women educational leaders provided a glimpse into their world that gave breath to the barriers, brilliance, and beauty through their own individual perspectives and lenses. These interviews give way to not only understanding the trials and tribulations of being a Latina/Hispanic woman navigating the waters of the dominant culture, but even that of their own cultural communities. While at the same time, accentuating the asset-based mindset and inspiring accomplishments that each Latina/Hispanic woman leader shined a light on during their interviews and the lasting impact they have made in K-12 educational spaces.

Chapter 5 makes way for a discussion of the findings as a response to the proposed research questions for this study. With that, recommendations are provided based on the

interview responses from the six participants in the phenomenological research study, and further literature is employed on new ideas and concepts that emerged from the participants' responses.

Chapter 5. Discussion

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the qualitative phenomenological study and the discussion of findings for this study. Three main areas are covered in this chapter to include: (a) discussion of findings, (b) recommendations and implications, and (c) considerations for future studies. The recommendations for organizational and leadership practices are further discussed in alignment with the research findings and theoretical frameworks in the literature review.

Overview of the Study

This study centered around the lived experiences of Latina/Hispanic women in K-12 leadership roles. This study was grounded in four theoretical frameworks: (a) Latino Critical Race Theory, (b) Social Identity Theory, (c) Role Incongruity Theory, and (d) Psychological Capital Theory. The three research questions in the study were:

1. What ways can organizations support women and more specifically Latina women to begin to shift the way society views women in roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents?
2. For women to ascend into leadership positions beyond assistant principals, are there perceived systematic barriers that inhibit progression based on gender and/or race/ethnicity?
3. To what extent does social identity and psychological capital play in women advancing in leadership positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendency?

This qualitative phenomenological study was realized on a national scale through direct participation from ALAS members to support a larger population of potential participants from multiple geographical locations. Geographically, the participants current leadership roles range

from California, Maryland, Oregon, Puerto Rico, and on a national level (undisclosed). As a point to note, the six participants have had other positions/roles in varying geographical locations throughout their careers as leaders to include Florida, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Washington D.C.

The analysis of findings was realized using qualitative methods and the incorporation of literature reviews as a means to bridge multiple data points. Findings in this study generated nine themes: (a) professional growth and leadership, (b) diversity, inclusivity, and representation, (c) lack of support and the importance of mentorship and sponsorship, (d) networking and self-promotion for career advancement, (e) gender expectations and stereotypes as Latina women leaders, (f) barriers, biases, perceptions, and privilege, (g) systemic challenges, inequalities and the need for change, (h) multiple identities and their intersections, (i) bilingualism and cultural pride, and (j) striving for success and leaving a lasting impact.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into Latina educational leaders' lived experiences in K-12 administrative roles including principalships, district office executives, and superintendency positions to deepen the understanding between identity, role, and leadership (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the researcher explored intersectional factors in relation to the participants identity which tends to foster cross-cultural practices through lived experiences that differ from main-stream and dominant culture peers (Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). Thus, by centering the lived experiences of Latina women that have held higher level positions such as principals, district office executives, and superintendencies it allows for a grounded lens in which Latino Critical Race theory (LatCrit),

Social Identity theory, Role Incongruity theory, and Psychological Capital (PsyCap) theory explored the relationship between leadership and identity.

Summary and Discussion of the Findings

Based on the responses of the six Latina/Hispanic women K-12 educational leaders in this research study, several significant points were brought to light during the interviews that were deduced from the three overarching research questions and the sub questions. The participants answered a total of fifteen questions not including general questions which encompassed seven initial questions around background information. An analysis of the data produced two main themes under each research question for a total of six main themes, respectively.

The first research question encompassed organizational support and leadership development, that produced the themes of (a) educating oneself and others, and (b) seeking mentorship and build a supportive network. The second research question that entailed systematic barriers and ascension gave way to (c) challenge stereotypes, and (d) advocate for equity and access. Lastly, the third research question that was specific to identity and empowerment highlighted the theme (e) embrace your identity.

Each theme that came to light was significant for the participants lived experiences as Latina/Hispanic women leaders in K-12 education, and each theme holds relevance to the theoretical frameworks of Latino Critical Race theory, Social Identity theory, Role Incongruity theory, and Psychological Capital theory. Undeniably, it is the unique experiences and perspectives as a Latina leader that can bring valuable insights and strengths to the organization. By challenging stereotypes, advocating for equity, and embracing one’s identity, Latina

educational leaders can pave the way for future generations and contribute to a more inclusive and diverse society.

Consequently, it is important to understand the variability of how intersectionality factors into the individual perceptions of participants social identity. An individual's perception of their own social identity is inherently influenced by their lived experiences. Thus, identity may evolve over time as a person navigates different social contexts, while also encountering various forms of discrimination or privilege (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Another point to note is that an individual's self-esteem and self-concept can be influenced by how they perceive their intersecting identities. Both positive and negative experiences can impact one's self-worth and self-identity throughout the trajectory of an individual's lifetime.

Collins and Bilge (2016) propose that "attending to how intersecting power relations shape identities, social practices, institutional arrangements and cultural representations and ideologies in ways that are contextualized and historicized introduces a level of complexity into everything" (p.202). Hence, each of the six participants in this study brought in their own perspectives and intersections such as age, heritage, cultural background, regional experiences, professional experience, and generational influence. Ultimately, each participant's multifaceted and complex intersectional factors impact the results and interpretation of this study. Thus, it highlights the significance when considering all aspects of an individual's identity when analyzing the lived experiences of Latina/Hispanic leaders in K-12 education.

Organizational Support and Leadership Development

The first overarching research question was stated as: What ways can organizations support women and more specifically Latina women to begin to shift the way society views

women in roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents? Participants spoke to (a) educating oneself and others, and (b) seeking mentorship and building a supportive network.

Educate Oneself and Others

As a means to ascend into higher level leadership positions, participants in the study shared the necessity to continuously enhance one's own knowledge and skills as an educational leader. Each participant had multiple degrees and/or certificates throughout their careers and for some their journey in enhancing their knowledge base and others will continue to grow. This aligns with the current data from the National Center of Educational Statistics (2022) where 78% of women are achieving their master's degree in education in comparison to their 22% of men. With that being said, women are representative of 53% of principalships, however, the disparity between the racial and ethnic groups is more pronounced currently in the field of education where only 8.9% are Latina/o (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Therefore, despite the higher percentage of women holding higher level degrees, findings support that Latina women face barriers and societal expectations that can prolong their ascension into higher level positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents. For example, Columbia Manaus mentions that "sometimes our own communities don't quite know how to deal with a woman in a position of power and sometimes the challenges come from our own communities." In the context of LatCrit theory, through educating oneself and others about the historical and contemporary challenges faced by Latina leaders in education, it can foster a critical understanding of systemic racism and discrimination (Bernal, 2002; Franco, 2021; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). As Latina/Hispanic women leaders

educate themselves and others about one's own cultural background and the experiences of other Latina leaders, it can strengthen social identity and build a sense of collective empowerment (Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000; Hann & Tapper, 2013). Hence, in sharing the stories and lived experiences of Latina educational leaders about the diversity even within the Latina/o community and the need for inclusive leadership it can empower organizations to identify and address these multifaceted disparities.

