

**LATINA PRINCIPALS LEADING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY**

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Male high school principals surmount the number of female high school principals at both the national and Texas state level. In Texas, women make up the majority of the public school principal population; nevertheless, their placement is concentrated at the elementary school level. In addition, the ethnic representation of Texas high school Latina principals is atypical with respect to the Texas Latino student population. Hence, research into the placement of Texas high school female principals is crucial to the academic success of Latino students. In this phenomenological case study, I analyzed the leadership perspectives of 16 Texas Latina high school principals as the first phase of this project through an online open-ended questionnaire in a statewide scope. In the second phase, I implemented a phenomenological approach to examine the life experiences of seven Texas high school Latina principals via virtual semi-structured interviews in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. The application of the Latino/a critical race theory lens served as a vehicle to obtain insight into the Texas high school Latina principal experience. Through the analysis of the online questionnaire responses and the virtual semi-structured interviews, I found four similar themes connecting the seven high school Latina principals' life experiences across cases: (a) leadership of dual credit high school campuses, (b) Spanish language proficiency, (c) challenges to the high school principal role, and (d) support from principal mentors. Implications for educational leaders and aspiring Latina principals are discussed.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: Noé (father), Elsa Evelia (mother), Jimmy (brother), Adrianna (sister-in-law), and Kassandra (niece). I am the first in the Matias Villarreal family tree to achieve a doctoral degree, but I will not be the last.

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I also want to extend my gratitude to the Texas high school Latina principals who participated in this study. Your leadership is an inspiration, and your life experiences fuel the empowerment of Latina women in leadership.

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Contributors

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All work for the dissertation was completed independently by the student.

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NOMENCLATURE

TEA	Texas Education Agency
LatCrit	Latina/o Critical Race Theory
EL	English language learner
ELs	English language learners

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES	v
NOMENCLATURE	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study.....	13
Problem Statement.....	13
Significance of the Study.....	18
Definition of Terms.....	19
Research Questions.....	21
Considerations for the Study.....	22
Assumptions.....	22
Organization of the Study.....	22
CHAPTER II CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE	24
Introduction.....	24
Metasynthesis Process	24
Balancing the Latina Identity.....	31
Stereotypes.....	35
Establishing Mentorships.....	38
Theoretical Framework.....	41
Summary	43
CHAPTER III METHODS	45
Introduction.....	45

	Page
Research Approach	46
Participants	47
Instrumentation	49
Data Collection	53
Data Analysis	56
Questionnaire Reliability	59
Trustworthiness Reliability	69
Researcher Perspective	73
Researcher Positionality.....	73
Summary	75
 CHAPTER IV QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS.....	 76
Introduction.....	76
Phase I: Presentation of Open-Ended Questionnaire	76
Phase I Questionnaire Findings	78
Phase I Demographic Survey Findings.....	109
Summary.....	115
 CHAPTER V CASE STUDY PRINCIPAL #1 SOFIA.....	 117
Introduction.....	117
Community and School Demographics	118
Interview Analysis of Principal #1 Sofia.....	119
Researcher's Reflection.....	139
Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)	140
Chapter Summary	144
 CHAPTER VI CASE STUDY PRINCIPAL #2 ISABELLA	 146
Introduction.....	146
Community and School Demographics	147
Interview Analysis of Principal #2 Isabella.....	149
Researcher's Reflection.....	169
Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)	170
Chapter Summary	172
 CHAPTER VII CASE STUDY PRINCIPAL #3 VALENTINA	 174
Introduction.....	174
Community and School Demographics	175

	Page
Interview Analysis of Principal #3 Valentina.....	176
Researcher's Reflection.....	193
Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)	195
Chapter Summary	197
CHAPTER VIII CASE STUDY PRINCIPAL #4 EMMA.....	199
Introduction.....	199
Community and School Demographics	200
Interview Analysis of Principal #4 Emma.....	201
Researcher's Reflection.....	219
Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)	220
Chapter Summary	221
CHAPTER IX CASE STUDY PRINCIPAL #5 MARTINA.....	223
Introduction.....	223
Community and School Demographics	224
Interview Analysis of Principal #5 Martina.....	225
Researcher's Reflection.....	245
Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)	246
Chapter Summary	247
CHAPTER X CASE STUDY PRINCIPAL #6 LUCIANA	249
Introduction.....	249
Community and School Demographics	250
Interview Analysis of Principal #6 Luciana.....	252
Researcher's Reflection.....	276
Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)	277
Chapter Summary	279
CHAPTER XI CASE STUDY PRINCIPAL #7 XIMENA	281
Introduction.....	281
Community and School Demographics	282
Interview Analysis of Principal #7 Ximena.....	284
Researcher's Reflection.....	302
Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)	303
Chapter Summary	306

	Page
CHAPTER XII CROSS CASE STUDY ANALYSIS	308
Introduction.....	308
Part I: Cross-Case Analysis Across Principals' Life Experiences	308
Part II: Latino Critical Race Theory Cross-Case Analysis	312
Researcher's Reflection.....	317
Discussion.....	317
Summary.....	318
 CHAPTER XIII SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.....	320
Introduction.....	321
Summary of the Study	321
Summary of the Findings.....	323
Discussion	332
Researcher's Reflection.....	340
Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)	341
Implications for Latina High School Principals.....	343
Recommendations for Further Research.....	348
Conclusion and Final Reflection.....	349
 REFERENCES	350
 APPENDIX A.....	379
 APPENDIX B	380
 APPENDIX C	383
 APPENDIX D.....	386
 APPENDIX E	387
 APPENDIX F	388

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 2017-2018 Principal Counts by School Type and Gender.....	8
Figure 2 2017-2018 High School Principal Count by Gender and Ethnicity.....	12
Figure 3 Qualitative Research Synthesis Process.....	25
Figure 4 Qualitative Database Search Results	27
Figure 5 Six Geographic Locations Throughout Texas and Respective ESCs	49

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 1	Summary of Recommendations of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission	2
Table 2	National Percentage Distribution of Teachers by Gender and School Type for the Years 2017-2018	5
Table 3	National Percentage Distribution of Principals by Gender and School Type for the years 2017-2018	5
Table 4	2017-2018 Texas School Principal Count by School Type, Ethnicity, and Gender.....	9
Table 5	Literature Sources	28
Table 6	2017-2018 Texas High School Latina Principal Count and Student Enrollment Counts by ESC Region	48
Table 7	Texas High School Latina Principal Open-Ended Questionnaire.....	51
Table 8	Semi-Structured Interview Protocol	52
Table 9	Questionnaire Timeline of Distribution and Follow Up.....	54
Table 10	Questionnaire Reliability: Rating a Questionnaire Intended for Texas High School Latina Principals	59
Table 11	Reliability Statistics	61
Table 12	Item Descriptive Statistics	61
Table 13	Item-Total Statistics	63
Table 14	Reliability Analysis: Identity	65
Table 15	Subscale Item Analysis: Identity	65
Table 16	Reliability Analysis: Stereotypes.....	65
Table 17	Subscale Item Analysis: Stereotypes	66
Table 18	Reliability Analysis: Mentorship	67
Table 19	Subscale Item Analysis: Mentorship	67

	Page
Table 20 Reliability Analysis: Goals	67
Table 21 Subscale Item Analysis: Goals.....	67
Table 22 Reliability Analysis: Background.....	68
Table 23 Subscale Item Analysis: Background	68
Table 24 Texas High School Latina Principal Open-Ended Questionnaire.....	77
Table 25 Questionnaire Responses: Leadership Perspectives of Texas High School Latina Principals Regarding Identity	79
Table 26 Questionnaire Responses: Leadership Perspectives of Texas High School Latina Principals in Balancing Professional and Personal Life.....	82
Table 27 Questionnaire Responses: Self-perceptions of Why Texas High School Latinas Were Chosen to Lead Their Respective Campuses	86
Table 28 Questionnaire Responses: Challenges Texas High School Latina Principals Encountered on Their Journey to Become a High School Principal	90
Table 29 Questionnaire Responses: Individuals Who Impacted Texas High School Latina Principals to Become a High School Principal.....	93
Table 30 Questionnaire Responses: Mentors Who Impacted Texas High School Latina Principals and Helped with Goal Achievement.....	97
Table 31 Questionnaire Responses: Texas High School Latina Principals and Their Future Professional Goals	101
Table 32 Questionnaire Responses: Texas High School Latina Principals Offer Advice for Aspiring Principals	104
Table 33 Questionnaire Responses: Texas High School Latina Principals Who Would be Open to a Follow up Interview (Audio Recorded).....	108
Table 34 Demographic Survey Responses: Texas High School Latina Principals' Country of Origin.....	109
Table 35 Demographic Survey Responses: The Cultural Identity of Texas High School Latina Principals	110

	Page
Table 36 Demographic Survey Responses: Languages Spoken by Texas High School Latina Principals	111
Table 37 Demographic Survey Responses: The Age Range of Texas High School Latina Principals	112
Table 38 Demographic Survey Responses: Teaching Experience Across School Placements	113
Table 39 Demographic Survey Responses: Principal Experience Across School Placements	114
Table 40 Phase II: Seven Texas High School Latina Principal Virtual Interview Participants.....	116
Table 41 2019 Rio Grande Valley Estimated Population and Race/Ethnicity by County Participants.....	147

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The struggle for women's equality dates back a century. In 1920, the United States Congress ratified the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote. Decades later, Congress passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act with the intention of protecting historically marginalized groups from discrimination based on gender, race, religion, color, and national origin. The fight for women's equality and equality for women of color continued through the 1990s. The Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 enacted a 21-member bipartisan Federal Glass Ceiling Commission to analyze the barriers and hindrances of the advancement of females and females of color to leadership positions. The Glass Ceiling is a concept of an unbreakable barrier that keeps people of color and females from rising the steps of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Glass Ceiling Report, 1995). The Commission collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data from Chief Executive Officers' surveys (CEOs), five public hearings, and focus groups. The Glass Ceiling identified three levels of barriers: (a) societal barriers, which may be outside the direct control of business; (b) internal structural barriers within the direct control of business; and (c) governmental barriers, such as policies and laws (Department of Labor, 1995). To address these barriers, the Commission published two reports: The Environmental Scan and the Strategic Plan. The Environmental Scan contained the findings of the Glass Ceiling Commission, and the Strategic Plan outlined recommendations based on its findings. In

1995, the Strategic Plan was presented to the President and Congress, and one of the recommendations included the need for formal mentoring programs to provide females with access to resources, ensuring progress at a rate like their male counterparts. The Glass Ceiling Commission submitted the following recommendations for business, government, and social sectors as the beginning steps of an open and continuing dialogue to disassemble roadblocks within their organizations.

Table 1

Summary of Recommendations of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission

Business sector	Government sector	Societal initiatives
Demonstrate CEO commitment to diversity	Lead by example	Recognize the role of the media
Include diversity in strategic business plans and measure progress for accountability	Strengthen enforcement of anti-discrimination laws	Educate for cultural awareness
Use affirmative action as a tool	Improve data collection	Counsel for careers in business
Select, promote, and retain qualified individuals	Increase disclosure of diversity data	Recognize all potential
Prepare minorities and women for senior positions		Acquire second language proficiency
Educate the corporate ranks		Take a child to workday
Adopt high-performance workplace practices		

Scholars have studied women in leadership positions across organizations to assess the impact of the Glass Ceiling legislation. Some women had already broken

through the glass ceiling prior to the inception of The Glass Ceiling Commission, and they are considered trailblazers for women in leadership. Examples of these trailblazers were (a) Victoria Woodhull, the first female presidential candidate in 1872; (b) Madam C. J. Walker, aka Sarah Breedlove, the first self-made millionaire in 1910; (c) Frances Perkins, the first woman appointed to Secretary of Labor by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933, and (d) Katherine Graham, the first female Fortune 500 CEO in 1963 (Stoller-Lindsey, 2017).

Meanwhile, many women experienced challenges in breaking through the glass ceiling. For instance, in 2017, only 5% of Fortune 500 CEOs, 8% of U.S. governors, and 19% of U.S. Congress were female (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2018). Despite the recommendations of the Glass Ceiling Commission in 1995, organizations continued to lack female representation in the senior ranks of corporate executives and leadership positions in the United States through the next decades, and this situation proliferated into the 2010s (Adams et al., 2009; DeSilver, 2018). The inconsistency of employed women across leadership labor sectors has prompted researchers to study possible barriers to women's advancement into these leadership roles. Some of these possible barriers include conscious and unconscious biases, lack of mentality to pursue leadership, lack of mentors, lack of policies that support work-life balance, work-life integration challenges, and lack of networking opportunities and resources (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017).

U.S. Women in Educational Leadership

The most saturated female labor sector is education, with the largest share of women workers being preschool/kindergarten teachers (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). Concerning educational leadership positions, U.S. women have traditionally dominated the elementary school principal role, while men dominated the secondary school and high school principal role. For example, between 1900 and 1950, women led over two-thirds of U.S. elementary schools but were excluded from higher paying high school principal positions (Rousmaniere, 2013). Since the 1950s, women have remained a minority in high school principalship.

Women are traditionally underrepresented in administrative roles despite their overrepresentation in high school and elementary teaching positions (Johnson et al. 2008). An example of the overrepresentation of female teachers in high school and elementary teaching positions and the inconsistency in female principal placements is reflected in the labor force demographics of the National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) for the years 2017-2018 (Taie & Goldring, 2020). This descriptive data survey was released in 2020 and is updated every two years. The results of the next survey will be released in 2022. Table 2 contains a demographic overrepresentation of female teachers across all public school types.

Table 2

National Percentage Distribution of Teachers by Gender and School Type for the Years 2017-2018

School type	Male teachers	Female teachers
Primary	11.4%	88.6%
Middle	27.9%	72.1%
High	40.0%	60.0%
Total	29.7%	70.3%

Note. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

As noted, the school type with the highest teacher female overrepresentation is primary, followed by middle, and finally, high school. Despite the total overrepresentation of female teachers across all school types, the NTPS Survey also contains demographic underrepresentation of female principals at the middle and high school level (Taie & Goldring, 2019). In Table 3, the national percentage distribution of principals by gender and school type is outlined.

Table 3

National Percentage Distribution of Principals by Gender and School Type for the Years 2017-2018

School type	Male principals	Female principals
Primary	33.2%	66.8%
Middle	60.1%	39.9%
High	67.4%	32.6%
Total	56.6%	43.4%

Note. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The 2017-2018 national percentage distribution of teachers and principals by gender and school type bolster the research regarding females outnumbering males in the elementary, middle, and high school teacher, and elementary principal roles.

Simultaneously, men outnumber women in the middle and high school principal role. In Tables 1 and 2, the data indicate a problem of female overrepresentation in the teaching profession across all school types but a lack of gender representation in the high school principal role. In conclusion, male high school principals have traditionally outnumbered female high school principals, and at present, male high school principals outnumber female high school principals at the national level.

Texas Principal Gender

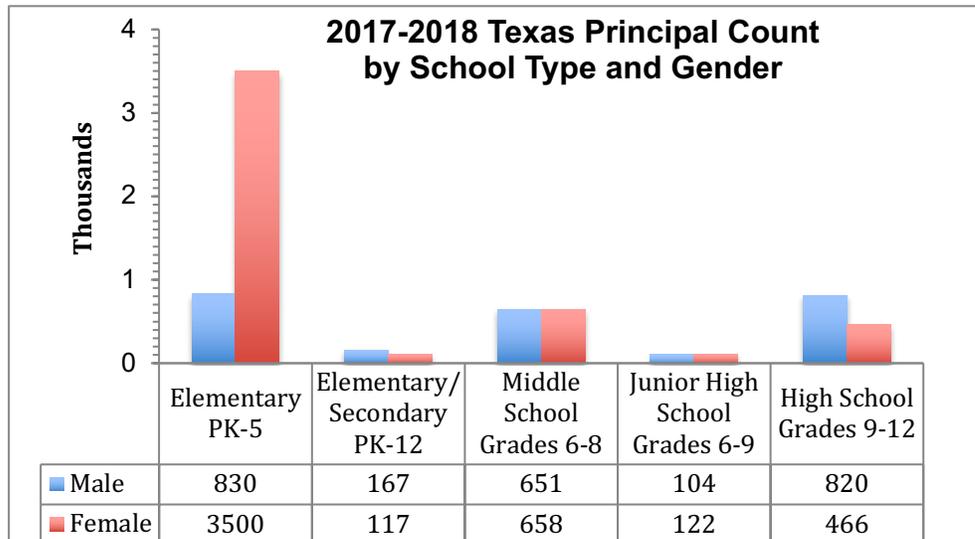
In Texas, women make up the majority of the public school principal population; nevertheless, their placement is concentrated at the elementary school level. For the years 2011-2015, the Texas male principal count decreased from 40% to 38%, and the Texas female principal count increased from 60% to 63% (TEA, 2015). As of 2017-2018, the Texas female principal count increased to 65% (TEA, 2018); however, the placement of female Texas principals is not consistent across school types. Figure 1 contains the 2017-2018 Texas Principal Count by School Type for a grand total of 7,435 Texas principals. Of the 7,435 Texas principals, 2,572 (35%) were male and 4,863 (65%) were female. During the 2017-2108 school years, differences in principal gender were found at the elementary and high school levels. First, women exceeded men in the role of Texas elementary school principals by triple. Indeed, an imbalance of male

representation at the elementary level was noted. Second, a balanced gender representation was observed at the middle school and junior high school grades, as the gender difference between male and female principals was less than ten in number at the middle school and less than 20 in number at the junior high. Finally, men outmanned women in the role of Texas high school principals by 354 in number (TEA, 2018).

These high school principal gender counts support the research of Fuller et al. (2018) in their examination of the employment of female Texas principals in public schools from 1990 through 2012. Across all Texas geographic locales (large city, large suburban, mid-size suburban, mid-size city, town, and rural), Texas high school female principals were the minority group of principals. Hence, male high school principals have traditionally outnumbered female high school principals up to 2018. This principal count does not include district charter schools, alternative schools, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement (DAEP) campuses. The Texas State Agency (TEA) calculated the principal count and categorized totals into the following school types: (a) Elementary (Grades PK-5), (b) Elementary/Secondary (Grades PK-12), (c) Middle School (Grades 6-8), (d) Junior High (Grades 6-9), and (e) High School (Grades 9-12).

Figure 1

2017-2018 Principal Counts by School Type and Gender



Ethnicity of Texas Principals

In April 2018, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) published a history of Texas public school principal gender and ethnicity demographics for the academic years 2012-2013 through 2016-2017. During this time period, most of the principals were White, with the second and third largest ethnic groups being Latino/a and Black/African American principals (TEA, 2018). The population of Texas principals who identify as White decreased from 65% to 63% (TEA, 2018). Despite the percentage decline for White principals, White remains the majority ethnic group of Texas public school principals (TEA, 2018). The Latino/a principal group increased from 22% to 23%, and the Black/African American principal group increased from 11% to 12% (TEA, 2018). When considering the ethnic principal representation across Texas public schools, Latino/a students account for the largest percentage of total enrollment in 2016-2017

(52.4%), followed by White (28.1%), African American (12.6%), Asian (4.2%), and multiracial (2.2%) students (TEA, 2017). Thus, regarding principal ethnicity and student ethnicity, a racial disparity exists in the number of Texas Latino/a principals serving as role models for Latino/a students, the majority student population.

The racial disparity of Texas principals has been a concern for scholars. Davis (2012) stated the possibility of gender and ethnicity-based bias in the employment of Texas principals. Crawford and Fuller (2017) were concerned that Texas Latino/a educators were placed into assistant principal positions to symbolically address the growing Latino/a student population, perpetuating the notion of Latino/a leaders as primarily disciplinarians under a White principal. They cautioned this phenomenon as a troubling trend and called for further research. Certainly, further research is needed to analyze the ethnic representation of Latino/a principals and their school type placements. Table 4 contains the 2017-2018 Texas principal ethnicity count by gender and school type (TEA, 2018).

Table 4

2017-2018 Texas School Principal Count by School Type, Ethnicity, and Gender

School type	Ethnicity	Male count	Female count	Total counts
Elementary (PK-5)	American Indian or Alaska Native	3	7	10
	Asian	13	17	30
	Black or African American	91	410	501
	Latino/a	244	932	1176
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	3	14	17
	Two or more races	9	27	36

Table 4 Continued

School type	Ethnicity	Male count	Female count	Total counts
Elementary and secondary (PK-12)	White	467	2093	2560
	American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0
	Asian	0	0	0
	Black or African American	9	3	12
	Latino/a	11	17	28
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	0	0	0
	Two or more races	1	1	2
	White	146	96	242
Middle school (6-8)	American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2	3
	Asian	3	1	4
	Black or African American	62	92	154
	Latino/a	144	148	292
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	1	3	4
	Two or more races	7	13	20
	White	433	399	832
	White	1	2	3
Junior high (6-9)	American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2	3
	Asian	0	0	0
	Black or African American	15	19	34
	Latino/a	18	19	37
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	0	2	2
	Two or more races	0	3	3
	White	70	77	147
	White	4	1	5
High school (9-12)	American Indian or Alaska Native	4	1	5
	Asian	4	1	5
	Black or African American	80	59	139
	Latino/a	147	114	261
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	1	3	4
	Two or more races	5	0	5
	White	579	288	867
	White	579	288	867
Grand totals		2572	4863	7435

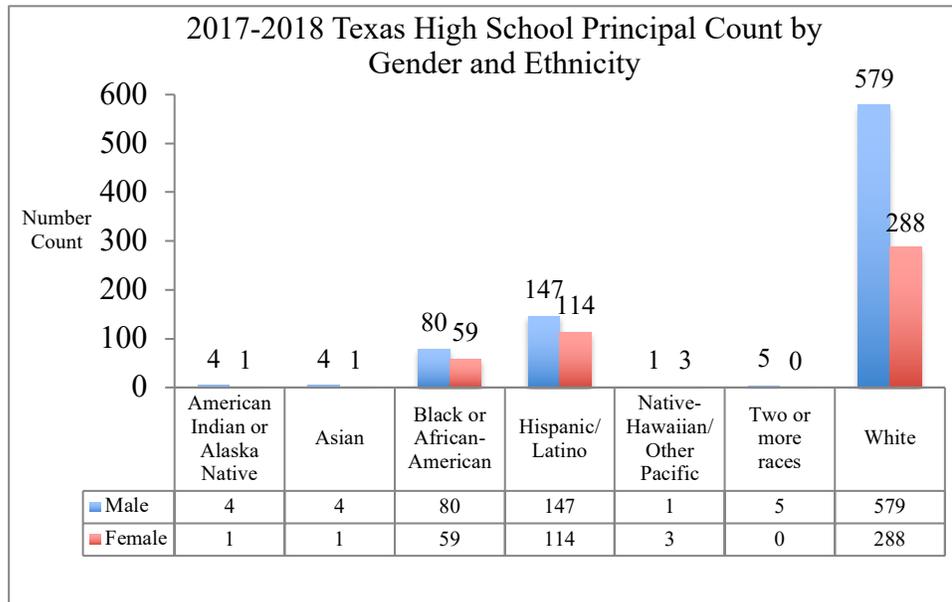
One can infer that the gender and ethnicity representation of all female principals is higher at the elementary level in comparison to the high school. For example, White women accounted for 48% of the elementary principal population followed by Latina women (22%) and African American/Black women (9%) respectively. White men made up only 11% of the elementary principal population next to Latino men (6%) and African American or Black men (2%). However, White male principals comprised 51% of the PK-12 school type. At the middle school and junior high, female and male principals were within three percentage points in gender difference across White, Latino/a, and African American/Black ethnicities. The gender and ethnicity differences at the high school level is discussed in detail in the Gender and Ethnicity of Texas High School Principals section. In summary, Texas female principals were abundant in number in comparison to male principals, but they were not distributed equally across school types with respect to their gender and ethnicities.

Gender and Ethnicity of Texas High School Principals

For the purpose of this study and in the interest of analyzing Texas high school female principals by ethnicity and by school type, the results of the TEA public information request encompassed 4,863 Texas female principals (TEA, 2018). Out of the 4,863 Texas K-12 female principals, 466 (36%) female principals were employed at the high school level. White women were the majority ethnicity (22%) followed by Latina women (9%) and Black/African American women (5%). The number counts of Texas high school principals (grades 9-12) by gender and ethnicity are displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2

2017-2018 High School Principal Count by Gender and Ethnicity



Texas high school female principals remain a minority in comparison to male high school principals. Specifically, men made up 64% of the total high school principal population, and 45% of these men were of White ethnicity. High school Latino men represented 11% of the high school principal population, and only 9% of the high school principal population consisted of Latina women. Notably, the 9% of high school Latina principals do not reflect the total Latino/a student population (52.4%) across Texas public schools (TEA, 2017). Consequently, this ethnic disparity can disrupt the diversity in school leadership and deny Latino/a students an adult role model with who they can identify, racially and ethnically (Tayloe, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

In this phenomenological case study, I analyzed the personal leadership perspectives of 114 Texas Latina high school principals as the first phase of this project. In the second phase, I used a phenomenological approach to examine the life experiences seven of Texas Latina high school principals in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. Knowledge of the Latina perspective is obtained through Latino/a critical race theory (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Irizarry, 2012; Yosso, 2006). The application of the Latino/a critical race theory lens served as a vehicle to obtain insight into a specific, marginalized population.

Problem Statement

Male high school principals surmount the number of female high school principals at both the national and Texas state level. Demographic data presented as evidence of this gender difference has been previously mentioned and referenced from The National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS, 2017) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2018). In addition, the ethnic representation of Texas Latino/a principals is atypical with respect to the Latino/a student population. For example, in the 2001-2002 school year, the number of Latino students (41.7%) surpassed the number of White students (40.9%) for the first time, becoming the largest enrolled ethnic group in Texas (TEA 2003; TEA, 2017). Also, within a ten-year span, between 2006-2007 and 2016-

2017, the number of Texas Latino/a students increased by 32% (681,739 students) as the number of White students declined by 8.1% (133,216 students) (TEA, 2017). Undeterred by the increase of Latino/a students, White principals remained the largest ethnic group of Texas high school principals. Hence, research into the placement of Texas high school female principals is crucial to the academic success of Latino/a students. Magdaleno (2004) stated Latino/a teachers and school district administrators could serve as role models, building relationships with Latino/a students and ensuring Latino/a student success. Santiago (2009) argued the growth of Latina principals should reflect the growth of the Latino population because Latino/a students need to observe and interact with role models who are representative of their cultural groups.

The Dominant Culture

Almost two decades ago, Gardiner et al. (2000) perceived the dominant culture of educational administration as a White, male-dominated culture. This perspective has shaped the policy and practice in school culture, influencing students of color. Latinas seeking to lead secondary schools were told they were not the right fit (Gardiner et al., 2000; Grogan & Brunner, 2005; Tallerico, 2000). Social and political standards are also based on this norm, and individuals who are not part of this norm are often marginalized (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). For this reason, the right fit is subjective and is shaped by the dominant culture. Quilantán and Menchaca-Ochoa (2004) argued that the *good old boy* network impeded the possibilities for females in leadership roles. They referred to this impediment as a suppressor, keeping females from attaining administrative positions in the educational and corporate worlds. Carrillo (2008) reported Latina female assistant

principals have been overlooked for principal positions due to gender and ethnic discrimination. He explained how Latina female assistant principals were not given the same duties as their male counterparts. As a result, these Latinas were perceived as less capable and experienced prejudice against their ethnicity. Hence, this White male-dominated culture is difficult for aspiring Latina principals to navigate the political and hidden culture of educational administration. As well, R. Fernandez (2013) agreed gender was a factor in acquiring principal positions, sometimes more than being Latino/a. Inci and Parker (2013) defined networking within the favorable group as *old boy* networks, where informal groupings of individuals, through personal and business interactions, provide referrals about co-members to third parties. Individuals outside of this network do not benefit from these referrals, and they are marginalized by not belonging to this network.

Balancing the Latina Identity

Latina principals struggle with an inner identity conflict. Chavez (2012) explained how cultural upbringing is a complex cultural factor in balancing work and family duties since traditional culture holds Latinas responsible for house domestics, child-rearing, and taking care of elderly parents. For first-generation families, parents expect their daughters married and raising a family; therefore, college is not a priority (Falk, 2012). For example, first-generation Latina female principals in Falk's (2012) study indicated their parents clashed with the notion of allowing them to leave home for college, as this process was unfamiliar territory for first-generation parents. Although Latina females have been perceived as homemakers and caregivers within the Latino

culture, this perception is evolving as more Latina females enter the workforce (Barajas, 2016; Ruiz-Williams, 2015). For instance, Chavez (2012) explored the work-life balance of Latina female principals and found many support systems, such as family and friends. Notably, the Latina female principals in Chavez's study affirmed their husbands were the greatest support system by assisting with domestic duties and offering emotional support for success in the professional realm. The presence of Latina principals in the workforce has also resulted in opportunities to incorporate their cultural identities into their workplace environments. Particularly, principals in Carrillo's study (2008) stated the family was the most important Latino value, and this value steered the mindset of how these principals established relationships with their school staff. Thus, the balancing of the Latina identity in a leadership context can be both challenging and advantageous.

Typecasting and Stereotypes

Female principals have campuses where most of the student body consists of students of color, and they compete with the double burden of ethnic and gender stereotyping (Gardiner et al., 2000; Hernandez et al., 2016; Palacio, 2013; Santiago, 2009; Rosario-Schoenfeld, 2010). Méndez-Morse (2004) concluded minority female administrators share the same experiences of limited recruitment, focus on the elementary school principalship, or lead from a distance as a department director of a curriculum area. Thus, they are considered tokens. Latina principals have been typecast into bilingual schools despite them not requesting the placement (Rosario-Schoenfeld, 2010). Santiago (2009) addressed the myth perception of Latina females not being capable or tough enough to handle high school discipline issues. He further explained

that this myth contributed to the stereotyping of Latina females and their ability to lead at the secondary school level, such as high school. Santiago recommended future research with respect to the placement of Latina principals. Enriquez-Damian (2009) found challenges on the journey to the principalship in predominantly White schools in the forms of racism, prejudice, ostracism, language stigma, and rejection. He described Latina professionals meeting the degree requirements for the principalship but who were told to apply at another school district because of their skin color and accent.

Lack of Mentors

Due to the androcentric culture of educational administration, the majority of administrators are primarily White males (Gaetane & Lloyd-Jones, 2011). Consequently, a strong possibility exists that minority protégés will be limited in the possibility of being recognized as potential leaders. Researchers have recommended mentorship programs to assist aspiring Latina leaders to process their inner identity conflict and navigate the dominant culture, a White, male dominated realm (Carrillo, 2008; Fernandez, 2013). Although mentors are meant to act as sponsors and provide support for potential networking, researchers have suggested there have been few mentors for Latina leaders to navigate and advance in their careers (Carrillo, 2008; Falk, 2011; Fernandez, 2013; Hernandez et al., 2014; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Santiago, 2009). Carrillo (2008) contended Latinos did not have equal access to principalships due to the *good old boy* network controlling the hiring as well as mentoring their own future leaders. Falk (2011) found aspiring Latina leaders look for a Latino/a role model or mentor to help them navigate through the journey of obtaining and maintaining the

principalship. For Latinas to experience interaction with principals of their own ethnicity, Latina leaders must be present in positions of leadership. In the circumstances where Latinas were able to interact with a Latina mentor, the mentor served as a role model and a coach for the mentee's knowledge, training, and skills (Falk, 2011).

Significance of the Study

The voices in this study may serve as role models for other Latinas aspiring to break the mold set forth by dominant social and political stereotypes. The high school principal position is considered the unspoken training ground to the superintendency and is also favored in comparison to the elementary principalship due to the complexity of its role (Tallerico, 2000). For example, Yong-Lyun Kim and Brunner (2009) studied the career pathways for females in educational administration and found male administrators moved up vertically via high school principal to the superintendency, while females traveled horizontally to the superintendency through central office staff roles. In addition, some of the complexities with the high school principal role include administration of severe disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and expulsions, and navigation of political currents at high visibility/high media events, such as athletics, prom, and graduation. Men have traditionally filled the high school principal role, and as previously stated, female principals were not placed consistently across public school types. In this study, I provide insight into the disparity of Latina female principals at the high school level. Educational leaders can use the results of this study to reevaluate their leadership mentoring programs and increase their recruitment of Latinas for high school principal positions. Since mentoring programs traditionally have benefited White males

in leadership positions (Méndez-Morse, 2004), females of all races and cultural backgrounds would be able to benefit from someone who can connect, teach, and support their career advancement.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of navigating this study, multiple identities associated with the Latino/Hispanic culture surfaced. The multiple identities are Latino/a, Hispanic, Mexican-American, and Chicano/a. In order to maintain the authenticity of the scholars who have contributed to this research, a list of definitions is stated below to clarify the meanings of these multiple identities.

Latino/Latina (Latino/a)

The term Latino refers to a male, and the term Latina refers to a female. Throughout this study, I used the term Latino/a to reference the research literature and to analyze the data in this study. The term Latino/a can be of any race, and multiple cultures exist within the Latino/a label (Stokes-Brown, 2012). For instance, the participants in my study may vary in race. To be a Latino/a is when an individual or his/her ancestry is from a Latin American country, such as Brazil, Argentina, El Salvador, Cuba, or Mexico (U.S. Department of Education and Office of English Language Acquisition, 2015).

Hispanic

In 1976, the U.S. Congress defined the term Hispanic as Americans of Spanish speaking background and Americans who trace their ancestry from a Spanish-speaking country (Passel & Taylor, 2009). For example, Brazilians are from a Latin American

country, so they are Latino/a. However, Brazilians do not speak Spanish; they speak Portuguese. Brazilians, hence, are Latinos/as but not Hispanics. Spaniards, nonetheless, do speak Spanish, but they are not located in Latin America. Spaniards, thus, are Hispanics, not Latinos. For my study, I have chosen not to use the term Hispanic. Rather, I chose to use the term Latina/o due to its inclusivity as it encompasses multiple cultures under the same Spanish language.

Mexican-American

A Mexican-American is an individual of Mexican ancestry, who resides in the United States, regardless of citizenship status (Pew Research Center, 2011). Mexican-Americans can also be Latinos/as or Hispanics in broader terms; however, some Mexican-Americans do not speak Spanish. Therefore, not all identify as Hispanic, but they could identify with being Latino.