Furthermore, participants felt that through staying informed and up to date with the latest research and best practices, educational leaders can effectively lead their respective organization towards positive change and breaking down misconceptions, while opening the door to higher-level positions for women leaders. For example, Trina, shared:

> I think that we're starting this beautiful movement in a lot of the school districts about social and emotional learning. Emotional learning is an area in which, of course a lot of superintendents feel that it's about a program that you implement as a school, but in reality it's about a self-reflection of the adults in the system so that we're able to support the students as they come to us with their trauma and their lack of skills in connecting with others. And I think that as we start self-reflecting about our biases, our intrinsic biases, I think that then the organization will start understanding and shaping to promote more teachers into leadership roles.

Importantly, all participants reflected in their lived experiences that one should seek out professional development opportunities that focus on equity, cultural competency, and leadership development. PsyCap theory contests that due to the nature of psychological capital being more state-like, by growing through professional development it provides skills that are crucial for

leadership roles, especially when factoring in experience power through specialized or perceived knowledge (Ali Salih & Salman Al-Dulaimi, 2017, 2017; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011). Additionally, through professional development training around topics relevant to supporting Latina/Hispanic women leaders it cultivates self-awareness and confidence, in which one can then recognize their knowledge base, combatting self-doubt and in turn fostering a sense of self-worth (Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Ali Salih & Salman Al-Dulaimi, 2017; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011).

As an example, the different branches of the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, such as CALSA (California Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents), was mentioned by participants in that they were supportive and helped to navigate the realm of leadership and if it wasn't for the learning and support through the program, the skills necessary to continue moving forward would have been harder to obtain. Specifically, CALSA emulates the continual development and placement of Latino educational leaders who are committed to quality public education and provides members opportunities for professional growth activities (California Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, n.d.). Mercedes shared that, "if it wasn't for my mentors that I've had through CALSA and through my credential program, I don't think I would have had those skills."

Through the recognition that Latino individuals' experiences are shaped by the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and other social categories. It acknowledges that multiple forms of oppression can compound and influence each other. Therefore, by encompassing LatCrit theory, Social Identity theory, and Psychological Capital theory through sharing the stories and lived experiences of Latina educational leaders in K-12 spaces and

encouraging dialogue about gender and cultural diversity in leadership, it will provide a counter-story to the dominant narratives.

Seek Mentorship and Build a Supportive Network

As a main and recurrent theme from the findings, all Latina leaders discussed the necessity to surround oneself with mentors and support networks that understand the vast but connected experiences as a Latina leader moving up the ladder. Even though more women are breaking the "glass ceiling" in higher level positions in K-12 education, research shows that men continue to hold a disproportionate number of those roles in comparison, and this is even more pronounced for Latina women (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). As an example, research supports that as of 2020, only 26.68% of superintendents were women, with a meager 8.6% being non-white (inclusive of both men and women of color) (The School Superintendent Association, 2020).

Chisholm-Burns et al. (2017) supports that when there is a deficit of women in leadership positions of power it impacts the amount of role models, mentors, and sponsors for aspiring women leaders and therefore may feed into the "lack of leadership mentality." Basically, if women do not see other women rising to higher level positions and maintaining those roles, they may not believe they can successfully ascend into leadership roles. Equally important, when there is a limited number of women in prominent roles, there is a hyperfocus on women in those positions and are therefore subject to higher levels of scrutiny and evaluation based on social constructs and societal expectations (Ely and Rhode, 2010). As an example, Mercedes shared that, "The principal I worked with…he has Latina APs, and he was like…they have to work harder than everyone else. They have to work smarter. They're going to be judged 10,000 times

harder than everyone else." In this light, Role congruity theory examines the challenges that individuals face when their social roles are incongruent with societal expectations and thus by seeking mentorship and building a supportive network, Latina leaders can find guidance in ways that align with their values and identity while navigating conflicting role expectations (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Hernandez & Murakami, 2006; Ritter & Yoder, 2004).

It was apparent in the findings that it is extremely valuable as a Latina leader or rising leader to connect with other Latina professionals who can provide guidance, advice, and mentorship. Their experiences can help navigate challenges and provide essential insights. Ines uplifted this notion in that when she began her journey as a director in the central office she met a professional network of Hispanic women and "they became my tribe…so it's important when you get into these positions that you start finding out who in the community are going to be your cheerleaders and your tribe and that's what I am learning in my trajectory professionally."

Social identity theory highlights the importance of group identities and the influence those in-groups have on an individual's sense of belonging and validation (Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000). As Ines mentions, "so it's very important that the people that you have to help women, Latina women, are going to be there to support the vision and that are aligned because if not, someone will try to sabotage it." Hence, networking and support from like-minded individuals can provide strength and validation during one's leadership journey. Essentially, when building a network with individuals that share similar identities it can reinforce and support a positive social identity. In essence, through seeking mentorship and building a supportive network, it creates a collective sense of empowerment and solidarity, enhancing one's psychological capital at the same time through increasing self-esteem, self-efficacy, and

confidence moving through leadership challenges (Cavas & Kapusuz, 2015; Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Mary S. & Khhaveya A., 2021, Ali Salih & Salman Al-Dulaimi, 2017).

Consequently, as a means to bridge "personal and communal empowerment" one must cultivate relationships with diverse professionals, both within and outside their respective field in order to "bridge the differences between us" (Chavez, 2012; Payne, 2016). With this in mind, Zoraida supports working together as she expressed, "I think as a leader, you need to be able to build teams that feel welcome," and therefore be able to collaborate with others who are working towards breaking gender stereotypes and creating more inclusive environments. By working together, the impact can be amplified, and change can occur on a larger scale.

Systematic Barriers and Ascension

The second research question in this study was: For women to ascend into leadership positions beyond assistant principals, are there perceived systematic barriers that inhibit progression based on gender and/or race/ethnicity? When looking at the magnitude of this question participants shared commonalities around (a) challenging stereotypes, and (b) advocating for equity and access.