Chicano/Chicana (Chicano/a)

The term, Chicano/Chicana, is applied to males and females of Mexican origin and/or other Latinas/Latinos who share similar political perceptions (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). In the 1960s the Chicano/Chicana identity emerged to protest the poor educational conditions in the Los Angeles School District by boycotting classes and organizing walkouts. Grievances to the Los Angeles School District's Board of Education included demands for smaller class sizes, bilingual education, and more emphasis on Chicano history (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). The Chicano community targeted activism towards a cultural and linguistically responsive approach to schooling, addressing the rights of farmworkers, and asserting historical land rights (Rios, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

In my study, I incorporated Latino critical race theory (LatCrit); (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Irizarry, 2012; Valdes, 1996; Yosso, 2006). In 1995, LatCrit ascended from an academic meeting regarding Latinos/as and critical race theory within the annual Hispanic Bar Association meeting in Puerto Rico. The four functions of LatCrit are as follows: (a) production of knowledge, (b) advancement of transformation, (c) expansion and connection of struggle(s), and (d) cultivation of community and coalition (Valdes, 1997). First, LatCrit studies the social and legal conditions of Latinos to inform change agents as they improve both society and law. Second, LatCrit acknowledges the application of theory to praxis in order to create social change. Third, LatCrit embraces dimensions and diversities within the Latino/a culture and seeks to frame and interconnect struggles and oppressive conditions impacting all Latino/a people. In other words, this theory addresses the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). Fourth, LatCrit fosters a community of scholars from various disciplines and perspectives. In summary, LatCrit provides insight and understanding of the Latino/a experience. This theoretical framework is discussed at length in Chapter II.

Research Questions

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?
2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?

3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Considerations for the Study

My study was limited to Texas high school Latina principals who volunteered to participate. Out of the 114 principals who respond to an initial open-ended questionnaire, seven were selected for an in-depth interview. Only Texas public high school Latina (self-identified) principals were included in the study. These principals were from a range of rural to urban public school districts across Texas.

Assumptions

This study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, 114 Texas Latina high school principals were surveyed using an open-ended questionnaire, and in the second phase, seven selected Texas Latina high school principals would provide a richer description of their experiences through interview responses. The assumption of this study is that data gathered from the participant questionnaires and interviews provided cultural and professional insight with respect to the Latina experience. My positionality as a former Latina high school administrator guided me to accurately interpret the perceptions of the participants in this study.

Organization of the Study

This research study consists of five chapters. Chapter I includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, definitions of terms, theoretical framework, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and the assumptions of the study. Chapter II contains a critique of the

literature regarding the identity, professional trajectory, and mentorship of Latina principals through the lens of Latino/s critical race theory. Chapter III consists of the methodology used for this research study, such as data sources, data collection, data analysis, and reliability and trustworthiness methods. Chapters IV-XII are composed of the findings of the study. Chapter XIII is a summary of the study discussion of the findings, implications of the findings for practice, recommendations for further research, and comprises a discussion of the findings of my study.

CHAPTER II

CRITIQUE OF LITERATURE

Literature Critique Process

Introduction

This chapter includes the critique of the literature in which addresses the experiences of Latina principals with respect to identity, barriers throughout their professional journeys, and mentorship. A qualitative metasynthesis literature critique method was applied to this study. Qualitative metasynthesis is a systematic approach to analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting findings from qualitative studies (Lachal et al., 2017; Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). The purpose of the meta-synthesis is to interpret integrated findings with depth rather than interpreting findings from individual studies (Bondas & Hall, 2007; Major & Savin-Baden, 2010; Walsh & Downe, 2005). The application of this method gives the researcher an opportunity to reflect on the studies and link concepts across the studies. The meta-synthesis method is recommended for qualitative studies, and synthesis of data includes phenomenologies, ethnographies, and grounded theories (Bondas & Hall, 2007; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003a; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007).

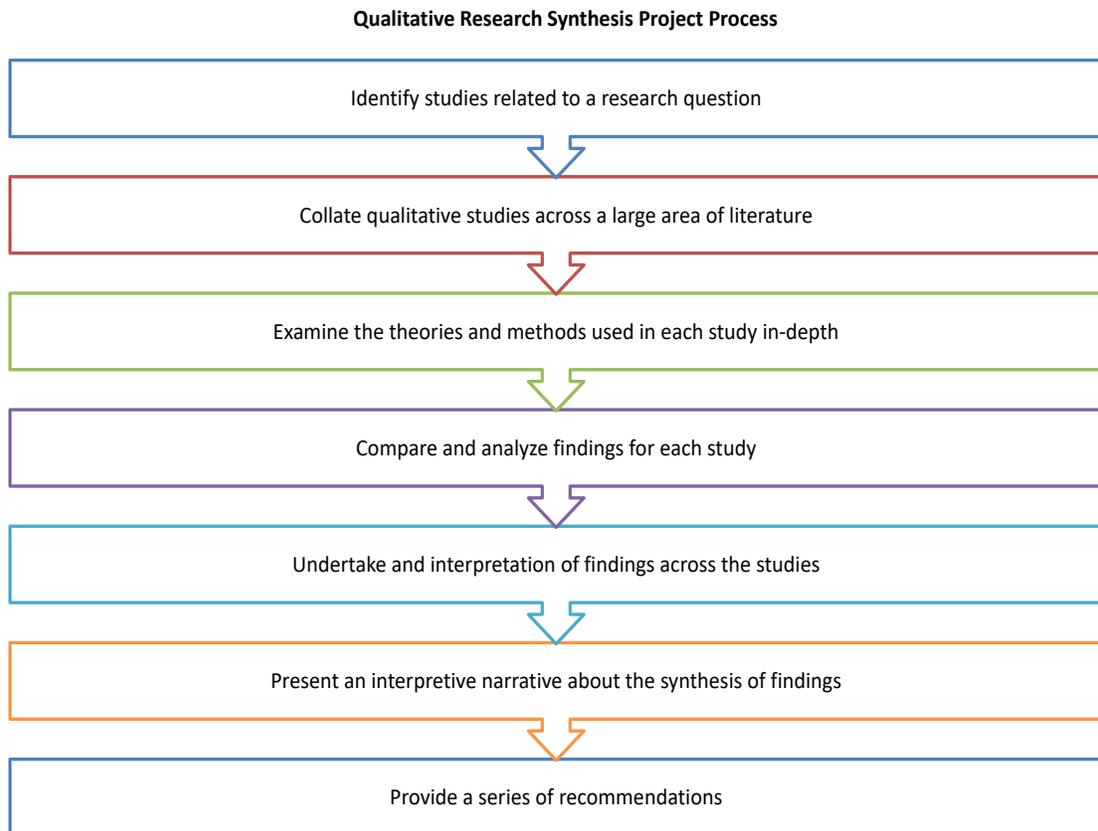
Metasynthesis Process

The qualitative metasynthesis process is broken down into steps to systematically draw meaning at a higher level from existing qualitative studies by combining them into a new whole (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Researchers who conduct qualitative research synthesis studies have a duty to execute these studies in

a systematic and justifiable manner. For example, researchers are responsible for defending the inclusion and exclusion criteria in their research project. In turn, the researcher provides transparency to their research. Major and Savin-Baden (2010) outlined the process for qualitative research project synthesis in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Qualitative Research Synthesis Process



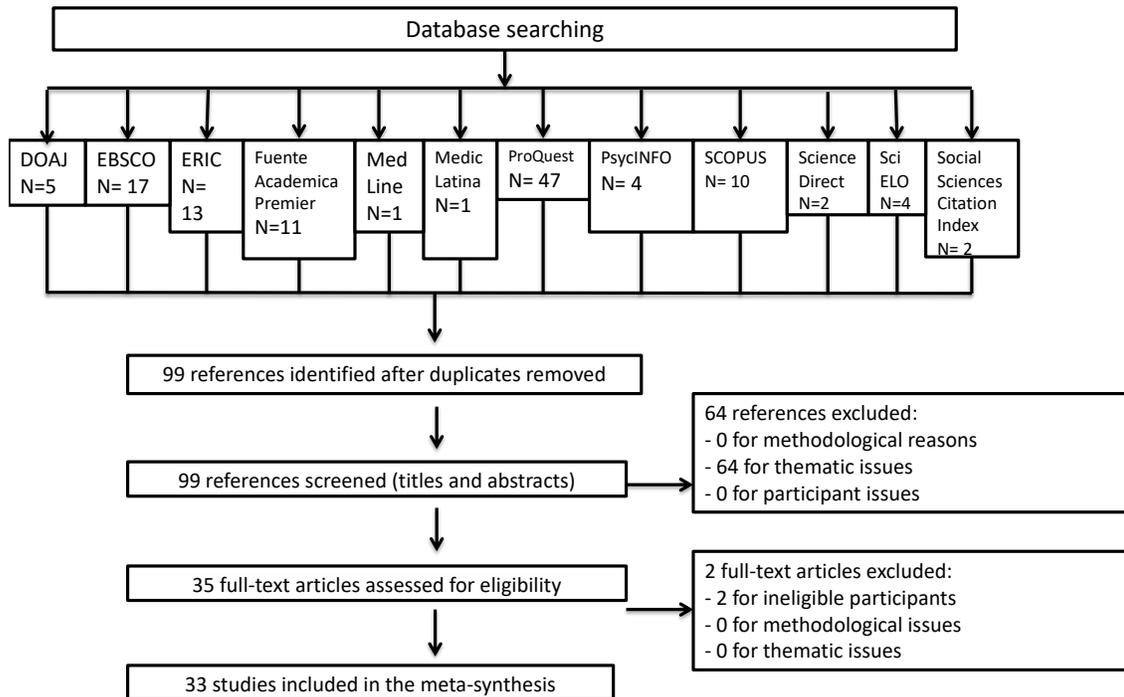
Note. Qualitative research synthesis process. Adapted from *An introduction to qualitative research synthesis: Managing the information explosion in social science research* (p. 11), by C.H. Major, & M. Savin-Baden, 2010, Routledge. Copyright 2010 by Routledge. Adapted with permission.

Search Parameters

Qualitative research literature containing Latina principals or Latina administrators were selected as the topic of study. The inclusion criteria consisted of qualitative studies regarding Latina principals or administrators (assistant principals and superintendents), research studies were published in English, the research study took place in the United States, and studies published in the twenty-first century were included for currency. Studies excluded from this metasynthesis were quantitative studies, studies published in another language other than English, studies that took place outside of the U.S., and studies published before the twenty-first century. The sources for the study search were books, peer-reviewed journals, periodicals, dissertations, and papers presented at research conferences relating to the field of educational administration. Databases utilized in this study were Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), EBSCO, ERIC, Fuente Académica, MedLine, MedicLatina, ProQuest, PsychINFO, SCOPUS, Science Direct, Sci ELO, Social Sciences Citation Index, and the Texas A&M University LibCat. Keywords used to identify research pertaining to high school Texas Latina principals were *Latina principals or administrators*, *Hispanic female principals or administrators*, *Mexican-American principals or administrators*, and *Chicana principals or administrators*. At the conclusion of the database search, 99 references were identified after the removal of duplicates, 64 references were excluded due to thematic issues, and 33 studies were included in the meta-synthesis. The search results are displayed in the figure below.

Figure 4

Qualitative Database Search Results



Appraising Reports of Qualitative Studies

In order to ensure the quality of the metasynthesis, guidelines have been developed in the past decade to assess the quality of the studies (Lachal et al., 2017). I chose the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme to systematically assess the trustworthiness, relevance, and results of published papers (CASP, 2018). After the appraisal of studies, none were excluded based on the quality criteria. Table 5 contains

the studies utilized in the metasynthesis. These studies are listed in chronological order by publication year.

Table 5

Literature Sources

Year	Author(s)	Keywords	Reference type	Research design	Theoretical framework or concept	Sample/context	Findings
2000	Méndez-Morse	Latina leadership, principals	Journal article	Phenomenological	Not available	Mexican-American, Latina leaders	Latina stereotypes
2000	Tallerico	Latina leadership	Book	Literature Review	Not available	superintendent candidates from NY	Biases and challenges for females of color
2002	McCreight	Hispanic women, educational leadership	Monograph	Phenomenological	Not available	Hispanic principals	Barriers, career advancement
2003	Trujillo-Ball	Mexican - American female principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Chicana feminism	4 Mexican-American Females	Identity, job placement, influences in identity
2004	Magdaleno	Latina leadership	Dissertation	Maxwell Interactive Design Model (1996)	Cross-race mentoring support system	6 Latino/a leaders in California	Mentoring
2004	Méndez-Morse	Latina leaders	Journal article	Phenomenological	Not available	6 Mexican-American female leaders in West, TX	Caretaking, pride, tragedy
2005	Hernandez	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Latino identity Latino critical race theory	6 Latino/a principals, midwestern US	Racial identity
2006	Magdaleno	Latino/a principals	Journal article	Not available	Not available	Latino/a principals	Mentoring
2006	Magilvy et al.	Hispanic, caring for our own, nursing home	Journal article	Ethnography	Not available	Rural Colorado	Hispanic culture, aging elders
2008	Carrillo	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Critical race theory, storytelling and counter storytelling	22 K-12 Latinos in California	Culture, gender, inequity, mentoring, values and beliefs
2008	Wrushen	Females secondary school principals	Journal article	Phenomenological	Feminist	8 female principals	Personal backgrounds, influences, identity

Table 5 Continued

Year	Author(s)	Keywords	Reference type	Research design	Theoretical framework or concept	Sample/context	Findings
2009	Enriquez-Damián	Leadership, Latina education	Dissertation	Heuristic inquiry	Not available	4 Mexican-American Latinas in Arizona	Discrimination, ostracism, language, stigma
2009	Murakami-Ramalho et al.	Latina principals, mentoring, principal preparation	Journal article	Program evaluation	Social justice	Texas principal preparation cohort, 26 of 40 were Latinas	Mentoring, principal preparation, partnerships
2009	Santiago	Hispanic female administrators	Dissertation	Case study	Role theory	Central Florida, 8 female Hispanic principals	Family background, token Hispanic, placement, mentors
2009	Sperandio and LaPier	Female principals, principal preparation	Journal article	Phenomenological	Not available	15 women in US	Mentoring through cohorts
2010	Rosario-Schoenfeld	Hispanic, educational administration	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Life course theory	9 Puerto Rican Latinas from New York	Identity, mentorship
2011	Falk	Hispanic female leaders	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Not available	12 Hispanic women from Texas	Barriers, tenacity, courage, and persistence
2012	Chávez	Latina principals	Dissertation	Case study	Social role theory	3 Latina principals, California	Identity, guilt, external barriers
2012	Roberts and Hernandez	Texas Latina principals, principal preparation	Journal article	Program review of preparation programs in Texas	Not available	16 Texas leaders	Mentoring, university principal preparation program
2012	Roybal	Hispanic woman, educational leadership	Dissertation	Auto-ethnography	Latina feminist theory, <i>mujerista</i> theology	1 Hispanic female principal in Northern Mexico	Gender, race, and salary inequities
2013	Fernandez	Hispanic secondary principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Latino critical race theory	5 Suburban, Texas principals	Mentors, family support, gender
2013	Palacio	Latina, high school principal	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Social cognitive career theory	8 Latina female high school principals from California, Texas, and Florida	Early influence, background, mentors, networking

Table 5 Continued

Year	Author(s)	Keywords	Reference type	Research design	Theoretical framework or concept	Sample/context	Findings
2013	Ramsey	Latina principals	Dissertation	Ethnographic study	Critical race theory, Latino critical race theory	10 Latina secondary principals, Texas and California	Identity, social justice, obstacles, racism
2014	Hernandez et al.	Latina principals	Journal article	Case study, phenomenon	Latino critical race theory	K-3 US Female principals	Background, race, gender,
2014	Morales	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological narrative	Not available	8 Latina Texas principals	Age, racial, and gender stereotypes
2015	Crawford and Fuller	Texas principals, administrators	Journal article	Descriptive statistics	Representative bureaucracy	n=49,945 Texas administrators	Disproportionate placement of principals
2015	Méndez-Morse	Latina school leaders	Journal article	Phenomenological	National survey	Latina/o principals and assistant principals	Latinas leading urban elementary campuses, identity, background
2015	Murakami	Latina/o school principals	Journal article	Phenomenological	Latino/a identity	1,000 Latina/o leaders	School demographic, career path, leadership identity
2015	Reyes	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Role congruity theory	4 Latina assistant principals	Challenges, motivation, support systems, identity
2016	Barajas	Latina principals	Dissertation	Narrative inquiry	Mujerista theory	2 Latina principals, 2 Latina leaders in Arizona	Culture, gender, race, and class
2016	Fuller et al.	Texas principal placement	Journal article	Descriptive Statistics	Not available	n=48,628, Texas leaders	Texas principal trends, gender, ethnicity, and age
2016	Hernandez et al.	Latina principals	Journal article	Descriptive statistics	Critical race theory	94 assistant principals, national study	Challenges to the principalship
2016	Mendieta	Latina principals	Dissertation	phenomenological	Latino critical race theory, social learning theory	10 Second generation Latina/o principals	Mentoring roles

Table 5 Continued

Year	Author(s)	Keywords	Reference type	Research design	Theoretical framework or concept	Sample/context	Findings
2016	Tayloe	Female principals	Dissertation	Mixed methods	Critical race theory	30 Latina leaders surveyed; 4 Latina principals interviewed	Role conflict, stereotypes, job assignments
2017	Niño et al.	Latina/o principals	Journal article	Texas survey, descriptive statistics	Cultural wealth model	Likert scale survey	Activities type, and time spent principals
2018	Benavidez	Central office administrators	Dissertation	Testimonios, interviews	Women ways of knowing	Interviews	Struggle, mentors, networking
2019	Barrera	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Social role theory	Principals interviewed	Resiliency, persistence, grit, and social supports

Challenges Latinas Face in Leadership Positions

In this section, I synthesize the common findings and themes across the studies included in the scope of this literature critique. Within these studies, Latinas faced three common challenges in obtaining leadership positions: (a) balancing their identity, (b) dealing with typecasting and stereotypes, and (c) lack of mentorship programs.