Challenge Stereotypes

While navigating the floodgates of stereotypes, there is a more profound intersectionality when an individual carries multiple stereotypes into their persona and self-identity, especially for Latina women leaders. LatCrit theory embraces this realization and builds on the multidimensional identities of the Latina/o experience as it seeks to dismantle oppressive narrative and beliefs (Bernal, 2002; Franco, 2021; Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2021). The realization that stereotype threat encompasses life and societal values that one

human puts on another (and is ultimately internalized) was expressed by several participants. For example, Rosi expressed how as a Latina woman she feels that she has to work harder in comparison to her male counterparts and feels disrespected by both men and women. She states "Even though I'm working harder, I'm still being questioned. I'm still like, not good enough, I feel not only the internal imposter syndrome, but people saying things blatantly." Rosi expands and speaks to generational clashes and expectation differences where "some of my male Hispanic machista parents…and me…might not see eye to eye," as one example over something as simple as homework.

Inherently, through centuries of being conditioned to socially based constructs, stereotype threats, and cultural aspects, both implicit and unconscious biases become engrained in organizational and systemic cultures (Snaebjornsson et al., 2015). Additionally, Bearman et al. (2009) expands on this notion in that studies have shown that women, like men, can foster these unconscious biases and beliefs from internalizing stereotypes and can show up in how women tend to judge one another. Steele (2010), illustrates that stereotype threat, "springs from our human powers of intersubjectivity…we know what people could think…we know that anything we do that fits the stereotype could be taken as confirming it (p. 5)." Therefore, it is of importance for Latina women leaders to break free from societal stereotypes and "re-define their own narratives" by showcasing their leadership skills, expertise, and accomplishments. Trina highlights this in that she shares, "We women are very critical of ourselves. We allow others to be critical of our work and we do not celebrate it like we should."

By excelling in the field and demonstrating one's capabilities, it can challenge and debunk stereotypes about Latinas and women in leadership roles, thus defining the own

narratives (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). However, this type of work should not be the sole responsibility of one person, as Columbia Manaus states, “I think the most important thing is don’t try to do it by yourself.” Mercedes supports this in that, “so for women, we need to have people support us in our voices and leading and using our voices.” Thus, organizations need to showcase the amazing triumphs that have and are continuing to transpire for women and more importantly Latina women in order to challenge the existing stereotypes, power structures, and policies that shadow the broader society (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse, 2004).

Advocate for Equity and Access

LatCrit supports that by taking into account historical disadvantages and systematic barriers specific to the Latina/o communities, one can be an advocate for equity and access encouraging the advancement of fair opportunities and outcomes for marginalized individuals “who have the potential to transform schools into places where the experiences of all individuals are acknowledged, taught, and cherished” (Bernal, 2002, p. 121; Huber, 2010; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). With this in mind, the findings showed that several of the Latina/Hispanic leaders spoke to forging strong partnerships with parents, community organizations, and local businesses in order to support inclusive and equitable opportunities. As asserted by Ines, it is imperative to engage the community in educational initiatives and leverage their expertise and resources to enhance students' learning experiences. She explained:

> I brought in culturally specific programs for our students…it has an Afrocentric genre, but it was really good for all of our students…bringing in programs where students can read books by authors of color…and as a superintendent, I was intentional about bringing in students to train teachers…I also brought Latino speakers and African American

> speakers that the staff had never heard before…and with that you have a lot of professional development on culturally specific curriculum.

Rosi and Zoraida also uplifted starting programs that benefited the entirety of the community of learners in which created access and sustainable programs like language access programs and pipeline programs to support both students and staff.

Conversely, Rosi shared, "it's challenging to have conversations about equity. I want to say, especially being Latina in my opinion because I don't want it to seem like, oh she's got an agenda for us, you know?" However, even with that being said, Rosi forged forward and expressed passionately, "I was part of the committee to spearhead our dual language program…I want to make sure that we are able to provide that for our students and our population…to make sure that I give our community that opportunity." This was shared with Zoraida in which she also created a language access unit in a school district that didn't have one at the time through writing a grant and getting community leaders to support her in the process.

As a means to create a pipeline for Latina's that as Zoraida shares are "super underrepresented" one project she is currently working on is a program that supports bridging the gap of aspiring women starting at the teacher level that may want to move into roles such as assistant principals because there are already other programs in place like supporting instructional assistants rising to teachers. She shared that, "we can do better at diversifying that pool…so we're working with outside organizations to help support and we just graduated…students in high school that are going into teacher prep programs. So, we are looking at every angle possible."

Hence, as a means to continue an upward trajectory, the use of one's position of influence to advocate for equity and access within organizations and beyond was deemed necessary by the participants in this study through the promotion of inclusive policies and practices that address eliminating educational disparities and creating multiple opportunities. As Murrell (2019) points out, inclusive leaders build community and bring people together for a common goal in an impactful way, with the ultimate outcome of building awareness in understanding people's differences in perspectives in the organization and being stewards for aligning policies and processes.

Identity and Empowerment

The final research question was: To what extent does social identity and psychological capital play in women advancing in leadership positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendency? This specific question sparked significance in how the Latina leaders in this study ascertained the need to embrace your identity.

Embrace Your Identity

The findings in this study brought forward a common theme that revolved around embracing one's Latina/Hispanic identity and cultural background through celebrating heritage, language, and traditions. Social Identity theory suggests that people's self-concept and self-esteem are derived from their membership in social groups and seeks to explain how individuals develop a sense of identity based on the value they place on those groups (Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000; Hann Tapper, 2013). Conversely, Halloran and Kashima (2006) argue that culture becomes a salient factor in which social identity and culture have a reciprocal relationship in which culture influences social identity processes and vice versa. Mercedes shared that, "my

identity shapes who I choose to hang around with, who my friends are, and what community I feel connected to."

Consequently, as Mercedes, Rosi, Zoraida, Trina, Ines, and Columbia Manaus illuminated in their interviews, through being proud of your cultural identity, it can inspire others and contribute to a more diverse, inclusive, authentic, and shared leadership landscape. This essentially builds upon the PsyCap theory in that through embracing one's cultural background and lived experiences in relation to their multiple identities, it can develop a sense of hope and optimism in overcoming obstacles in making an impact within their educational communities. In other words, it allows one to lead authentically, bringing their true selves and cultural values to the table fostering trust while increasing cultural competence enabling them to engage more readily with diverse communities (Caligiuri, 2012; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011).

However, on that same note, it's important to explore the multifaceted intersections as we become our own person as we bridge our identities, roles, and root knowledge as educational leaders. The intersectionality theory, coined by Kimberle Crenshaw, recognizes that individuals experience multiple dimensions of one's identity and that these intersections interact with each other, creating a complexity of identities (Adams et al., 2018; Collins & Bilge, 2016). For example, even though Rosi embraces her Latinness, she feels like an outsider on occasions where she is not following the same political and religious path as her other family members. She states, "The majority of my community is Catholic. However, I'm not. And so, I think that always kind of made me feel like a little bit of an outsider from the mainstream."