Balancing the Latina Identity

A conflict lies within the Latina identity in functioning as a leader in a dominant culture while struggling to maintain her cultural identity. Latinas are conflicted in functioning as a leader in the workplace while struggling to maintain their cultural identity (Barajas, 2016; Carrillo, 2008; Chavez, 2012; Falk, 2011; Hernandez, 2005; Hernandez et al., 2014; Magilvy et al., 2006; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015; Murakami-Ramalho et al., 2009; Niño et al., 2017; Reyes, 2015; Santiago, 2009; Trujillo-Ball, 2003; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Trujillo-Ball (2003) studied how

the Latina female principal identity changes due to experiences, influences, and expectations from family, culture, society, and self. She described the identity of Latina females as a chameleon, adapting to the expectations of society, family, and culture. In nature, chameleons are constantly working toward changing their identity to fit the environment in which they thrive. Latina principals use the same adaptation behaviors of chameleons in order to adapt to the norm of any given social situation. Consequently, the unique Latina identity becomes invisible in order to adopt the normed identity established by the status quo. Trujillo-Ball (2003) addressed this invisible identity as a problem in educational administration, rationalizing for the small numbers of successful women and people of color in educational administration.

In addition, Hernandez (2005) analyzed the racial identity development experiences of Latino/a principals and the impact of their experiences on leadership practice. He examined the conditions under which their identity is expressed and suppressed in their practice. One of the principals in Hernandez's study noted her "passion can be overwhelming for some, and that she is working on toning it down, especially for the white audiences (Hernandez, 2005, p. 347). Hernandez concluded that the life experiences of the principals who participated in his study contributed to their identity development. These life experiences included language, family, school, differences, social class, religion, customs and traditions, adulthood experiences, birthplace, and residency paths.

Family Expectations

Magilvy et al. (2006) studied the phenomenon of aging Latino/a parents in a ten-

year longitudinal study along Northeastern Colorado and the San Luis Valley in California. Their findings identified an obligation to take care of their elders, a characteristic of the Latino/a culture (Falk, 2011; Magilvy, 2006). Yet, a conflict existed where societal, economic, and other changes were causing the shift in family support provided to Latino/a elders (Magilvy et al., 2006). These changes depend on the availability of jobs, the distancing of families as a result of seeking these jobs, and the changes in cultural traditions as younger generations establish themselves and establish their own cultural traditions. The cultural word phrase of *we take care of our own* is an example of a factor that would weigh heavily on the identity balance of a Latina principal, being that placing one's parents in a nursing home is frowned upon in the Latino/Hispanic culture. The expectation of moving a parent into one's home and taking care of them at home in lieu of placing them in a nursing facility impacts the time and identity role for Latina principals.

Moreover, the Latina racial identity conflict could stem from marianismo, a gender role script in Latin America based from the image of the Virgin Mary (Kosmiki, 2017; Palacios, 2013; Sanchez et al., 2017). The term marianismo was introduced by Evelyn Stevens (1973) to describe women's subordinate position in Latin American society and to bring attention to the glorified gender-role expectations of women (Castillo et al., 2010; Ertl et al., 2019; Kosmiki, 2017; Mendieta, 2016). Castillo et al. (2010) conceptualized marianismo into five dimensions: (a) priority to maintaining family, (b) expectation of a Latina to maintain her virginity until marriage, (c) obedience and respect of for the Latina/o family structure, and (d) avoidance of conflict and self-

silencing to maintain relationship harmony. Within the educational administration context, Carrillo (2008) discussed the White culture values their children to be independent and move out to make it on their own. Conversely, Latino culture is more interdependent and discourages their children from leaving home, particularly young Latina females. Participants in Carrillo's study confirmed that their parents reflected this perspective, and some of the participants noted that they were not expected to leave home until they were married.

Wrushen and Sherman (2008) also studied female principals from different ethnic backgrounds and investigated their family dynamics. Their findings revealed struggles to balance family and work. For instance, some females struggled with balancing the rearing of their children and work. Other females questioned their capacity to maintaining relationships and marriages while serving as principals. Wrushen and Sherman (2008) asserted females lack role models who have proven successful in maintaining both realms of work and home; therefore, the struggle of balancing the two realms has remained a challenge for Latinas to overcome.

Santiago (2009) concurred family connections are an essential component of the Latino culture. He found family relationships overlapped into the personal and professional realms of Latina principals. Morales (2014) confirmed how the Latina high school principals perceived their job as a difficult balance between being mothers, wives, and a principal. Even the single Latina principal in the study affirmed she would not have been a high school principal if she were married with children. Murakami-Ramalho et al. (2009) and Reyes (2015) also found Latina principals expressed conflict

in dealing with their roles as females at home and their roles as a principal.

Stereotypes

The term *token* (Ortiz, 1982) was used by scholars to describe the stereotypical placement of Latina principals (Enriquez-Damian, 2009; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Santiago, 2009). For example, the Latina school administrators in Santiago's (2009) study recalled painful memories when they were selected for a principalship because co-workers and community members made comments to them about how they were only hired because they needed another Latina/o administrator. These Latinas used the term *token* to describe their experiences. The term *token* caused Latina principals to have mixed feelings about being hired at schools with majority student Latino populations. Although these principals were proud to serve their communities and act as agents of change for social justice, they were concerned if they were placed at these schools solely because of their skin color, rather than their skills and qualifications. Santiago (2009) also found Latina principals who acknowledged the importance of being hired at a school with a low number of Latino students because this placement would demonstrate acceptance for their leadership abilities for all students, not just the Latino population.

Researchers (e.g., Carrillo, 2008; Hernandez et al., 2014; Palacio, 2013; Ramsey, 2013) indicated Latina principals were traditionally hired to successfully lead schools in deteriorating conditions where most of the population was students of color. Those who do eventually become principals advance through a stereotypical position, such as special program director. These Latina principals are often placed in these positions without them requesting or expressing the desire to occupy the position (Rosario-

Schoenfeld, 2010). For example, The National Research Study on Latino Principals Survey (NLLP) conducted by Méndez-Morse et al. (2015) collected demographic data and professional development experiences of Latina/o principals. They found half of Latina/o principals were counselors, athletic coaches, or directors before obtaining their administrative positions. Thus, Latinas who became superintendents advanced through a position where they felt typecasted. Latinas are typecasted into their administrative positions for their ethnicity or bilingual abilities. This typecasting serves as a challenge to Latinas seeking a path to high school principalship. Typecasting can perpetuate false notions. In turn, these false notions impact school board district hiring decisions and impede Latinas from obtaining high school head principal positions.

Furthermore, Hernandez et al. (2016) concluded the consistent placement of Latina/o principals in these schools creates the following problems: (a) the possibility to pigeonhole Latina/o principals into work positions fueling the false notion that Latinas/os are only capable of working with Students of Color; (b) the success of Latinas/os working in challenging schools with achievement gaps of diverse student groups can negatively impact their promotion beyond the campus level. Indeed, further research into the job trajectory of Latina/o leaders can provide insight on how Latina's navigate their path through the principalship up to central office (Benavidez, 2018). For example, Barrera (2019) interviewed a Texas high school Latina principal, and the high school Latina principal indicated she was the first high school Latina principal in her school district. For contextual purposes, her school district was established in 1949, and the first female high school principal (White ethnicity) was not hired until the year 2000.

Barrera noted she and her participant sat in silence to process how it took 51 years for a woman to be the first female of a high school and much longer to be the first Latina high school principal.

Salary Inequities

Stereotypes can lead to deficit notions, and deficit notions can lead to discrimination through salary inequities. For example, Roybal's (2012) auto-ethnography of working as an administrator in a school district in New Mexico, revealed salary inequities in comparison to her male counterparts. Specifically, she earned a principal salary of \$60,000 while the male high school principal earned \$85,000. She had more years of professional experience, she was responsible for supervising double the number of faculty, and she oversaw double the number of students. Roybal's résumé was extensive. She graduated Valedictorian of her high school, earned her Bachelor's degree in K-12 Music Education (Cum Laude), and earned her Master's in Bilingual Education from New Mexico Highlands University (Las Vegas NM). And in 2002, she began her doctoral program at New Mexico State University (Las Cruces, NM). Her five educational state licensures permit her to teach and practice as an administrator in grade levels PK-12 with endorsements in Language Arts, Performing Arts, and Bilingual Education. Despite her extensive resume, Roybal noted the superintendent of the district had no previous administrator experience, nor did he have a teacher or administrator license to practice in the state of New Mexico. His salary was \$80,000. She was stereotyped into her position, and her salary suffered.

Establishing Mentorships

Scholars (e.g., Amancio, 2019; Fernandez, R., 2013; Hernandez, 2005; Magdaleno, 2004; Méndez-Morse, 2004, Murakami, & Quijada-Cerecer, 2014; Palacio, 2013) have suggested mentorship programs for aspiring Latina leaders. Historically, mentoring has been a White, male-dominated realm. Due to the androcentric culture of educational administration, most administrators are White males. Aspiring principals of color could be limited in being recognized as potential leaders. Reyes (2015) explained how the politics of hiring an assistant principal depended on an endorsement from an influential administrator in the district (Reyes, 2015, p. 128). Consequently, the lack of Latina role models and mentors will forfeit the potential of Latinas obtaining leadership positions and future networking with aspiring Latina leaders.

Méndez-Morse (2004) argued more Latina leaders are entering the workforce, but female leaders of color lack mentorship for job advancement due to the traditional history of mentoring being dominated by White male culture. Méndez-Morse interviewed six Latina principals in West Texas to inquire how they attained their positions in the absence of formal mentors. Three descriptions of role models emerged: familial, distant, and professional. First, familial role models were influences, such as parents. The parents modeled work ethic, the value of education, and active support of school activities. Specifically, the maternal role model was important to these administrators. Despite fact that the educational levels of their mothers were not beyond high school, these mothers played an active role and valued the success of their daughters (Méndez-Morse, 2004). Second, distant role models were individuals who

they knew of but did not interact with or know personally. These role models were examples that obtaining that job or continuing school was possible. Distant role models served as a motivator for seeking opportunities for continuing education. Third, professional role models were coworkers or supervisors. Some of the administrators stated the teachers they had along their educational journey were the inspiration for them to consider a career in education.

Like Méndez-Morse's study, Mendieta (2016) analyzed the perspectives of Latina/o principals' mentorship experiences in both formal and informal platforms. The principals described their respective Latina/o principal mentors offering *consejos*, which is a Spanish translation for the advice. This advice ranged in topics from gender in race issues to navigating political undercurrents. The Latina/o principals in Mendieta's study provided: (a) encouragement and counseling, (b) opportunities for career advancement, (c) modeled leadership, and (d) modeled leadership for a successful school culture. Hence, mentorship was a critical factor in the perseverance of Latina/o administrators.

Mentoring Through Cohorts

Conversations with mentors about race and social justice can be difficult to mediate in a work environment embedded with hidden politics, especially if the mentor and the mentee work within the same building. Sperandio and LaPier (2009) collected data from two female minority teacher cohorts who aspired to become urban principals. This two-year program was a collaboration by a university partnership, the city school district, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) under a grant from the U.S. Department of Funded Schools. The goal of the program was to

assess an experimental leadership preparation program for aspiring urban principals. The researchers sought to offer a leadership preparation program that would benefit aspiring female leaders with a support system, as they become leaders of schools. The first cohort consisted of 11 leaders, eight females (two White, two Hispanic, and four African Americans) teachers recommended by their principals. These females were selected for their leadership potential from the perspective of their supervisors, without seeing themselves as potential leaders of schools or reflecting on how their potential leadership could be linked to serve as a social justice agent. The second cohort consisted of ten participants, including seven females (three White, one Hispanic, and three African Americans). The researchers found that the second cohort was able to articulate the intersections of racism and motivation for social justice. Opportunities to express their concerns in the safety of the cohort were valued amongst the participants. Sperandio and LaPier (2009) found this cohort setting functioned as a support and suggested females participants require safe spaces to have difficult conversations with females who were aware of gendered/ethnic stereotypes of leadership. The cohort setting fostered an environment of self-reflection while having critical conversations about stereotypes and social justice issues in a safe forum, free from workplace politics.

Reviewing Principal Programs

In addition to educators having the opportunity to have critical conversations in a safe forum, cohort principal preparation programs have also helped prepare principals for cultural competency centering on application, rather than theory. Roberts and Hernandez (2012) evaluated a principal preparation program at the University of Texas

at Pan Am in Edinburg, Texas, where poverty and English learners (ELs) demographics contributed to the lack of financial resources in this area. Roberts and Hernandez also reviewed methods applied in principal preparation programs from 42 Texas colleges and universities using the criteria from the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA). The criteria consisted of program hours, course content, principal certification requirements, internship, and use of cohorts. Sixteen superintendents who lead districts along the Texas-Mexico border were interviewed on how well the program prepared graduates to lead schools. Findings suggested that the University of Texas at Pan Am was committed to forming principal cohorts and providing quality internships that focused on the following skills: assertiveness in leadership communication, parent communication, understanding accountability, preparing budgets, growing teachers, using best practices, and applying knowledge in the field. Cohort principal programs, such as mentioned above, support aspiring principals with the best practices and skillsets needed to meet the needs of the predominantly English learner population.

Theoretical Framework

The success of the University of Texas at Pan Am cohort principal program was credited to superintendents' and program coordinators' skills in knowing the culture and needs of the population they served. These superintendents and program coordinators gave a voice to cohort participants by validating their experiences. Historically, the voices of this cohort have been lost in predominantly White-dominated institutions, such as in public schools. By exploring the perceptions of the Latino/a culture, researchers can gain insight into understanding the needs of the population they serve. The following

theoretical framework served as the foundation for understanding the perspective of Texas high school Latina principals: Latino/a critical race theory.

Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

In my study, I apply the LatCrit lens to contextualize the experiences of Texas high school Latina principals and to propel social change in the field of educational leadership. LatCrit is considered a raced-gendered epistemology, recognizing Students of Color as holders and creators of knowledge (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). LatCrit extends beyond the intersectionalities of race to include other variables: class, gender, identity, language, bilingual education, and immigration status (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, 2012; Huber, 2010; Irizarry, 2012; Solórzano & Delgado, 2001; Yosso, 2006). For instance, analyzing the cultural identity of Texas high school Latina principals through the LatCrit lens would provide knowledge on how these females function as leaders in the workplace while struggling to maintain their cultural identity (Carrillo, 2008; Chavez, 2012; Hernandez et al., 2014; Méndez-Morse 2000; Falk, 2011; Trujillo-Ball, 2003, Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Cultural upbringing is a complex factor in balancing work and family duties as traditional culture holds Latinas responsible for house domestics, child-rearing, and taking care of elderly parents (Chavez, 2012). Latinas are expected to sacrifice their own needs in order to take care of the needs of their family. Therefore, Latinas struggle to reach career goals, such as the principalship, in order to meet the expectations of her family and culture.

In addition, I employed LatCrit to study the educational and professional experiences of Texas high school Latina principals. Aleman (2009), Ladson-Billings

(1998), Valenzuela (2004), Villalpando (2003), and Yosso (2006) argued K-12 and higher education settings systematically oppress and discriminate against Students of Color. LatCrit scholars (i.e., L. Fernandez, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Valenzuela, 2004; Villalpando, 2003; Yosso, 2006) suggest the lack of representation of Latinos/as in higher education needs to be examined by studying the school context at the elementary and secondary levels. Consequently, school leaders and policymakers shape policy and practice based on their perceptions of the Latino/a population, which are often grounded with deficit notions and stereotypes of Latinos/as (Irizarry, 2012). Ironically, as schools set up programs with the intention of intervening academically to the Latina/o population, researchers acknowledge that educational institutions can operate in contradictory ways: with the potential to oppress and the potential to empower (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In summary, the application of the LatCrit lens guided my study of the perceptions of the Latina high school principals. Their perceptions gave legitimate research insight into the Latina leadership experience.

Summary

In this chapter, I integrated common findings and themes across the studies included in the scope of this literature critique. Within these studies, Latinas faced three common challenges in obtaining leadership positions: (a) balancing their identity, (b) dealing with typecasting and stereotypes, and (c) lack of mentorship programs. These themes were contextualized under the Latino critical race theory lens to study the life experiences of Texas high school Latina principals.

In Chapter III, I explain my research design and methodological approaches in establishing criteria for my data sources. I present my instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and methods for establishing trustworthiness and credibility. My perspective as a Latina and professional experience as a former high school administrator served as a familiarity guide to reflect on my own personal journey. By reflecting on my personal life and experiences, the reader can gain insight into my research process.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

In this qualitative phenomenological case study, there are two phases of the research. In the first phase, I analyzed the personal leadership perspectives of 114 Texas Latina high school principals as the first phase of this project. According to TEA (2018), 114 Latina principals were employed in Texas public high schools. These numbers represent 24% of all female high school principals 9% of all high school principals. In the second phase, I used a phenomenological approach to examine the life experiences of seven Texas Latina high school principals in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship including: (a) balance of the Latina identity in the workplace and home, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, and (c) mentorship experiences in the workplace. Specifically, the methods described in this chapter address the research questions of this study.