As a leader, there will be multiple times in one's lived experiences whether positive or negative that will continue to shape our individual selves while also setting us apart from what

societal constructed boxes are set. As Ghouldy Muhammad (2023) highlights, that there is a plethora of moments that we come to self in our lives that give us a sense of belonging and "coming to self means knowing our identities and becoming unapologetic about who we are…having humble entitlement about our beauty, genius, and justice orientations"(p. 94).

Implications of the Study

The research on Latina/Hispanic women leaders in K-12 education has significant implications for various areas of study and practice. Even though there has been an upward trend in Latina leaders moving into higher level positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents, research shows that the increase has been insufficient when looking at the highest level of superintendency from 24.1% in 2010 to 26.68% in 2020 (School Superintendent Association, 2020). What is concerning is that the statistic reported is representative of all women superintendents and the researcher was unable to locate desegregated data by race and/or ethnicity. Each of the stories provided by the Latina/Hispanic educational leaders in this study, reflected this perspective in which all six participants agreed that even in today's landscape with the continual growth of over 13.8 million Latina/o students in the K-12 school system and increase of Hispanic/Latino populations across the country, that representative leaders, especially Latina leaders, are still grossly underrepresented (Mendez-Morse, 2004; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022).

As Zoraida states, "I don't know if there's a word that's bigger than underrepresented, but yes, we are." After working in four different districts, Mercedes shared that, "I've been in a few places…we had 1 in 1 of the districts…she left after two years…I've had a hard time finding Latina/o mentors. So, yeah underrepresented in every kind of aspect." Even more, Trina

expressed, “first of all, we’re underrepresented in the classroom, 83% of classroom teachers are Caucasian in our nation…and so then as you go into the higher grade levels, you see more males in these positions…and you see heavily in the central office, you have the male as the leader.” Therefore, the voices of the Latina/Hispanic women leaders shine a light on the ongoing disparity between who is leading in the educational system, the need to have diverse and representative leadership, and the necessity to redefine the narrative that continues to exist (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse, 2004).

Several of the participants illuminated that by Latina/Hispanic leaders still being underrepresented and the continual need to seek their own mentorships, build networks, and seek professional development it pushed them to have to work harder to ascend into positions without support or very little support. Ines stated that, “organizations need to do better to promote Latinas…in my own professional experience, I had to promote myself…I went out looking for the jobs because I didn’t see myself growing in the places that I was in because there wasn’t a support system within that district.” Columbia Manaus shared that, “there was no support there for retention that had to be done by networking on your own once you had the position.” Importantly, it should not be on the backs of Latina leaders trying to navigate the educational system with limited access to other Latina/o leaders or women of color, solely to “find” support and leadership development opportunities. Even more so, because of the lack of Latina/Hispanic leaders in higher level educational roles it contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypes and biases, ineffective policies and practices, and a lack of robust research around women leaders, specifically Latina educational leaders. Organizations must step up and provide opportunities that leverage one’s expertise and talents through leadership development, while increasing the

number of role models and mentors that are representative of the diverse Latina/o population in order to support an inclusive organizational framework (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse, 2004; Murrell, 2019).

Even with cultural factors, incongruency in representation, and the merging of gender and socially constructed gender roles, participants embraced their own unique identities as Latina/Hispanic women from differing backgrounds. They shared their pride in their personal and professional triumphs and the resilience in maintaining their paths even when adversity stood in their way. As Trina expressed, "I felt that the promotions that I got, the few promotions I got, they were due to my hard work…I felt like I had to kind of push people out of the way and let me go in and I had to struggle and push and discuss." Consequently, findings supported that even though Latina women leaders in this study had displayed a sense of psychological capital such as resiliency and self-efficacy, the multiple and continual challenges that they had to face around intersectional stereotypes proved to be psychologically exhausting in that they had to constantly prove themselves not just in dominant space, but also among the diverse Latino/Hispanic populations. In order to support the strengths, triumphs, and forward trajectory of Latina/Hispanic women, organizations must leverage the components of psychological capital (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) that are already being uplifted by Latina women leaders through training interventions, thus promoting gender equity through appropriate policies and practices as a means to enhance well-being and positive organizational outcomes (Chawla & Sharma, 2019; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011).

Notably, the disparity in diverse leadership and lack of role models not only impacts Latina women, but the students in which they represent (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016;

Mendez-Morse, 2004). Significantly, school is an entry point for many Latina/o students where they begin to experience discrimination and stereotyping (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse, 2004). As Murakami et al. (2015) supports, when teachers and school leaders are not representative of the Hispanic and Latina/o student population, it can hinder their cultural identity and their tribulations can be addressed ineffectively, therefore deterring students academically and emotionally. Thus, organizations must begin to support and enact inclusive leadership programs that address the unique needs and challenges faced by marginalized women, through inviting diverse voices and their lived experiences into the conversations and decision-making efforts to recruit, retain, and support Latina educators, administrators, and policymakers in education (Mor Barak et al., 2021; Randel et al., 2018).

Through highlighting these implications, organizations can work collectively to dismantle systemic barriers, promote inclusivity, and support the ascension of Latina educational leaders. These efforts can specifically contribute to a more equitable educational landscape and empower Latina/Hispanic women leaders to share their stories, triumphs, and their significance in the contributions they make in the field of education.

Recommendations for Future Policy, Practice, and Research

Hernandez and Murakami (2016) signify that when thinking of diverse cultures, the Latino population in the United States is complex and diverse in its own right including demographic diversity where several backgrounds and multiple nationalities encompass the overarching term of Latino/Hispanic. With that in mind, Latina/Hispanic women leaders in education often face unique challenges and barriers, including cultural biases, stereotypes, and systemic inequalities and research on Latina leaders in K-12 education highlights the

significance of representation and the presence of role models for Latina students and aspiring leaders (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse, 2000; Murakami & Mendez-Morse, 2015; Murakami et al., 2018). This specifically underscores the importance of diverse and inclusive leadership that directly reflects the student population and continued growth of Latino/Hispanic people in the United States that by 2060 will contribute to 29% of the United States population (Passel et al., 2022).

Findings from the six Latina/Hispanic educational leaders lived experiences sparked several recommendations that were consist with the research questions for this study. It was clear that in order to collectively dismantle the complex and multifaceted barriers and support the ascension of Latina leaders to make significant contributions and changes to the field, the following recommendations need to be brought to the forefront for organizations to provide more inclusive and equitable environments: (a) amplify voices and visibility, (b) mentoring and leadership development (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016; Mendez-Morse, 2000; Murakami & Mendez-Morse, 2015; Murakami et al., 2018).