Research Questions

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?
2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?
3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

This chapter is organized into six sections: (a) research approach, (b) participants, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection, (e) data analysis, and (f) trustworthiness and reliability.

Research Approach

I chose a phenomenological case study to examine the personal leadership perspectives of multiple individuals and recognize phenomena through the eyes of the participants (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The case study component of this research refers to a bounded system allowing researchers to study individual(s), events, or activities (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described a case study like the top of a funnel, beginning with a wide scope of searching for possible sources of data and judging the feasibility of the data source for the researcher's purpose. In the first phase of this study, I analyzed the perspectives of 114 Texas Latina high school principals via an open-ended questionnaire in a statewide scope. In the second phase of this study, I implemented strategic selection criteria, outlined in the data collection section of this chapter, to narrow the research scope. This narrowing in the scope provided an opportunity to examine the life experiences of seven Texas Latina high school principals within their educational leadership contexts through in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

Moreover, the second phase of my study employed a phenomenological approach within a multiple case study. Phenomenology is the study of everyday life as one experiences it (Schwandt, 2007). For example, researchers approach a phenomenon through the view of the participants' lived experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The

purpose of phenomenology is to discover the essence of the participant's lived experience free from assumptions, and it emphasizes how individuals experience the world, such as how a patient experiences illness or how a teacher encounters a learning experience with a student (van Manen, 2007; van Manen, 2014). Therefore, the second phase of this study analyzed how seven cases of Texas Latina high school principals experience the world. I also conducted a cross-case analysis for the seven cases to determine similarities and differences in the Latina principals' lived experiences.

Participants

Phase One

Through purposeful sampling, the participants in the first phase of this study were identified as Texas Latina public high school principals per the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2018). This information was requested through a TEA public information request (TEA, 2018) and contains principal names, geographic location by Texas Educator Service Center (ESC) region, school district and campus name and address, principal school phone and school email contact information, and student enrollment counts. Latina principals from private schools, charter schools, special sites, and disciplinary alternative education placement (DAEP) schools were excluded. Of the 1,286 Texas traditional public high schools (grades 9-12), only 114 self-identified Latina principals occupied high school principal positions statewide (TEA, 2018). All 114 of these self-identified Latina high school principals received an open-ended questionnaire. Table 6 also includes a comparison of the 114 Latina principals to the 2,827,807 Latino/a students by ESCs.

Table 6*2017-2018 Texas High School Latina Principal Count and Student Enrollment Counts**by ESC Region*

ESC region location	Latina high school principal count	Latino student enrollment count
Region 1 (Brownsville)	43	421,181
Region 2 (Corpus Christi)	12	78,127
Region 3 (Victoria)	1	30,771
Region 4 (Houston)	7	613,926
Region 5 (Beaumont)	1	18,241
Region 6 (Huntsville)	0	71,602
Region 7 (Kilgore)	0	47,884
Region 8 (Mt. Pleasant)	0	11,881
Region 9 (Wichita Falls)	0	10,451
Region 10 (Richardson)	8	373,425
Region 11 (Fort Worth)	4	213,972
Region 12 (Waco)	1	59,507
Region 13 (Austin)	5	186,586
Region 14 (Abilene)	1	21,400
Region 15 (San Angelo)	1	29,194
Region 16 (Amarillo)	1	40,283
Region 17 (Lubbock)	1	49,196
Region 18 (Midland)	3	62,416
Region 19 (El Paso)	10	160,347
Region 20 (San Antonio)	15	327,417

Note. ESC Regions 6 (Huntsville), 7 (Kilgore), 8 (Mount Pleasant), and 9 (Wichita Falls) did not contain high school Latina principals.

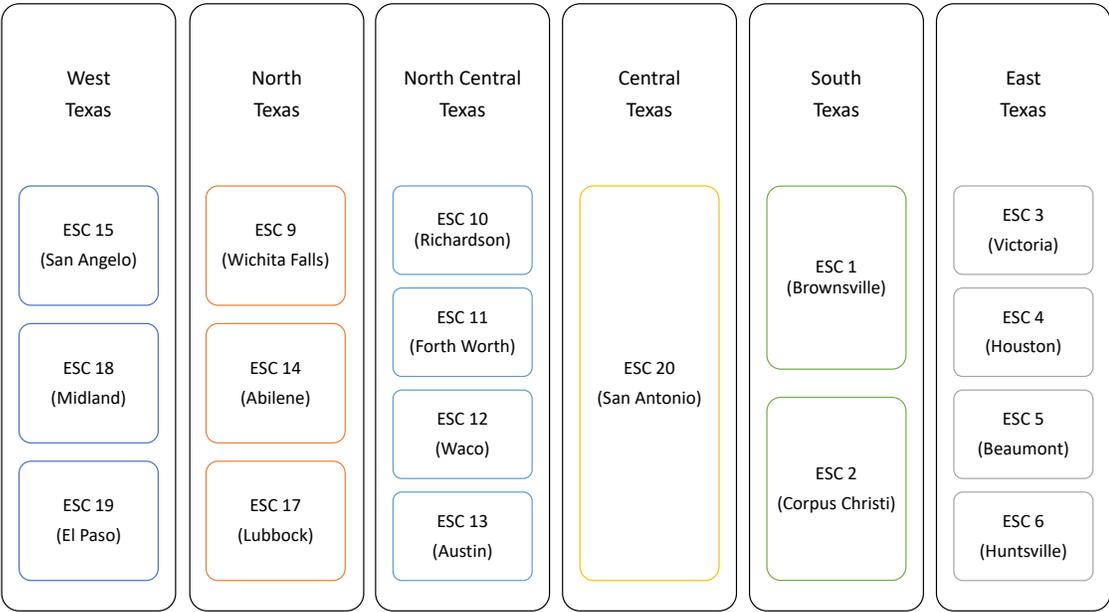
Phase Two

Of the 114 principal participants who completed the open-ended questionnaire from phase one, I selected seven Latina high school principals for individual in-depth interviews. Figure 5 contains six geographic locations throughout Texas and their respective ESCs. My selection criteria for a purposeful sample for the seven principals are the following: (a) one from each geographic location as noted in Figure 5 and (b) three years of principal leadership experience. The participants from different ESCs

throughout Texas should provide insight into the Latina high school principal experiences across Texas. In the event no principals volunteered to participate in the interviews in a specific geographic region, I moved to the adjacent region to determine a participant.

Figure 5

Six Geographic Locations Throughout Texas and Respective ESCs



Instrumentation

I utilized two instruments in this study, and these instruments were implemented in two phases. In phase one, an open-ended questionnaire assisted me in collecting responses from the 114 Texas Latina high school principals. In phase two, individual semi-structured interviews aided me in obtaining a rich description of the participants' experiences across the state.

Phase One

I used an open-ended questionnaire, providing an opportunity for all the 114 Texas Latina high school principals to participate in the study. The purpose of the open-ended questionnaire is to gain a statewide scope of Latina leadership perspectives, as well as to identify common opinions and directions for future in-depth study. A distribution and collection timeline for this questionnaire is discussed in the Data Collection section of this chapter.

The open-ended questionnaire was validated by face validity (Gall et al., 2007; Hardesty & Bearden, 2004; Nevo, 1985). Hardesty, and Bearden (2004) stated previous researchers defined face validity as the extent to which a measure reflects what it is intended to measure. Validity by assumption denotes when the test is assumed to be valid if the items, which compose it, *appear on their face* to bear a common-sense relationship to the objective of the test. Validity is an indication the test is valid if the items sufficiently represent the total universe of appropriate questions to the subject-matter expert. The appearance of validity signifies a test should appear valid in the sense of having statistical validity and used in a practical situation.

Face validity consisted of an expert panel of at least 15 junior high school Latina principals to validate the questions on the questionnaire. Email invitations to participate as an expert in validating the questions on the questionnaire were sent on August 25, 2019. These experts did not participate in the study. They only reviewed the questionnaire and answered the question: How well do you think the questionnaire measures the perceptions of Texas high school Latina principals concerning their

background, job trajectory, race, gender, and mentorship experiences related to their job? The experts responded using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very poorly) to 5 (very well) and provide qualitative feedback. Cronbach’s alpha was used to measure the consistency of the experts' opinion of the instrument. Table 7 contains the open-ended questionnaire questions for the 114 Latina high school principals.

Table 7

Texas High School Latina Principal Open-Ended Questionnaire

Experiences and perceptions
1. How has being a Latina principal shaped your leadership practice?
2. Describe some challenges in balancing your job and home life.
3. Why do you think you were chosen to lead your campus? Did gender or ethnicity play a factor in this hiring decision?
4. What challenges have you encountered on your journey to the high school principalship? Were these challenges due to your gender or ethnicity?
5. Who impacted your decision to become a high school principal? Why?
6. Who has served a mentorship role in your professional career, and how did they help you achieve your goals?
7. What are your future personal and professional goals?
8. What advice do you have for aspiring Latina high school principals who currently occupy positions as teachers or assistant principals?
9. Would you be open to a follow up interview (audio recorded)?
Demographics and background
1. Country of origin
2. Cultural identity (Example: Mexican-American, Central American)
3. What language(s) do you speak?
4. Indicate your age year range. ___ 20-29 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50-59 ___ 60 and over
5. How many years did you teach at each of the following school placements? _____ elementary _____ middle _____ high school
6. How many years were you a principal at each of the following school placements? _____ elementary _____ middle _____ high school

Phase Two

After reviewing the open-ended questionnaire data, I selected seven principal participants that qualified and met the criteria: (a) one from each geographic location as noted in Figure 5 and (b) three years of principal leadership experience. If multiple participants met the selection criteria from within a geographic area displayed in Figure 5, I randomly selected a participant to conduct a 45-60-minute semi-structured phenomenological interview. The purpose of the phenomenological interview is to gather data for developing a richer and deeper understanding of the human experience. In a sense, the interviewee becomes the co-investigator of the study, because she has been given a voice and ownership (Hays & Singh, 2012; van Manen, 1990). Via the semi-structured interview protocol outlined in Table 8, I collected a richer and deeper data sample by probing and extending the open-ended questionnaire from the first phase of this study.

Table 8

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Interview questions with probing examples

1. Tell me about your educational background. (Probe for first language or language learning experiences, family cultural background, and family expectations about education)
2. How has being a Latina principal shaped you as a leader? (Probe for family influences, work relationships, education and work experiences)
3. How do you balance work and home? (Probe for home and work dynamics, support systems, and work/home conflicts)
4. How long have you been a principal? What were your previous positions? (Probe for work experiences, reason for change in work experience, issues of gender, cultural bias, power and/or politics)
5. Why do you think you were hired for your current position? Was gender or ethnicity a factor? (Probe for issues of gender, cultural bias power and/or politics)

Table 8 Continued

Interview questions with probing examples

6. What challenges have you encountered on your journey to the high school principalship? Were these challenges due to your gender or ethnicity? (Probe for issues of gender, cultural bias power and/or politics)
7. Who impacted your decision to become a high school principal? (Probe for influences, mentors, and support systems)
8. Who has served a mentorship role in your professional career, and how did they help you achieve your goals? (Probe for formal or informal mentor support systems, work and home influences)
9. What are your future personal and professional goals? (Probe for inspiration for goals and plans to achieve these goals)
10. What advice do you have for aspiring Latina high school principals who currently occupy positions as teachers or assistant principals? (Probe for knowledge, perspective on culture and navigating school norms)
11. Do you know of any other Latinas who pursued the high school principal position or other administrative positions? How did it work out for them? (Probe for knowledge of others experiences)
12. Is there anything else you would like to say that I might have overlooked? (Probe for reflections on life experiences, regrets, what would you have done differently?)

Data Collection

Phase One

First, I contacted the principals by phone to inform them of my study and to anticipate my open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was emailed via Qualtrics to 114 Latina high school principals as provided by TEA (2018) on the following dates: November 10, 2019, December 1, 2019, January 9, 2020, February 10, 2020, and February 23, 2020. In total, the questionnaire data were collected over a time period of November 10, 2019, through March 6, 2020. The email contained an introduction of myself and the purpose of my research. Per IRB guidelines, I stated that their participation in this study was voluntary and confidential. Neither the participant names

nor the school district names were used in reporting responses to ensure they could not be identified. I also explained they may choose to participate by clicking on a separate survey link. A second email served as a reminder and follow-up to increase questionnaire participation. A third email introducing a financial incentive to complete the questionnaire was presented to maximize participant participation. For instance, below is an example of my introductory email communication/phone talking script:

Hello, my name is Elsa Villarreal, and I am a doctoral candidate at Texas A&M University in the Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development. The objective of my dissertation study is to investigate the perspectives and experiences of Texas high school Latina principals as they pertain to their gender, ethnicity, and their educational/professional journey. Would you consider contributing to my study? Your insights are valuable, and your voice will contribute to the field of educational leadership. Would you be interested in participating in a short open-ended questionnaire? The questionnaire will be brief (no more than 20 questions). Your identity would remain anonymous, and a pseudonym will replace your identity and school district name. A follow up interview may be necessary, but I will not determine who will be interviewed until I have had an opportunity to review the questionnaire data. Enclosed is my approved IRB documentation, signifying Texas A&M University has granted me permission to conduct the study, and my dissertation chairs will oversee my research process. Your input and your time are greatly appreciated.

Table 9 includes the timeline for the distribution and follow-up of the open-ended questionnaires.

Table 9

Questionnaire Timeline of Distribution and Follow Up

Time frame	Description
Week one	Introductory phone call and email describing the study, including first participant consent for the questionnaire and web link to the questionnaire.
Week two	Follow up with reminder phone call and reminder email containing participant consent for the questionnaire and web link to the questionnaire.

Table 9 Continued

Time frame	Description
Week three	Introduce financial incentive to complete the questionnaire by phone call and email participant consent for the questionnaire and web link to the questionnaire.
Week four	Follow up phone call and reminder email describing financial incentive and include participant consent for the questionnaire and web link to the questionnaire.

The results of the open-ended questionnaire guided me to reflect on the perspectives in my meta-synthesis literature critique, create new questions to explore topics in-depth, and possibly pursue emerging topics specific to the Latina principal population. After reviewing the questionnaire data, I selected seven principal participants for a follow-up interview. My selection criteria for selecting the seven principals are the following: one from each geographic location (see Figure 5) and three years of principal leadership experience. Should multiple participants had met the selection criteria from within a geographic area displayed in Figure 5, I randomly selected a participant to conduct a 45-60-minute semi-structured phenomenological interview. These seven principal participants completed a second consent form to participate in Phase Two of this study.

Phase Two

The semi-structured interview was conducted via an audio-recorded interview (GoToMeeting), and the duration of the interview was 45-60 minutes. The interview data collection spanned from May 1, 2020, to June 22, 2020. Interviews were transcribed fully, indicating these transcriptions were conducted verbatim, including filler words, false starts, and repetitive phrases (Carlson, 2010). Throughout the interview, points of

clarification and replay took place to ensure correct communication and interpretation between the interviewer and interviewee. A replay is a valuable method to ensure the researcher has heard the participant correctly (Hays & Singh, 2012). For instance, I may use phrases like, “Would you say? Did you mean? Is that another word for . . .?” A replay is a restatement or paraphrase immediately following a participant's response to ensure clarification and elaboration.

Data Analysis

Phase One

Questionnaire Reliability

An expert panel of 22 junior high school Latina principals validated the questions on the open-ended questionnaire from August 25, 2019, to November 3, 2019. These experts did not participate in the study. They only reviewed the questionnaire and answered the question: How well do you think the questionnaire measures the perceptions of Texas high school Latina principals concerning their background, job trajectory, race, gender, and mentorship experiences related to their job? The experts responded using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very poorly) to 5 (very well) and provide qualitative feedback. I utilized Cronbach's alpha via SPSS software to measure the consistency of the experts' opinion of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha measures the reliability of a scale defined by

$$\alpha = \frac{N^2 \overline{cov}}{\sum s_{item}^2 + \sum cov_{item}}$$

in which the top half of the equation is the number of items squared multiplied by the average covariance between items, and the bottom half is the sum of all the elements in the variance-covariance matrix (Field, 2013). I analyzed the variance within the item and the covariance between a particular item and any other item on the scale. Due to the multiple constructs within the questionnaire, Green and Salkind (2011) recommended computing separate reliability analyses for all subscales of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Responses

Three approaches assisted me to uncover meaning from the open-ended questionnaire text. van Manen (2014) emphasized the interpretation of meaning is "not a rule-bound process but a free act of seeing meaning" (p. 320). van Manen (1990) utilized three approaches towards unveiling meaning from the text: (a) the holistic or sententious approach, (b) the selective or highlighting approach, and (c) the detailed or line-by-line approach. First, the holistic or sententious approach signifies generating a central meaning to capture the text as a whole. Second, the selective reading approach guides the researcher to search for statements essential or revealing about the described phenomenon. These statements stand out from the text, and the researcher indicates these statements with a marker (highlight, underline). Third, the detailed reading approach orients the researcher to examine single sentences or sentence clusters exposing the described phenomenon. As I looked for recurring descriptions from the questionnaires, I grouped them into themes. These themes contained statements from the text to bolster holistic meaning. My responsibility as a researcher was to see the meaning of the text and connect these meanings to a main holistic meaning.