Amplify Voices and Visibility

Participants in this study shared the necessity to work together as a collective or "sisterhood" while also engaging the broader community in uplifting Latina voices in organizations. As Mercedes stated, "so for women, we need to have people support us in our voices and leading and using our voices." However, with the disparity in Latina leadership in higher level positions, women of color tend to become hypervisible and subject to a higher level of scrutiny due to the incongruence of normative leadership styles and as a result can be rendered invisible beyond their perceived monolithic marginalized membership (Buchanan & Settles,

2019). Mercedes elaborates in that, “I have to find a way to fight the narrative of, well, you’re anti this because you’re this, or if you don’t talk this way, then you know, we can’t invite you to the playground. So those are the narratives I constantly have to face.” Conversely, hypervisibility can be of benefit as it can allow for marginalized groups to gain representation and have their voices heard, leading to a greater awareness of their lived experiences, struggles, triumphs, and future goals, thus promoting social change and understanding. In order for this type of visibility to be positive and an impetus for change “individuals must have control over their image and be recognized in ways that affirm their important identities” (Settle et al., 2017).

As a recommendation, by highlighting the success stories and achievements of Latina women educational leaders through a variety of platforms including social media, regional and national conferences, publications, and professional forums, organizations can support the amplification of diverse voices that inspire and demonstrate the impact of these accomplishments in the field of education positively. As Cho et al. (2013) supports, that through providing an intersectional perspective of Latina educational leaders multiple identities both personally and professionally within the larger context of educational politics, policies, and systemic inequalities, it offers a counter story to the dominant narrative.

However, for Latina educational leaders to have ownership and control over their own image and the narrative that they believe is necessary to move forward practices, trainings, development, policies, and programs, professional development around personal and professional branding can enhance and amplify voices even further. Personal and professional branding is not only interdisciplinary but is pervasive in our lives. Even though personal branding is a relatively new concept in the zeitgeist of our times, history has seen that personal

and professional branding has been intertwined in how one is received by the community at large, which can support Latina educational leaders in redefining the dominant narrative that is deeply ingrained in our social fabric. Self-presentation as a form of identity when looking at personal and professional branding, is both intentional and tangible in which one can be defined by others (Scheidt et al., 2020). The term "personal branding" in and of itself, was brought forward only 24 years ago by Tom Peters who really didn't have a solid definition but implied the essence of how one represents themself (Scheidt et al., 2020).

In turn, through personal and professional branding, people can uplift their more salient qualities and unique attributes from both an internal and external perspective (Scheidt et al., 2020). As Rangaragjan, Gelb, and Vandaveer (2017) note, self-knowledge and the journey in personal branding supports a road map to career development, rethinking career opportunities, and overall career success. Which can be highly beneficial to supporting Latina/Hispanic women educational leaders in their ascension to leadership positions, while at the same time increase individual psychological capital. As Ali Salih and Salman Al-Dulaimi (2017) explain, when one gains experience power it can influence one's ability to "move the organization's resources in order to achieve the goals and influence the decisions of others to determine their behavior and fix the direction of future work" (p. 4). Consequently, this can be accomplished by evaluating, modifying, and managing how the branding compliments that of the organization or future organization that one wants to explore (Rangaragjan et al., 2020).

One way this can be accomplished in through utilizing Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to amplify voices and visibility for underrepresented populations. Appreciative Inquiry as an organizational framework can prove to be a powerful and inclusive approach for leadership in educational organizations. According to Hammond (2013), Appreciative Inquiry is a positive and

strengths-based framework for organizational change and development that can support an asset-based perspective while bridging an inclusive model of leadership. As a means for organizations to lead an AI approach forward, it is imperative to assemble a team that is diverse and representative of the Latina/o population. Through having a diverse team, it will ensure that there is both a variety of perspectives and backgrounds.

With that in mind, each phase of the AI process gives a deeper understanding of what is currently taking place in the organization through the lens of stakeholders and drives a more nuanced focus for the inquiry. In this case, the focus revolves around amplifying voices and visibility of Latina leaders in higher level leadership roles. Once this focus is at the forefront, the discovery phase can be employed. In the discovery phase, the AI team and participants identity and appreciate the organization's strengths and past successes (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2006; Hammond, 2013). In this phase, the focal point revolves around engaging in interviews and discussions through asking questions such as, (a) What are the strengths and talents of our underrepresented Latina/Hispanic leaders? and (b) When have we seen the most inclusion and amplification of voices on Latina/Hispanic leaders in our organization? (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2006; Hammond, 2013). However, these questions are examples and should be enacted by the AI team and their stakeholder's input.

The next phase moves into the dream phase which leans into uplifting aspirations and envisioning a future state where the strengths are amplified, and the organization is theoretically thriving (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2006; Hammond, 2013). This phase supports innovation and a creative license to imagine the possibilities. More specifically, the dream phase encourages underrepresented Latina/Hispanic leaders to envision their ideal organizational workplace asking

questions such as (a) What would success look like for them? (b) What would support positive visibility and amplification of Latina/Hispanic educational leaders voices?

Moreover, the design phase encompasses the concrete plans and strategies that bring the dream phase into reality in which goals are set and action plans are created (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2006; Hammond, 2013). In this phase, the organizational AI team takes all the relevant information from the first two phases as a means to design initiatives and strategies centered around increased asset-based visibility and the amplification of Latina/Hispanic women leaders voices.

The last phase of the AI process also known as the destiny or delivery phase involves the implementation of the plans and initiatives in the organizational setting (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2006; Hammond, 2013). Additionally, feedback and adaptation will be crucial during the destiny phase from stakeholders as it incorporates the continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adjustments to ensure that strategies employed continue to remain inclusive and focused on the initial purpose of the Appreciative Inquiry. As Cooperrider and Sekerka (2006) explain, “when the energy of people’s collective relationship is linked to their positive core, it is possible to connect this awareness to any changed agenda, and…is then suddenly and more democratically mobilized” (p. 229).

Therefore, as more organizations and professional development trainings support the amplification of Latina educational leaders’ voices and increase their visibility in a positive light through their vast accomplishment both personally and professionally, it will begin to shift the narrative thus inspiring aspiring Latina/Hispanic women to ascend into higher level roles. Increased visibility and amplification that illuminates the added value to organizations that

Latina educational leaders have displayed as shown by the findings in this study, not only supports efforts to recruit, develop, and promote individuals, it uplifts the representation of diverse teachers and leaders that are "both representative and held up as successful and contributing members of our society" that can inspire the 13 plus million Latino/Hispanic students in our school systems (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016, p. 4).