Phase Two

Similar to the data analysis protocol for the open-ended questionnaire responses, I applied van Manen's (2014) three approaches in drawing meaning from text. Specifically, I extended the analysis of the interview responses through the Latino/a critical race theory lens (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Irizarry, 2012; Yosso, 2006). The application of the Latino/a critical race theory lens served as a vehicle to obtain insight into a specific, marginalized population. This theory provided an interpretation of the multidimensional Latina identities and can address the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). Examples of other forms of oppression are immigration status, language, phenotype, and ethnicity (Huber, 2010). I reflected on the emergence of my findings through the LatCrit lens and provided insight on how these findings shape the Latina high school principal experience.

Furthermore, these seven interview participants were analyzed as separate cases, then compared to all the cases for a cross-case analysis (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). In other words, each case was analyzed for common concepts as well as its individual findings. For instance, each case is analyzed within its own context, and this context may include physical, social, cultural, economic, and political contexts (Stake, 2006). Stake (2006) also pointed out the benefits of a multi-case study will be limited if the researcher concentrates on fewer than four cases or more than ten. In consideration, I evaluated a total of seven cases for my study.

Questionnaire Reliability

Face validity was applied to the reliability of the open-ended questionnaire. An expert panel of 22 middle school/junior high school Texas Latina principals validated the questions of the questionnaire through a Qualtrics survey platform. These experts did not participate in the study. They only reviewed the questionnaire and answered the question: How well do you think the questionnaire measures the perceptions of Texas high school Latina principals concerning their background, job trajectory, race, gender, and mentorship experiences related to their job? The experts responded using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very poorly) to 5 (very well) and provided qualitative feedback. Table 10 contains the open-ended questionnaire questions rated by the 22-middle school/junior high school expert panel.

Table 10

Questionnaire Reliability: Rating a questionnaire Intended for Texas High School Latina Principals

Please review the questions and rate on how well you think the questionnaire measures the perceptions of Texas high school Latina principals concerning their background, job trajectory, race, gender, and mentorship experiences related to their job. Responses will be measured on a rating scale, ranging from 1 (very poorly) to 5 (very well).

Experiences and perceptions

1. Type your first and last name in the space below.
2. How has being a Latina principal shaped your leadership practice?
3. Describe some challenges in balancing your job and home life.
4. Why do you think you were chosen to lead your campus? Did gender or ethnicity play a factor in this hiring decision?
5. What challenges have you encountered on your journey to the high school principalship? Were these challenges due to your gender or ethnicity?
6. Who impacted your decision to become a high school principal? Why?

Table 10 Continued

Please review the questions and rate on how well you think the questionnaire measures the perceptions of Texas high school Latina principals concerning their background, job trajectory, race, gender, and mentorship experiences related to their job. Responses will be measured on a rating scale, ranging from 1 (very poorly to 5 very well).

Experiences and perceptions

7. Who has served a mentorship role in your professional career, and how did they help you achieve your goals?

8. What are your future personal and professional goals?

9. What advice do you have for aspiring Latina high school principals who currently occupy positions as teachers or assistant principals?

Demographics and background

1. Country of origin _____

2. Cultural identity (Example: Mexican-American, Central American) _____

3. What language(s) do you speak? _____

4. Indicate your age year range ____ 20-29 ____ 30-39 ____ 40-49 ____ 50-59 ____ 60 and over

5. How many years did you teach at each of the following school placements?
_____ Elementary _____ Middle _____ High School

6. How many years were you a principal at each of the following school placements?
_____ Elementary _____ Middle _____ High School

7. Are there any questions, comments, or concerns that you would like for me to address?

A Cronbach's alpha analysis was utilized to measure the internal consistency of the open-ended questionnaire. Tavakol and Dennick (2011) suggested internal consistency should be determined to ensure validity before a test can be utilized. Specifically, alpha values of 0.7 to 0.8 are considered satisfactory (Bland & Altman, 1997; Field, 2013; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). In this study, α is .881, indicating good reliability (Field, 2013). The Cronbach's alpha, the Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items (items standardized to a variance of 1), and the number of items that make up the questionnaire scale are outlined in the following table.

Table 11*Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's α	Cronbach's α (based on standardized items)	Number of items
.881	.895	14

Note. Questions 1 and 15 were not included in the calculation due to their open-ended qualitative nature.

In addition, descriptive statistics were conducted to analyze the average response to each question. Responses were measured on a rating scale, ranging from 1 (very poorly to 5 very well). For instance, “Question 2 Leadership Identity” consisted of an average value of 4.0455, indicating that the average response to this question was approximately “somewhat well” (as “somewhat well” was coded as a 4). The standard deviation is 0.89853 signifying that the responses to this question vary within one standard deviation of the mean. The table below includes a descriptive statistics analysis of the mean, the standard deviation, and the number of Latina junior high principals who participated in rating the questionnaire.

Table 12*Item Descriptive Statistics*

Question item	M	SD	N
Q2 Leadership identity	4.0455	0.89853	22
Q3 Work/life balance	4.0909	1.30600	22
Q4 Current assignment	3.3182	1.21052	22
Q5 Challenges	4.1818	0.85280	22
Q6 Inspiration/impact	4.4091	0.73414	22
Q7 Mentorship roles	4.4545	0.73855	22
Q8 Goals	4.0909	0.81118	22
Q9 Advice	4.6364	0.72673	22

Table 12 Continued

Question item	M	SD	N
Q10 Background origin	4.0909	0.81118	22
Q11 Cultural identity	4.2273	0.86914	22
Q12 Languages spoken	4.5000	0.74001	22
Q13 Age range	4.4091	0.79637	22
Q14 Teaching experience	4.4091	0.73414	22
Q15 Principal experience	4.5455	0.67098	22

Furthermore, an item-total analysis was conducted to study the correlations between the score of each question item and the total score of the questionnaire. The contribution of each item to the questionnaire scale is outlined in the Item-Total statistics table below (Table 13). Specifically, the first two columns, “Scale Mean if Item Deleted” and “Scale Variance if Item Deleted,” are indicators of what the scale mean and variance, respectively, would be if that item were deleted from the scale. Both columns contain values of “Somewhat Well” and “Very Well.” The third column “Corrected Item-Total Correlation” is composed of the correlations between each item and the total score from the questionnaire. Field (2013) stated values less than 0.3 are problematic, indicating an item does not correlate very well with the scale overall. In this study, all correlations between each item and total score from the questionnaire were above a 0.3 value. The fourth column “Squared Multiple Correlation” is the R^2 value in a multiple regression with the dependent variable as the specific item and the predictors as the other items (Laerd Statistics, 2015). In this case, the values remain large for the squared multiple correlation column, signifying an explanation to the variation in other items. Finally, the values in the column labeled “Cronbach’s Alpha if Item Deleted” are

the values of the overall α if that question item was not included in the calculation. Since the overall α is .881, all values in this column were equal or greater than the overall α . A breakdown of each question item to the questionnaire is displayed below:

Table 13

Item-Total Statistics

Question item	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's α if item deleted
Q2 Leadership identity	55.3636	51.385	.448	.675	.878
Q3 Work/life balance	55.3182	47.465	.498	.828	.881
Q4 Current assignment	56.0909	48.848	.452	.755	.882
Q5 Challenges	55.2273	52.729	.402	.861	.880
Q6 Inspiration and impact	55.0000	50.286	.686	.817	.867
Q7 Mentorship roles	54.9545	49.665	.745	.968	.865
Q8 Goals	55.3182	50.703	.572	.884	.872
Q9 Advice	54.7727	50.089	.715	.849	.866
Q10 Background origin	55.3182	50.323	.607	.913	.870
Q11 Cultural identity	55.1818	49.680	.615	.878	.870
Q12 Languages spoken	54.9091	51.515	.556	.807	.873
Q13 Age range	55.0000	51.048	.552	.945	.873
Q14 Teaching experience	55.0000	52.476	.466	.792	.876
Q15 Principal experience	54.8636	50.409	.746	.940	.866

Moreover, the questionnaire consisted of five subscales: (a) Identity, (b) Stereotypes, (c) Mentorship, (d) Goals, and (e) Background Experience. In order to analyze the association of item questions with these subscales, a subscale item analysis was compiled for each individual subscale (Green & Salkind, 2011). First, question items Q2 and Q3 were computed to assess the association with the Identity subscale. Second, question items Q4 and Q5 were evaluated for correlation with the Stereotypes subscale. Third, an analysis was conducted to determine whether question items Q6 and Q7 corresponded with the Mentorship subscale. Fourth, question items Q8 and Q9 were compared to the Goals subscale. Fifth, question items Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, and Q15 were calculated to examine their relationship to the Background Experience subscale.

The Identity, Mentorship, and Background subscales all had satisfactory reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = .72, .75, \text{ and } .88$ respectively. However, the Stereotype and Goals subscales concluded low reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = .27 \text{ and } .46$ correspondingly. In order to address the low reliability from the Stereotype and Goals subscales, I referred to the qualitative feedback of the junior high Latina principal expert panel and made revisions accordingly. For example, one of the panelists recommended question items Q2, Q3, and Q4 to be more open-ended in nature. Another panelist suggested caution in presenting two questions within one question item. The results of the five subscales are listed below in tables 14 through 23:

Table 14*Reliability Analysis: Identity*

Cronbach's α	Cronbach's α (based on standardized items)	Number of items
.722	.754	2

For the Identity subscale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Table 15*Subscale Item Analysis: Identity*

Question item	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's α if item deleted
Q2Identitypractice	4.0909	1.706	.605	.366	.
Q3Identitybalance	4.0455	.807	.605	.366	.

Thus, the question items Q2 and Q3 within the Identity subscale correlate with the scale overall.

Table 16*Reliability Analysis: Stereotypes*

Cronbach's α	Cronbach's α (based on standardized items)	Number of items
.279	.293	2

For the Stereotype subscale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .27$, concluding a low reliability.

Table 17*Subscale Item Analysis: Stereotypes*

Question item	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's α if item deleted
Q4Stereohire	4.1818	.727	.172	.030	.
Q5Stereochallenge	3.3182	1.465	.172	.030	.

In order to address the low reliability from the Stereotype subscale, I referred to the qualitative feedback of the junior high Latina principal expert panel and made revisions accordingly. For example, one of the panelists recommended question item Q4 to be more open-ended in nature.

Table 18*Reliability Analysis: Mentorship*

Cronbach's α	Cronbach's α (based on standardized items)	Number of items
.755	.755	2

For the Mentorship subscale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$, resulting in satisfactory reliability.

Table 19*Subscale Item Analysis: Mentorship*

Question item	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's α if item deleted
Q6Mentorimpact	4.4545	.545	.607	.368	.
Q7Mentorrole	4.4091	.539	.607	.368	.

Thus, the question items Q6 and Q7 within the Mentorship subscale correlate with the scale overall.

Table 20*Reliability Analysis: Goals*

Cronbach's α	Cronbach's α (based on standardized items)	Number of items
.461	.463	2

For the Goals subscale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .46$, concluding a low reliability.

Table 21*Subscale Item Analysis: Goals*

Question item	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's α if item deleted
Q8Goal	4.6364	.528	.301	.091	.
Q9Advice	4.0909	.658	.301	.091	.

In order to address the low reliability from the Goals subscale, I referred to the qualitative feedback of the junior high Latina principal expert panel and made revisions accordingly. For example, one panelist suggested caution in presenting two questions within one question item.

Table 22

Reliability Analysis: Background

Cronbach's α	Cronbach's α (based on standardized items)	Number of items
.881	.884	6

For the Background subscale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$, yielding satisfactory reliability.

Table 23

Subscale Item Analysis: Background

Question item	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's α if item deleted
Q10Origin	22.0909	9.706	.618	.763	.873
Q11Cultureid	21.9545	8.998	.716	.786	.857
Q12Languages	21.6818	9.942	.643	.601	.868
Q13Age	21.7727	9.422	.702	.781	.859
Q14Teachexp	21.7727	9.708	.709	.699	.858
Q15Leadexp	21.6364	9.766	.780	.781	.849

Question items Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, and Q15 within the Background subscale correlate with the scale overall. In summary, a Cronbach's alpha analysis was utilized to

measure the internal consistency of the open-ended questionnaire. With respect to the calculations mentioned above, the questionnaire is considered a reliable instrument.

Trustworthiness and Reliability

Qualitative research has impacted much what we believe and do in the world of business, education, psychology, counseling, and in life in general (Edmonson & Irby, 2008). The qualitative approach emerged during the period of 1970s and it is replicated in methods toward validity today (Creswell, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Hays and Singh (2012) stated previous researchers referred to Lincoln and Guba (1985) as the gold standard in judging trustworthiness in qualitative research. Guba's (1981) constructs for ensuring trustworthiness have been used for decades in qualitative research: (a) credibility (in preference to internal validity); (b) transferability (in preference to external validity/generalizability); dependability (in preference to reliability); and confirmability (in preference to objectivity). Examples of these methods include audit trail, member checking, triangulation, thick description, peer reviews, and external audits.

Audit Trail

I maintained a physical, tangible audit trail of my data collection and analysis procedures in a locked cabinet. Audio interviews were maintained and kept for five years. The purpose of an audit trail is to provide evidence for an auditor or any consumer to review (Carlson, 2010; Hays & Singh, 2012). The transparency of an audit trail demonstrated my commitment to conduct an ethical and professional research study. An audit trail allows a reader to follow my footprints through each stage of my research

process and determine whether the findings may be relied upon as a platform for further inquiry (Carcary, 2009).

Member Checking

Member checking has been cited as the key strategy for establishing trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Member checks may consist of researchers confirming the accuracy of the data as the data collection is taking place (i.e. points of clarification) or the informant reviewing interview transcripts and/or field notes. The focus is on whether the informants agree their words match what they intended to express (Shenton, 2004). In this study, I followed up with my analysis and interpretations of the participant's responses and obtained consent that I have verified and interpreted their responses with accuracy, as they intended. After transcribing the interview, the informant was given the opportunity to review the interview transcript in the form of their choice, whether reviewing a hard copy, electronic copy, listening to audio playback, or my dictation of the transcription. Offering choices for member checking procedures ensured participant comfort and confidence throughout the member checking process (Carlson, 2010). The goal of reviewing transcripts with the informant is not just a check for word accuracy; it is an opportunity to verify if the words express their life experience correctly.

Triangulation

Denzin (1978) distinguished four types of triangulation: (a) triangulation of data, which involves the employment of data from various sources; (b) triangulation of researchers, which implies the introduction to the research numerous evaluators and

auditors; (c) theoretical triangulation, meaning the employment of various theoretical perspectives to interpret a single set of data; and (d) methodological triangulation, which means the employment of numerous methods to study a single problem.

Triangulation of Data Sources

The triangulation of data sources may involve several participants who possess similar characteristics and are experiencing a phenomenon in various ways (Hays & Singh, 2012). In this study, the data collection procedure involves female principals across Texas who share similar characteristics, such as, gender, ethnicity, and job title. The use of a questionnaire functioned as the top of the case study funnel, and semi-structured interviewing worked as the bottom of the case study funnel to increase the scope or depth of the study (Morse, 2015).

Methodological Triangulation

Interviews, observations, and field notes are typically used in qualitative method triangulation (Carter et al., 2014). Different data collection modes were utilized: open-ended questionnaire responses, interviews, documents, and researcher's reflection notes. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described triangulation as a fisherman using multiple nets, placed together so that intact portions of other nets covered the holes in one net. These different data collection modes intend to demonstrate the complexity of social reality and multidimensional analysis of the phenomenon in this study (Konecki, 2008).

Thick Description

Thick description is a strategy of trustworthiness that refers to creating a detailed explanation of the research methods, participants, context of the study, and findings. In

qualitative research, the intention is to explore with depth, seeking information richness, not volume (Erlandson et al., 1993). Therefore, the goal is quality not quantity. The detailed and thick descriptions from the seven interviews served as a method to obtain data saturation (no new ideas), and depending on the sample size of the population, data saturation may be accomplished by as little as seven in-depth interviews (Fusch, 2015).

Reflexive Journals

My research journey and reflections were documented in a journal. The purpose of this reflexive journal is to keep a record of my evolving analysis and methods to ensure trustworthiness (Finlay, 2012). My reflexive commentary assisted me in monitoring my own constructions, which is critical in establishing credibility. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems. The expectation of a reflective journal is to demonstrate transparency by informing readers of my mistakes, biases and likes and dislikes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Morse (2015) discussed two forms of researcher bias: the tendency for the researcher to see what is anticipated and the researcher's choice of qualitative methods and design. A strategy to combat the biases mentioned above would be to implement a thoroughly detailed plan for data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness. By utilizing these strategies, the researcher will offer a system of checks and balances (Morse, 2015). Researchers who support the reflexivity acknowledge the impact of researcher subjectivity is inevitable, specifically during the data analysis; however, they suggest the researcher's subjectivity can also represent an opportunity during qualitative research that cannot be eliminated (Darawsheh, 2014).

Researcher Perspective

My perspective as a Latina and professional experience as a former high school administrator served as a familiarity guide to reflect on my own personal journey (cultural, familial, developmental, and educational background) to the intellectual themes of the work (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 185). By reflecting on my personal life and experiences, the reader can gain insight into my research process. In turn, my research process would remain open and transparent, demonstrating my influence in the research process (Palaganas et al., 2017, p. 431). Every researcher strives for objectivity in their research, and they must be transparent about their research process and their influence on their research process. Bourke (2014) suggested researchers could strive to remain objective, but they cannot ignore their subjectivities. Therefore, I must acknowledge who I am as an individual and become aware of how my identity influenced my research.

Researcher Positionality

I am a native Texan and first-generation Latina. My mother is a Mexican immigrant, and my father is a native Texan, first-generation Latino. Growing up in a first-generation home required additional responsibilities on my part. Since my mother spoke little English, she depended on me to translate the transactions of a bank teller, doctor's orders, and grocery store labels. I recall translating at the age of five, and my mother depended on me to help her run errands while my father was away at work as the sole breadwinner of my family. My Spanish translation duties resumed throughout my teenage years while I adjusted to living biculturally. As a high school student, I recalled

being one of the few students of color in my advanced courses. I also had to convince my mother to allow me to attend my high school prom. This event was a school-sponsored activity, and the norm was for boys to ask girls out to the prom with a simple face-to-face invitation or phone call. The norms of high school prom contradicted the dating norms instilled in my mother's upbringing, as her dates were chaperoned until marriage. The only time my father could step foot in my mother's home was to ask for her hand in marriage. I was finally granted permission to attend my high school prom because my father persuaded my mother to give me permission. My father had graduated from a Texas high school and understood the high school culture of football games, homecoming, and prom.

As an adult, I taught Spanish to high school students for seven years, and I exposed my students to my home language and culture. Most of the Latino teachers on my campus were Spanish teachers, and I felt the Latino students, who were the majority student population at my campus, needed a role model. I became a high school assistant principal and served the students at my graduating high school for eight years. With the support of my head principal and central administration, I was the first administrator to pilot the Optional Flexible School Day Program (night school) in my district. Students enrolled in the program were dropouts; young parents; former gang members; special education students; English learners (ELs); economically disadvantaged; homeless; and over-aged freshmen. As a product of my school district, I was hired to reconnect and reach out to my community in reducing the high school dropout rate. My knowledge of the community, my own cultural background, and my ability to speak Spanish enabled

me to create critical partnerships with my community and ensure student success. These experiences shaped my reflexivity on the perceptions of high school Latina principals in this study.

Summary

The purpose this research and the research questions were presented in this chapter. The participants were chosen through a purposeful sample of Texas high school Latina principals. The selection of 114 participants was discussed. In addition, the instruments were presented with procedures for determining their trustworthiness and reliability. The data collection procedures and response rates were also described in this chapter. Finally, the methods of data analysis for each of the data sources were outlined in this chapter.

In the next chapter, I present the questionnaire findings from the first phase of my study. The questionnaire is comprised of two sections: (a) open-ended questions regarding the leadership perspectives of Texas high school Latina principals and (b) demographic and background survey questions.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS: QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

In this qualitative phenomenological case study, I conducted two phases of research. In the first phase, I analyzed the personal leadership perspectives of 114 Texas Latina high school principals through an open-ended questionnaire. In the second phase, I used a phenomenological approach to examine the life experiences of seven Texas Latina high school principals in educational leadership contexts through virtual semi-structured interviews.

In this chapter, I present the questionnaire findings from the first phase of my study. The questionnaire is comprised of two sections: (a) open-ended questions regarding the leadership perspectives of Texas high school Latina principals and (b) demographic and background survey questions. The second phase of the research is presented in Chapters V through XI with each chapter representing an individual case study. In Chapter XII, I presented a cross-case study analysis of both the open-ended questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews.

Phase I: Presentation of Open-Ended Questionnaire

The purpose of the open-ended questionnaire was to gain a statewide scope of Latina leadership perspectives, as well as to identify common opinions and direction for future in-depth study. The open-ended questionnaire question items are listed below.

Table 24

Texas High School Latina Principal Open-Ended Questionnaire

Experiences and perceptions

1. How has your leadership experience been shaped by your identity as a Latina principal?
2. Describe some challenges in balancing your professional and personal life.
3. Why do you think you were chosen to lead your campus?
4. What challenges have you encountered on your journey to the high school principalship? Were these challenges due to your gender or ethnicity?
5. Who impacted your decision to become a high school principal? Why?
6. Who has served in a mentorship role in your professional career, and how did they help you achieve your goals?
7. What are your future personal and professional goals?
8. What advice do you have for aspiring Latina high school principals who currently occupy positions as teachers or assistant principals?
9. Would you be open to a follow up interview (audio-recorded)?

Demographics and background

1. Country of origin _____
2. Cultural identity (Example: Mexican-American, Central American)
3. What language(s) do you speak? _____
4. Indicate your age year range. ___ 20-29 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50-59 ___ 60 and over
5. How many years did you teach at each of the following school placements?
_____ Elementary _____ Middle _____ High School
6. How many years were you a principal at each of the following school placements?
_____ Elementary _____ Middle _____ High School

I utilized van Manen's (1990) three approaches to uncover meaning from the questionnaire text as previously stated in Chapter III: (a) the holistic or sententious approach, (b) the selective or highlighting approach, and (c) the detailed or line-by-line approach. After studying the questionnaire responses, I group the responses into themes to support holistic meaning. Lastly, all proper names mentioned in the questionnaire responses were removed and replaced with pseudonyms in square brackets.

Phase I Questionnaire Findings

The initial phase consisted of an open-ended questionnaire sent to 114 Texas Latina high school principals through the Qualtrics online survey platform. As I managed the survey responses, I discovered some Latina principals no longer occupied their positions or the contact information was incorrect. After updating my contact list, an open-ended questionnaire was sent to 84 Texas Latina high school principals, and I received 16 questionnaire responses ranging from the time period of November 10, 2019, to March 6, 2020.

Collective Questionnaire Responses: Leadership Experiences Shaped by the Latina Identity

In the first question, 14 of the 16 participants responded how their leadership experience has been shaped by their identity as a Latina principal. The responses of each participant are listed verbatim in the following table.

Table 25

Questionnaire Responses: Leadership Perspectives of Texas High School Latina Principals Regarding Identity

Question 1. How has your leadership experience been shaped by your identity as a Latina principal?

1. At the high school I see and hear all sorts of issues teenagers are going through. I am a leader who is visible and involved with the extra-curricular activities of my students. I attend the majority of all home games and travel to almost all playoff games. This has allowed me to build the trust with the students and their families. They know I care about them and what they do. I make it a point to make time to meet with the girls on campus. We share stories about being in high school yet mostly about their future and that they too can be in my chair one day. I did graduate from the high school that I am principal at. So, I know how much it, has changed since then. I have a real personal connection to the community and the campus.
2. My being Latina gives me a perspective of the many challenges that Latino students, specifically girls, deal with.
3. My ability to relate to Hispanic families, and most importantly to communicate with Hispanic parents, has given me credibility among the Latino population. They appreciate my knowledge and expertise; they admire by ability to lead and bring new experiences and opportunities to the campus.
4. Because of the area I serve, being Latina has allowed me to identify with my students and their families. My Hispanic roots have given me the experience to deal with some situations our students currently face.
5. I believe leadership experience has been shaped through the relationships I have built along the way. Being from the community and being raised by a single mother in my early years, Spanish being my first language and being a first-generation college student has allowed me to relate to my Title 1 community and provide them with what they need inside and outside the classroom.
6. As a Latina, my leadership experience has been shaped by how my parents raised me. I was taught to be responsible, be respectful, be accountable, and work hard. I think my perspective in the way I conducted business as a principal changed when I decided to act more as a mom than as a colleague with some personnel.
7. The fact that I am Latina and a Principal is really not a defining attribute for me. I was raised by hard working parents and we were migrants that worked in the fields for many years. My parents' lack of education is what I feel they instilled in us to make sure the same did not happen to us.
8. In some ways, being a Latina administrator has provided me with broader work opportunities. In my district, we have a high Hispanic population. My ability to communicate with the community and have an understanding of the culture has helped in creating networks of peers and community members as well.

Table 25 Continued

Question 1. How has your leadership experience been shaped by your identity as a Latina principal?

9. I don't believe it has really played much of a role. I believe most would say what defines me as a leader is my work ethic and my relationships with those I serve. I believe I am accepted and valued as a team member because I am trustworthy, transparent, and a team player. My words and actions go hand in hand and I believe that's what shaped my leadership.

10. It really has not. I have never thought about this before and it may be because I work at a campus where 100% of my students and their parents are Hispanic. My community is also predominantly Hispanic too. I have not had the opportunity to reflect on being Latina and a high school principal.

11. It has given me the self confidence that most Latinas lack. My background as the oldest grandchild and being first generation were steps on my journey that shaped many of the decisions I made through my beginning educational experiences. Both my parents were migrant workers and entered education positions. During their time in education, they were also trail-blazers and entered into administrative roles at their campuses so I also followed in their footsteps. I have learned to be confident and assertive, if necessary, when it comes to decisions I make on a daily basis.

12. As a Latina principal, I have found that I can relate to the school community that I serve. I feel that I have been able to build positive relationships with parents, teachers, and students because I can understand their issues.

13. I feel that as a Latina woman I have had to work three times as hard to prove that I am a capable leader. I feel that the strong connection to my culture has given me a strong work ethic and inspires me to excel every day.

14. As Latina serving the community that I grew up in, my practice has been very simple. Humble and strong-willed working for what is best for kids.

The principals described how their Latina identity has shaped their leadership experience. I identified two emergent themes in the responses: understanding the Latino culture/community and work ethic. Eight of the 14 principals indicated they understood the Latino culture and community. One principal stated, “Because of the area I serve, being Latina has allowed me to identify with my students and their families. My Hispanic roots have given me the experience to deal with some situations our students currently face.” Beyond the principals’ connections to the Latino community, three principals further stated the ability to speak Spanish solidified their relationships with

their respective Latino communities. Specifically, two principals stated Spanish was their first language, and they were first-generation college students.

In addition, five of the 14 principals affirmed work ethic shaped their leadership experiences, and two of these principals attributed their work ethic to their parents. For instance, one of the principals described how her parents impacted her professional journey, “Both my parents were migrant workers and entered education positions. During their time in education, they were also trail-blazers and entered into administrative roles at their campuses, so I also followed in their footsteps.” These principals attest to their parents’ influence on molding their work ethic.

One principal made a noteworthy response in stating she had never thought about how her leadership experience was shaped by her Latina identity. She explained, “It really has not. I have never thought about this before, and it may be because I work at a campus where 100% of my students and their parents are Hispanic. My community is also predominantly Hispanic, too. I have not had the opportunity to reflect on being a Latina and a high school principal.” Thus, most of the Latina principals were able to connect and address issues specific to the Latino community because they understood the Latino experience and had established a work ethic.

Questionnaire Responses: Challenges in balancing professional and personal life

In the second question, 15 of the 16 participants described some challenges in balancing their professional and personal life. The responses of each participant are listed in the table below.

Table 26

Questionnaire Responses: Leadership Perspectives of Texas High School Latina Principals in balancing Professional and Personal Life

Question 2. Describe some challenges in balancing your professional and personal life.

1. I am fortunate to have a very supportive spouse and extended family. We have the understanding that this job takes a lot of my time and without their support I would not be able to do it properly. I am in my seventh year as the high school principal and have 10 years prior experience in campus leadership. So, I guess it is just a way of life for us. On a personal note, it could be why I only have one child. He is 22.
2. The high school principal role, regardless of ethnicity, is arduous and requires many work hours. Being single affords me the opportunity to immerse myself in my job. However, it is quite taxing and often I find myself to be fatigued and depleted.
3. In my first two years as a high school principal, I spent over 70 hours at work. I had a lot of things to fix, and I had to ensure everything was done correctly. The amount of time dedicated to my work has taken its toll on my personal life. I am now divorced, but happier. My children are grown (youngest is 21, oldest is 31) and they understand the dedication it takes for me to be successful.
4. Time is a major challenge in balancing both professional and personal life. I have been an administrator at all levels from elementary to high school and have found out that high school is very time consuming.
5. The Hispanic culture is definitely tight knit so there are always family functions every weekend that we participate in. My husband and I always wanted to give our children experiences we did not have growing up, so I have involved them in many after school activities. Having served as both an elementary and high school principal the challenges arise when you have the extracurricular duties or after school meetings, which is a balancing act between his and my schedule but we make it work. Definitely have to be organized and prepared to balance and schedule both equitably.
6. The biggest challenge has been time. As a principal, I have to attend meetings or events after work hours and during holidays. I also have to attend out of town meetings/conferences. I have struggled with having the time and energy after work to provide academic guidance/help and having my children involved in extracurricular activities.
7. It is difficult in balancing our lives due to being mothers of children and then being mothers at work as well. I lead by example and know that I will not have my staff do anything that I myself have not done. It is an exhausting day for me and I have been in education for the past 33 years, but it is also rewarding to know that as educators we have helped children.

Table 26 Continued

Question 2. Describe some challenges in balancing your professional and personal life.

8. I have been fortunate enough to never feel an imbalance in regards to my personal and professional life. Each time I have taken on new roles, I have made sure to be very clear of the expectations of that role and also shared my personal feelings about my family and dedication to them. I made a decision early on in my career to make the balance a priority and have not put myself in a position, or taken a position that would absorb all of my time.
9. Balancing my professional and family. I have 3 young girls that at times require a lot of time.
10. As a high school principal, I am expected to be at everything, not necessarily by my supervisors, but by the kids and parents that I serve. That is often very challenging as it leaves very little time for me but I am very passionate about the work I do so for the most part, I don't feel like it's even work most times. I am a doctoral student as well and that has presented its challenges more than ever but I stay organized and try to divide my time equally in order to stay ahead and on track.
11. My professional and personal life has been a challenge. Long hours at work, the stress of being a high school principal, and a demanding home life took a toll on my marriage. My ex-husband, also Hispanic, had a hard time with the demands of my job. I was not allowed to talk about work at home which I understood but at the same time I needed. For many reasons, my marriage ended and I am divorced ... I do believe my commitment to my job was a part of the problem. The job of the principal does not end when work hours end. I was fortunate enough to be able to be an active participant in everything my two boys did in school. I did not miss any event that was important.
12. My spouse of 24 years has been in my life for a total of 32 years. He has been in my life throughout my entire career and understands the importance of all the roles I have undertaken as an educator. I struggled with time management when I was in my early years as an educator; however, with time, I have learned to delegate more of my responsibilities to capable staff. I still feel the need to be involved at all levels of my campus; however, I have surrounded myself with very capable individuals who also share my work ethic. As a mother, my children attended my campus and I know that they look to me as a role model on both an educational and emotional level. My highest hope is that if I set my goals high in my accomplishments, my children will strive to achieve and surpass those goals.

Table 26 Continued

Question 2. Describe some challenges in balancing your professional and personal life.

13. Balancing both work and family is always challenging. I am married and have a son and daughter who grew up with both of their parents serving as administrators. There were definitely times in my career that my family life and work conflicted. However, I was blessed to have my parents who always provided that extra support that allowed me to focus on work when necessary. We are a close family and I am proud that no matter how busy we were, we spent quality time together and prioritized our children's school activities. Balancing work and personal life continue to be challenging but I love what I do, and I can honestly say I have no regrets.
14. Finding a balance is extremely difficult, as a principal you are the person everyone looks to for guidance, in good times and in not so good times. I work extremely hard to make sure all my students are taken care of, so much so that I have forgotten to do things for my own children. There have been times I have felt like a poor mom as I try to be a good leader. I am blessed to have a wonderful family; my children always ask me how my day has gone and let me know that they are proud of what I have accomplished.
15. This is the hardest. Trying to be a wife, mom, daughter, sister, aunt, and leader. Having a supportive family and understanding family. Some days I run very low on fuel. Maybe with only a few hours of sleep.

The principals responded with examples of challenges in balancing their professional and personal lives. I identified two developing themes in the responses: children and marital status. Nine of the 15 principals stated being a mother and balancing their professional lives was a challenge. One principal revealed, "It is difficult in balancing our lives due to being mothers of children and then being mothers at work as well." Another principal explained, "Finding a balance is extremely difficult, as a principal you are the person everyone looks to for guidance, in good times and in not so good times. I work extremely hard to make sure all my students are taken care of, so much so that I have forgotten to do things for my own children. There have been times I have felt like a poor mom as I try to be a good leader." Overall, these principals

commented on balancing their professional and personal lives with respect to being mothers.

Moreover, five of the 15 principals divulged about their marital circumstances with respect to balancing their professional and personal lives. Two of these principals credit their ability to fulfill their job duties with the support of their husbands. One principal replied, “I am fortunate to have a very supportive spouse and extended family. We have the understanding that this job takes a lot of my time, and without their support, I would not be able to do it properly.” Also, two of the principals verbalized how their job duties have impacted their marriages by resulting in divorce. One principal stated, “My professional and personal life has been a challenge. Long hours at work, the stress of being a high school principal, and a demanding home life took a toll on my marriage.” Notably, one principal is single and articulated, “The high school principal role, regardless of ethnicity, is arduous and requires many work hours. Being single affords me the opportunity to immerse myself in my job. However, it is quite taxing and often I find myself to be fatigued and depleted.” Therefore, these Latina principals described examples of challenges in balancing their professional and personal lives through two developing themes: children and marital status.