Mentoring and Leadership Development

Even with the lack of representative Latina women in higher level educational positions and the disparity of mentors and leadership development opportunities as shared by the participants, findings from this study support that through actively uplifting and empowering other women, especially Latinas, they can reach their full potential. With that being said, due to the insufficient opportunities in many of the educational organizations, several participants initiated their own programs to support other Latina/o leaders, especially since they were "always the first Latina" to rise up to positions of influence. However, even with having mentoring opportunities available for Latina leaders, there were barriers that prevented some Latina/Hispanic women in supporting each other. As Ines noted, "as a superintendent, I started a women's group for Latinas, however because they didn't directly report to me…some of them probably felt intimidated that there direct reports were meeting with the superintendent…so sometimes direct reports would give them jobs to do, and they couldn't come and meet."

On the other hand, it was apparent that participants felt that through mentoring other women, offering guidance, and creating opportunities for them to grow and succeed, it will contribute to breaking down barriers and creating a more equitable leadership landscape. As Trina mentions, "I had a couple of principals, friends. We work together and build our skills

together…and sometimes you don't have to have a mentor that is in a higher position. Sometimes it's a mentor that can listen to you and help you with a problem to solve." She goes on to say, "we need to start supporting each other and stop the competition…we need to develop the relationships and the connections and build the collegiality." Whereas Zoraida spoke to collaboration and team building where she mentions, "you have to be honest about your own skill set and be able to celebrate the other people's skill set that are bringing everyone up."

Findings showed that the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents was mentioned by several participants and their geographical affiliations such as CALSA (California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators) and TALSA (Texas Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators) as being sources of leadership development, mentorship, and networking. For example, Mercedes shared, "I was in the CALSA mentorship program and I had…two mentors…they helped me navigate what it means to be a Latino leader. How to sidestep all the issues that I have had to deal with…that was a really good program. I would say I wouldn't be here without that program, hands down." Explicitly, Ines proposed:

> "I think the key that organizations need to do is to take a look at themselves…and they need to really look at what barriers they have for women or Latinas and then how are they going to bring down those barriers and be authentic about what they're going to do to provide it and is it going to sustain itself? Because you can start something, but are you going to finish it and then have a pipeline, have a succession plan."

Therefore, findings suggest that establishing mentoring and leadership development programs that support Latina/Hispanic women in K-12 educational spaces that provide opportunities to

access networks, resources, and career advancement is important to their trajectory and ascension.

As a recommendation, educational organizations need to foster strong partnerships with community and professional organizations such as ALAS, cultural centers, and other educational institutes (i.e., higher ed) to support the ascension of Latina women in educational leadership that is formalized. Organizations through a collaborative partnership can encourage participation through paid time to attend and full funding for conferences, workshops, and professional forums that focus on role transition, development of leadership skills, culturally responsive practices, and relevant topics of choice. The ultimate goal of these types of endeavors is to facilitate and create effective strategies and processes for the ever-present need to adapt and adjust in contemporary society (Gallos, 2006; Senge, 1994). Hence, change management will help the organization as a whole, while also supporting each individual on a team to see the success and progress that change can bring if done right (Gallos, 2006; Senge, 1994).

In order to foster new initiatives and programs, leaders in educational organizations must embrace a number of theories, tools, resources, principles, and techniques to choose from, for the reason that no one person or leader comes in with a "one size fits all" strategy (Gallos, 2006). Accordingly, change management draws on theories from many disciplines, including psychology, behavioral science, engineering, and systems thinking. As an example, in Lewin's model, it involves the three steps of unfreezing, changing and refreezing (Gallos, 2006). This model represents a practical framework for understanding the change process that entails creating the perception that a change is needed, then moving toward the new, desired level of behavior and finally, solidifying that new behavior as the norm (Gallos, 2006). To this end, in order to implement change, it involves getting the right people involved and presenting the plans

in the best possible way and valuing the contributions of each individual employee and their importance to achieving the end goals (Gallos, 2006; Schein, 2010). Thus, providing the space and the platform for Latina educational leaders to be a part of an inclusive teaming process as a means to minimize policy-practice decoupling, where organizations are walking their talk and elevating a climate for inclusion (Mor Barak et al., 2021; Murrell, 2019)

Overall, by focusing on bringing stakeholders into the conversations and incorporating an environment of cultural inclusion in a way that allows for the diverse voices within the organization to be dignified, it opens up the space for innovation and creative process that can drive a powerful outcome for all. This process will support an increase in mentorship and professional development opportunities for Latina educational leaders in K-12 education.

Given the implications in this research study, as outlined in Chapter 1, the researcher identified the need for further and ongoing research specifically focusing on Latina/Hispanic women educational leaders in K-12 education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Finding in this study encompassing the lived experiences of Latina educational leaders in higher level K-12 roles has supported the need to continue the path forward that so many Latina/Hispanic leaders have forged along the way. With several unpublished dissertations and little research focusing specifically on Latina/Hispanic women educational leaders, it is imperative that more published research on Latina educational leaders is available to explore in order to better understand the unique experiences, challenges, and contributions of Latina leaders in the education field. By focusing on these areas of research, we can gain a deeper

understanding of the experiences, strengths, and challenges of Latina educational leaders and work towards creating more inclusive educational environments.

For instance, as a continuation on this study, researchers can conduct a mixed methods study that uses quantitative data to explore the number of Latina/Hispanic leaders holding higher-level roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendencies in each state and unincorporated territory in the United States. Once that is established, a qualitative method could be employed to uplift the lived experiences of Latina/Hispanic women leaders throughout each geographical location. This will provide a more pronounced understanding of the nuances that are attributed to regional areas and recommendations at a national level. Which can provide the data to support positive policies and legislative outcomes for the Latino community of learners.

Another future study that would benefit Latina/Hispanic educational leaders revolves around psychological capital. Findings from the participants concluded that the intersectional factors that women have to navigate as leaders in education can have negative repercussions including imposter syndrome, lower self-confidence, and sense of disconnect with their communities. However, at the same time, findings also showed that participant held strong values, maintaining hope and resilience in the face of adversity given the continual internal and external challenges that Latina/Hispanic women specifically face in their lived experiences as leaders. By cultivating and leveraging psychological capital, they can navigate these challenges more effectively and positively influence their educational communities (Ali Salih & Salman Al-Dulaimi, 2017). Consequently, psychological capital can play a crucial role in one's individual well-being and outlook in the organizational environment and overall effectiveness and success

(Ali Salih & Salman Al-Dulaimi, 2017; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011). Therefore, scholars and practitioners can gain a deeper understanding of the role of PsyCap in the leadership experiences of Latina leaders in K-12 education.

For example, one study could examine the impact of mentorship, coaching, networking opportunities, and professional development programs on the development and utilization of PsyCap and identify best practices and strategies for supporting Latina leaders' growth and success. Another study could track the changes in PsyCap components such as hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism over time and explore how these changes relate to leadership effectiveness, career advancement, and job satisfaction. The findings from these future studies can inform the development of targeted interventions, policies, and support systems that enhance leadership development and promote equitable outcomes in educational settings.

Conclusion

This phenomenological research study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of Latina women in K-12 leadership roles. Through listening deeply to the experiences, perspectives, and stories of the six Latina educational leaders, it gave way to several connected themes and new ways of knowing. Research on Latina/Hispanic leaders in K-12 education can deepen our understanding of intersectionality and the interconnected nature of social identities and systems of oppression and its inherent impact on educational leadership. By examining and learning from the lived experiences of how Latina leaders navigate and challenge multiple forms of inequality, such as gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and language barriers, it will provide new perspective. In the end, this research can inform efforts to promote equity, social justice, and inclusivity in educational practices and policies. Thus, it's our stories and our life

experiences that can help others view us from a different perspective, or our bubbles of truths that propel us forward and help others understand who we are and what can be accomplished when we work together to make a difference.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Email Message to Potential Participants (Initial)

Dear (insert name):

My name is Casie Dimsey, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational and Organizational Learning and Leadership program at Seattle University. I am also a cohort member in the 2022-2023 National Principal Leadership Academy with the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). I am currently recruiting Hispanic/Latina women that hold positions in K-12 education such as principals, district office executives, and superintendents to participate in a research study required of my doctoral program at Seattle University. The dissertation study entitled, *Redefining the Narrative of Women in Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Latina Leaders in K-12 Education*, will explore the incongruency of women ascending in higher level leadership positions and the availability of robust research around women in educational leadership, specifically focusing on Latina women in K-12 education settings. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide insight into Latina educational leaders lived experiences in K-12 administrative roles including principalships, district office executives, and superintendency positions to deeper the understanding between identity, role, and leadership.

You are receiving this e-mail because you are a current member of the National Principal Leadership Academy (NPLA) or the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). I invite you to participate in the qualitative component of this research study.

The qualitative component of the study will be done through individual interviews. You will be interviewed and recorded through a videoconferencing platform named Zoom. The length of the individual interview will last no longer than 90 minutes. Should you choose to participate in an interview, your answers would be held completely confidential, and pseudonyms will be used in the final report.

In order for participants to participate in the study, they will have to meet specific criterion as a means to ensure that the phenomenon being studied is relevant to the population of interest. That being the case, the following criteria will need to be met: (a) identify as a woman, (b) identify as Latina or Hispanic, (c) have worked for at least one complete year in higher level role, (d) have worked as a principal, district executive, or superintendent in K-12 education.

Your participation is voluntary, and all responses will remain confidential. The URL below named Demographic Questionnaire is a screening survey based on the criterion described previously. If you meet the eligibility criteria, you will receive immediate follow up information to include the consent to participate information and a scheduling calendar link. However, if you are not eligible, you will be alerted right after the completion of the survey and the data provided will be deleted. Should you need to leave the survey before finishing, your progress will be saved provided you return using the survey link provided below:

Demographic Questionnaire

Passcode: xxxxx

I will be conducting this study under the supervision of my faculty advisor, Dr. Colette Taylor. If you have any questions or concerns, would like to know more about the study, or if would like to participate in the study, please contact Casie Dimsey via telephone at 206-316-0643 or via email at dimseycasie@seattleu.edu. Dr. Colette Taylor, Professor in the Educational and Organizational Learning and Leadership program and Special Assistant to the Provost for Strategic Directions at Seattle University can be reached via telephone at 206-296-6061or via email at taylorco@seattleu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these research efforts and consideration of participation.

Casie Dimsey

Doctoral Candidate in Educational and Organizational Learning and Leadership (EOLL)
School of Education
Seattle University

Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

Passcode: xxxxxx

1. Do you identify as a Hispanic/or Latina woman?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Are you currently or have been in a leadership role/or position in K-12 education?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Which area best describes the position(s) you have held:
   - Principal
   - District Executive
   - Superintendent
   - Other

4. How many years did you reside in your role/or position?
   - Less than 1 year
   - More than 1 year

Ineligible End of Survey Response:

Thank you for taking the time today to participate in the demographic questionnaire. At this time, you are not eligible to participate in this research study and all data provided in this survey will be deleted.

If you have any questions, please contact the principal investigator of the study, Casie Dimsey at 206-316-0643.

Eligible End of Survey Response:

Thank you for your time and interest in completing the demographic questionnaire. Based on your results, you are eligible to interview. Please review the consent to participate information below. After you review the consent information and are interested in moving forward, please find a day and time to participate in a 60-90 minute recorded Zoom interview within the next two weeks.

Consent to Participate Information

TITLE: Redefining the Narrative of Women in Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Latina Leaders in K-12 Education

INVESTIGATOR: Casie Dimsey, Educational and Organizational Learning and Leadership, College of Education/Seattle University, 206-316-0643

ADVISOR: Dr. Colette Taylor, Professor in the Educational and Organizational Learning and Leadership program and Special Assistant to the Provost for Strategic Directions/Seattle University, 206-296-6061

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research study that seeks to investigate the incongruency of women ascending in higher level leadership positions and the availability of robust research around women in educational leadership, specifically focusing on Latina women in K-12 education settings. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide insight into Latina educational leaders lived experiences in K-12 administrative roles including principalships, district office executives, and superintendency positions to deeper the understanding between identity, role, and leadership.

You will be asked to participate in a 60–90-minute individual interview via Zoom, depending on your schedule and preference. Your responses will be recorded and transcribed for future reference. If you do not wish to be recorded, you should not register for an interview. You may be asked to read and respond to a transcribed record of the interview to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. Additionally, you may be asked to participate in follow up questions after the initial interview.

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at Seattle University.

RISKS: There are no known risks associated with this study beyond the ordinary risks of daily life. However, there may be very minimal risks involved in the qualitative portion of the study. Participants may be asked to think about and address specific issues that they may be uncomfortable discussing such as experiences directly relating to stereotypes, biases, oppression, culture, identity, and personal or professional interactions with others. During the individual interview, there could be the possibility of psychological or emotional risks, such as embarrassment or nervousness, associated with discussing one's own experiences.
To minimize this risk, the researcher will provide complete confidentiality to all survey participants and provide research results in such a manner that confidentiality cannot be compromised. Additionally, you are under no obligation to answer any questions or discuss subject matter and/or situations that might be uncomfortable or distressing.

BENEFITS: There is no direct benefit to individual participants. The societal benefits will be centered around adding to the body of literature in educational leadership, specifically focusing on Latina leaders lived experiences in higher-level positions such as principals, district office executives, and superintendents in K-12 educational settings.

INCENTIVES: You will receive no gifts/incentives for this study. Participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: You will need to be in a private location, so that no unconsented individuals can accidently enter the recording during the interview. If you are unable to be in a completely private setting, you may use a blurred background for confidentiality purposes. You will also be guided on how to remove any identifying information, such as your name from the video. Although the video will display your face and demographic, you will be given a pseudonym for the recorded data. Additional demographic data will be collected to disaggregate the data for the group and not connected to any individuals. Your name will never be used in any public dissemination of these data (publications, presentations, etc.).

All research material, including interview recording will be stored on a Seattle University OneDrive account that is encrypted and, in a password, protected folder. Human subjects research regulations require that data be kept for a minimum of three (3) years. Once the project is complete, and/or the PI graduates, Dr. Colette Taylor will be the only one retaining a copy of the data set for the prescribed retention period. All of the information you provide will be kept confidential.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: Your participation in this study is *voluntary*. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time without penalty.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

Casie Dimsey
1221 1st Avenue Suite 12
Seattle, WA 98101
206-316-0643
dimseycasie@seattleu.edu

VOLUNTARY CONSENT : I have read the above statements and understand what is being asked of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason, without penalty. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any concerns about my participation in this study, I may call Casie Dimsey, who is asking me to participate, at 206-316-0643. If I have any concerns that your rights are being violated, you may contact Dr. Michael Spinetta, Chair of the Seattle University Institutional Review Board at (206) 296-2585.

Appendix C

Confirmation Email to Interview Participants

Thank you for your interest in *Redefining the Narrative of Women in Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Latina Leaders in K-12 Education*, my research study that will provide insight into Latina educational leaders lived experiences in K-12 administrative roles including principalships, district office executives, and superintendency positions to deeper the understanding between identity, role, and leadership. I am grateful for your willingness to engage in an individual interview.

Your interview date & time has been confirmed as:

XXX Date at XXXX Time

I will provide you with a password required link from Zoom 48 hours prior to our confirmed date and time. If you need any accommodations before the interview, please let me know at least 72 hours prior to our time together.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Casie Dimsey
Doctoral Candidate in Educational and Organizational Learning and Leadership
College of Education
Seattle University

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Introduction

Before the individual semi-structured interview begins, the principal investigator, Casie Dimsey, will provide consent forms electronically. After the participant has reviewed the consent to participate form, the principal investigator will give an introduction of the process and pertinent information pertaining to the study. The following introduction will be provided for all participants:

- This research study is being conducted by myself, Casie Dimsey, a current doctoral candidate in the College of Education at Seattle University. The purpose of this study is to provide insight into Latina educational leaders lived experiences and root knowledge in K-12 administrative roles including principalships, district office executives, and superintendency positions to deeper the understanding between identity, role, and leadership.
- If you have met the selection criteria from the demographic survey and haven chosen to participate, you can opt to leave the individual interview at any time or ask that the information not be included in the study. As a point to note, you are under no obligation to participate in the individual interview.
- As a reminder, your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any question or ask for a question to be repeated.
- I would like to remind you that to protect the privacy of participants, all transcripts will be coded with pseudonyms, and I ask that you not discuss what is discussed in the individual interview with anyone else. All responses are considered confidential and only group data will be reported at the conclusion of the study.
- Do you have any questions for me before we begin?
- Do you grant me permission to record this session?
- Thank you for your taking the time out of your day today to be a part of study through listening deeply to your lived experiences. Let's begin.

General Questions for individual interview:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your race and ethnic background? Generation?
3. What languages do you speak? Are you able to understand other languages, but respond in a different language?
4. What is your educational background?
5. Could you briefly describe your professional background?
6. What is your current position and its location (geographical)?
7. Is there any information that you would like to share that you feel would be important to understanding you and your personal identity or root knowledge as a Latina?

Research Question 1:

1. What ways can organizations support women and more specifically Latina women to begin to shift the way society views women in roles such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents?

1a. In what ways does your organization foster specific practices to promote and sustain diverse and inclusive leadership?

1b. Are there people in your organization that have provided coaching, mentorship, or sponsorship for Latina women to ascend to higher level positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendents?

1c. Are there processes or programs in your organization that supported you in transitioning between roles/or positions such as from teacher to administrator or assistant principal to principal?

1d. In what ways has your organization supported Latina women to shift the dominant narrative of how society views women in leadership roles?

1e. What do you believe are the key factors required for leadership development for Latinas?

Research Question 2:

2. For women to ascend into leadership positions beyond assistant principals, are there perceived systematic barriers that inhibit progression based on gender and/or race/ethnicity?

2a. Do you believe that ethnic background, race, or gender had an impact on your professional growth and attainment? Why?

2b. Have you experienced any biases, stereotypical behaviors, or oppressive actions in your career as a leader in K-12 education settings? What was the outcome?

2c. Describe any professionally based interactions that you have had that made you feel "othered" or excluded, due to gender and/or race/ethnicity.

2d. In your opinion, do you believe Latina women are underrepresented in educational leadership positions in K-12 education? Why?

Research Question 3:

3. To what extent does social identity and psychological capital play in women advancing in leadership positions such as principalships, district office executives, and superintendency?

3a. In what ways has your culture and identity played a role in your personal and professional journey?

3b. What personal triumphs are you proud of in your professional journey as a leader?

3c. What personal challenges have you faced in advancing in leadership roles/or positions?

3d. Are there any significant life experiences that have either been a barrier or have contributed to your success as a woman advancing in leadership positions?

3e. Do you plan to continue your role/or position? If not, what is the reason? If so, would you consider advancing into a higher-level position or taking on other endeavors (such as mentoring, consulting, etc.)?

Final Question:

1. Do you have anything else that you would like to add as it relates to your identity, role, or leadership?

Appendix E

SEATTLEU
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Admin 201 | 206-296-2585
irb@seattleu.edu

May 3, 2023

Casie Dimsey College of Education

Dear Casie,

As I indicated in my May 1 email, your study **Redefining the Narrative of Women in Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Latina Leaders in K-12 Education** meets exemption criteria from IRB review, in compliance with **45CFR46.104(d)**:

2) Research that includes only interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if (i) the investigator records information in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained (directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects); (ii) any disclosure of the data outside the research would not reasonably place subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or damage the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or (iii) the investigator records information in such a manner that the participant's identity can readily be ascertained, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review.

Note that a letter of exemption does **not** mean IRB "approval." *Do not include statements for publication or otherwise that the SU IRB has "reviewed and approved" this study*; rather, say the SU IRB has "determined the study to be exempt from IRB review in accordance with federal regulation criteria." Please retain this letter with your study files.

If your project alters in nature or scope, contact the IRB right away. Thank you for your hard work on this project to ensure a high level of research integrity. If you have any questions, I'm happy to assist.

Best wishes,

Andrea McDowell, PhD IRB Administrator

cc: Dr. Colette Taylor, Faculty Advisor