As the principals mentioned above described their marital status and children. One principal voiced that she is a doctoral student and revealed how being a student and a principal can be a challenge. She disclosed, “I am a doctoral student as well and that has presented its challenges more than ever, but I stay organized and try to divide my time equally in order to stay ahead and on track.” Another principal communicated she

has “been fortunate enough to never feel an imbalance.” She elaborated, “I made a decision early on in my career to make the balance a priority and have not put myself in a position, or taken a position that would absorb all of my time.” In summary, these two principals provided alternative perspectives to balancing work and personal life.

Questionnaire Responses: Self-perceptions of why Texas high school Latinas were chosen to lead their respective campuses.

In the third question, 15 of 16 participants responded to the question of why they thought they were selected to lead their respective campuses. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 27

Questionnaire Responses: Self-perceptions of Why Texas High School Latinas Were Chosen to Lead Their Respective Campuses

Question 3. Why do you think you were chosen to lead your campus?
1. I believe I was chosen to lead my campus because of my passion to serve our students and community. Although it may sound cliché, I do have a passion to make things right. When I was selected, the district had already rejected several applicants and classes were going to begin in a week. I offered to assist in the transition process if they hired someone. I had previously served as an assistant principal at the high school for four years. I really worried about what would happen at the high school if I wasn't there as the leader to get it back on stable ground.
2. Because I am a natural leader, I am articulate, and I have the ability to stay calm under pressure, well organized, and well respected in our school district,
3. My superintendent told me I was chosen because of my strengths in building a positive campus climate, curriculum & instruction, and special education background. He felt my ability to lead and bring people to consensus was vital to the needs of my current campus.
4. I think that my past experiences as an educator, testing strategist and administrator were a factor in my obtaining my current position.
5. I think teachers and parents in my community wanted someone who could relate to the needs of their children and could support them professionally as well. People want to be treated respectfully.

Table 27 Continued

Question 3. Why do you think you were chosen to lead your campus?

6. I have been an educator for 30 years and have held different positions and have held different positions such as teacher, campus math coordinator, assistant principal, district math dean, and middle school principal. I think I was chosen to lead my campus because of my professional/work reputation and showing respect to the people I work with in all capacities.
7. I think I was chosen to lead schools that were in need of improving and I have a proven record of making sure that I collaborate with staff to improve scores, student achievement and culture.
8. Being a leader encompasses not only having the knowledge about education and children, but you must also have the ability to bring people together. I was chosen to lead this campus for a few reasons: I am in the work with my staff, visible leader, experience in all levels of K-12, bilingual, ability to communicate well, and always with a focus on what is best for students.
9. I have a strong character; I always give 100% and do things right.
10. I think I was chosen to lead schools that were in need of improving and I have a proven record of making sure that I collaborate with staff to improve scores, student achievement and culture.
11. I was chosen because of my experience in education especially as a counselor and a dean of instruction. I am a principal at an early college high school and my district's leadership team believed I was the best person for this particular job. I have proven myself in my district and I am capable of working with many different kinds of people. I am a problem solver that gets the job done.
12. I had 20 years of experience in my district and in a variety of capacities (teacher, department chair, & content specialist) when I applied for the position. I feel that because I had experience in various levels of the educational system, I had awareness of the systems that needed to be in place. My years of experience helped me establish myself within the system so when the position was opened, naturally I applied. The campus I lead is a medically-focused specialty school and a small learning community. I had experience in the healthcare system and a knowledge of vertical alignment/curriculum needs. And, the major goal of the campus was to connect students to the community and I had been a community member of my city for over 30 years.

Table 27 Continued

Question 3. Why do you think you were chosen to lead your campus?

13. I believe I was selected to lead the high school for several reasons. First, I had already served as a middle school principal for ten years, giving me first-hand experience for the role I was to undertake. I also happen to serve as the principal for a middle school that feeds into the high school that I now lead. Thus, I had the knowledge and understanding of the community and the student population I would serve. Our campus has an enrollment of [enrollment number]. It requires the principal to be energetic, positive, and caring for its community. The principal also has to be an instructional leader and be able to build a positive culture to keep the school moving forward. I believe that I was able to convey these qualities. I have always felt fortunate and grateful for the opportunity to serve as the principal of this campus.

14. I am blessed to lead my campus! It is an honor to have been given the opportunity to help students reach the goal of graduation and beyond. I am a very positive person that works extremely hard to ensure the equality of all students. I am passionate about the work I do every day; I feel it's very evident when I advocate for students and their education.

15. I graduated from [the high school that I currently lead]. I was the best candidate for the job! I know what type of quality education our kids need and looks like. I had a great track record of turn around work and I am bilingual.

The principals expressed why they thought they were chosen to lead their high school campuses. I found three developing themes from the responses: proven leadership ability, professional experience, and passion. Seven of the 15 principals confirmed they had secured a principal role by proving their leadership ability. One principal affirmed, “Because I am a natural leader, I am articulate, and I have the ability to stay calm under pressure, well organized, and well respected in our school district. Another principal testified, “I think I was chosen to lead schools that were in need of improving and I have a proven record of making sure that I collaborate with staff to improve scores, student achievement and culture.” In brief, these principals perceived they had established a reputation of proven leadership.

Furthermore, six of the 15 principals indicated they obtained a principal position due to their professional experience in leadership. One principal responded, “I had 20 years of experience in my district and in a variety of capacities (teacher, department chair, & content specialist) when I applied for the position. I feel that because I had experience in various levels of the educational system, I had awareness of the systems that needed to be in place. My years of experience helped me established myself within the system so when the position was opened, naturally I applied.” These principals confirmed their professional experience was a factor in being chosen to lead their campus.

Three Latina principals perceived they were chosen to lead their campus because they demonstrated a passion for working with students. One of these three principals expressed, “I am a very positive person that works extremely hard to ensure the equality of all students. I am passionate about the work I do every day; I feel it’s very evident when I advocate for students and their education.” Therefore, these Latina principals expressed perceptions on why they were selected to lead their respective campuses through three themes: proven leadership ability, professional experience, and passion.

Questionnaire Responses: Challenges Texas high school Latina principals encountered on their journey to become a high school principal.

In the fourth question, 15 of the 16 participants responded to the question of what challenges they encountered on the journey to the high school principalship. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 28

Questionnaire Responses: Challenges Texas High School Latina Principals Encountered on Their Journey to Become a High School Principal

Question 4. What challenges have you encountered on your journey to the high school principalship?
1. The biggest challenge is the turnover in campus administrators. All have left for various reasons from medical issues to promotions to not fitting into my style of leadership. Each time I hire an administrator, I make it clear that the high school is run at a very fast pace and it's nothing compared to an elementary or middle school, which I too have served as an administrator and know the difference.
2. To be honest, I've not encountered many challenges at all. I spent one year as an assistant principal at a junior high campus before being reassigned as the high school principal in the same district. My road to principalship has been very easy.
3. Financial and lack of support from family have been the biggest challenges I have faced.
4. Parents are definitely a challenge because you have to help them understand how the expectations of a high school student align with the campus regulations and policy. Things like changing schedules and teacher relationships are sometimes more challenging than a student behavior issue. Of course, this day and age safety is of a concern with gun violence and mass shootings. I personally have to have a lot of faith and pray daily to get through the worries.
5. I think that my challenges have been more personal. I know and realize the time and effort it takes to run any organization and specially a high school. When I was younger, I don't think I was ready to make that commitment. Now that I am older, I feel I have more time because I have learned to better balance work and family/personal time.
6. I really don't think I had challenges other than having my vision become part of everyday routines on campus. I lead in the sense that titles really don't matter as much as the team collaboration and the fact that we have campus goals.
7. As I began my career in education, I never would have imagined that I would end up as a high school principal. Eventually I became an administrator in elementary, then middle school prior to my first attempt at principalship. The challenge was that I was attempting to get a high school principal job with no high school experience. Although I am the mother of three high school aged children, it was not enough to make a difference - it was not respected. I had the opportunity to become a high school assistant principal and learned more than I ever could have imagined. That was my springboard to high school principalship.
8. Time management.

Table 28 Continued

Question 4. What challenges have you encountered on your journey to the high school principalship?
9. No challenges. The only challenge is the state accountability system which is a great disservice to our students and staff. It is such an unfair system to believe that we can measure all students on one measure. Yet, we prevail any way we can. We remind ourselves that a score isn't everything and that a score will never define us as a campus. We do what is required of us, but we also do what is best for kids and if at the end of the day, the score isn't what we had expected, we reflect and take a different approach.
10. I would not call them challenges.... I would call them experiences. I applied for this position when I knew that I was ready. I took my time and I gathered as much experience as I could. I was fortunate enough to get this position after the first time I applied. The application process and my first year were tough. Other applicants were predominantly male and one with perhaps more experience. I felt the decision to give me this opportunity was questioned by other individuals in the district.
11. My path to my position was very different from the traditional principal position because my campus was new in the district. Our superintendent's vision placed me in my position a year prior to the campus opening its doors. I had the support from the different departments in the district to ensure that any "roadblocks" were moved to allow for timelines to be met. I research different campuses that were similar in design to take the best ideas and compile them into one learning space. Within those conversations, I learned the importance of creating systems that provided the outcomes needed and then employed individuals who shared the same mindset to ensure campus/student success.
12. Definitely work/personal life balance. Also "politics" of the system where people are promoted based on who they know, not necessarily their skill set. Almost all of my career has been in my current district, and although it has improved, this still continues.
13. I feel fortunate that I had already served as a middle school principal that allowed for a smoother transition to high school. However, I did meet some resistance coming into my new position. I believe that there is always a bit of insecurity when a person accepts their role. I devoted time to get to know the teachers, staff, and administrators. It was not until they began to trust in me that we were able to build a positive working relationship and succeed as a campus.
14. The biggest challenge has been the lack of opportunities, the feeling that you have worked hard but still get passed over.
15. I think challenges are the same everywhere. In a community like mine, you might run into too many strong-willed Latinas. Well, you know how that might look like. We all think we are right! lol.... Some people will love you and others will hate you. What is important is that scores are moving, children are at school and learning.

The principals articulated the challenges they encountered on their journey to the high school principalship. I discovered two emergent themes from the responses: professional challenges and personal challenges. Ten of the 15 principals communicated they confronted professional challenges on their trajectory to the high school principal role. One principal described her prior administrator experience at the elementary and middle school, “Eventually, I became an administrator in elementary, then middle school prior to my first attempt at principalship. The challenge was that I was attempting to get a high school principal job with no high school experience.” Another principal noted, “I would not call them challenges.... I would call them experiences. I applied for this position when I knew that I was ready. I took my time and I gathered as much experience as I could. I was fortunate enough to get this position after the first time I applied. The application process and my first year were tough. Other applicants were predominantly male and one with perhaps more experience. I felt the decision to give me this opportunity was questioned by other individuals in the district.” In summary, these principals shared the professional challenges they confronted on their journey to the principalship.

Additionally, three principals indicated they encountered personal challenges on their journey to the high school principalship. One principal experienced financial and family support challenges stating, “Financial and lack of support from family have been the biggest challenges I have faced.” Another principal revealed, “I think that my challenges have been more personal. I know and realize the time and effort it takes to run any organization and especially a high school. When I was younger, I don't think I

was ready to make that commitment. Now that I am older, I feel I have more time because I have learned to better balance work and family/personal time.” Hence, these Latina principals detailed challenges they confronted on their journey to the high school principalship through professional and personal experiences.

Remarkably, one principal shared that she did not encounter any professional or personal challenges on her journey to the principalship, “No challenges. The only challenge is the state accountability system which is a great disservice to our students and staff.” This principal stated the accountability system was an unfair system, measuring all students on one measure.

Questionnaire Responses: Individuals who impacted Texas high school Latina principals to become a high school principal.

In the fifth question, 16 of the 16 participants responded to the question of who impacted them to become high school principals. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 29

Questionnaire Responses: Individuals Who Impacted Texas High School Latina Principals to Become a High School Principal

Question 5. Who impacted your decision to become a high school principal? Why?
1. My family had the biggest impact. My son was entering his junior year and I wanted to be sure him and his classmates had the opportunity to learn and that discipline was taken care of at the campus.
2. My aunt who was the first to go to college in the 1970's. She was a teacher, became a counselor, a school administrator, and then a Asst. Superintendent.

Table 29 Continued

Question 5. Who impacted your decision to become a high school principal? Why?
3. [Former administrator's name] encouraged me to attend the PEL workshop [at respective region service center]. He said I had excellent classroom management, was knowledgeable in special education, and understood how to address the needs of students in my classroom. He felt I had the leadership skills necessary for the job.
4. A principal I worked with at an elementary had a big impact on my decision to become a principal. She was so knowledgeable, patient and fair to everyone. She always put students' success and welfare first. She encouraged me to pursue a principal certification.
5. My superintendent did. I was an IC at the time and he looked at me and said "hey you should be a high school principal". He saw something in me and so I signed up for the certification program and the rest is history.
6. I knew I wanted to be a teacher. Once I started teaching, I worked with some administrator that, no disrespect, I thought I could do better than them. After I became a campus coordinator, I was given administrator assignments like running the summer school program. I liked working with students in that capacity. I had the opportunity to become an assistant principal at an elementary school. After a year, I knew that was not the level for me. I was hired at a middle school where I spend 14 years (7 as an assistant and 7 as the principal). After that time, I was time to try something else. The opportunity to apply for an early college high school became available and I thought it was a good fit for me.
7. I have for the most part always been interested in education since I played with my migrant friends at the migrant camps. My decision to become a principal was actually a mentor principal that showed me how impactful one can be if you are visible and continue working with students.
8. I personally found that the high school age group was so satisfying to work with. I love the connection I am able to make with the students, and that is what attracted me to high school. I told myself that if I ever had a chance to choose, high school would be what I would want to lead. It was in my breath, in my conversations and I made sure to let anyone know who asked. I was approached about an upcoming position because I had planted those seeds all along.
9. Becoming a principal was not in my professional plans. I was simply told one day "effective today you will be the principal at"
10. No one. I knew from an early age that I wanted to be a teacher because my life was changed for the better because I had great teachers. In the process, I found myself wanting to help a greater audience for a greater purpose and I decided to go into administration. Basically, that's how it has happened. I lead because I feel I can contribute to a greater purpose and when I feel that my purpose has been fulfilled, I look for the next challenge where again, I can serve a greater audience with a greater purpose.

Table 29 Continued

Question 5. Who impacted your decision to become a high school principal? Why?
11. I am not sure that this was something I dreamed of doing while I was growing up but to answer this question, probably my family. My entire family works in education. My mother taught almost 50 years, my oldest sister is a principal, my other sister works in central office and my brother is a teacher / coach. My dad was the director / supervisor for transportation. It appears it was a natural progression of my career. I have taught, been a counselor, dean, and now principal and I knew in each of these when it was time to make a change. I am always looking to do more.
12. I have always had the support of my family on any and all endeavors; however, the individual who "planted" the seed to begin the certification journey was my academic colleague. She was also a Latina and we decided to embark on this certification adventure together. We supported each other along the way and motivated each other when times were tough because we both had families with young children.
13. My high school assistant principal. He was professional, very structured and serious, but you knew he cared about students. When I started teaching, he was the principal at the school I'd graduated from but my mother was a teacher there and due to the nepotism policy, I could not work there. As soon as she retired, I put myself on the transfer list and he offered me a position. He encouraged me to pursue administration and after a year at that campus he offered me an interim Assistant Principal position. He continued to teach and guide me professionally and was always a role model of professionalism and caring. He was instrumental in my professional growth and was an outstanding mentor and later a true friend.
14. My father was a principal and later became a superintendent of a district. I feel that his work ethic and diligence had a positive impact on my life. I know that I always wanted to be a teacher or principal. Once I graduated, I studied History and Science with the goal of teaching at a high school. After 11 years as a teacher, I pursued an administrative position. Through the years, I continue to value what I learned from my father. The insight he offered served me in keeping perspective in all that I do.
15. I felt that as a teacher and assistant principal I was only reaching a small group of students. I felt that I needed to strive to be in a position where I could help reach a larger population and help facilitate the creation of a strong educational foundation.
16. [Name of mentor], one of the Top Latinas in [name of city]. Now that woman is a beast at education. She was my mentor and is like a second mom to me. She taught me a lot of the turnaround work. She wanted me to impact more children. I was her AP for a few years, then went on to a middle school principal down the street from where I am currently at and then she pushed me to high school.

The principals described the individual(s) who impacted their decision to become a high school principal. I uncovered two themes from the responses: mentor

principal/administrator and family. Seven of the 16 principals replied that their mentor principal/administrator had encouraged them to pursue a career in educational leadership. One principal recalled, “a principal I worked with at an elementary [school] had a big impact on my decision to become a principal. She was so knowledgeable, patient and fair to everyone. She always put students' success and welfare first. She encouraged me to pursue a principal certification.” Another principal stated, “I have for the most part always been interested in education since I played with my migrant friends at the migrant camps. My decision to become a principal was actually a mentor principal that showed me how impactful one can be if you are visible and continue working with students.” Therefore, these seven of the 16 principals replied that their mentor principal/administrator had motivated them to follow a career in educational leadership.

Furthermore, four of the 16 principals responded that family members had inspired them to become a principal. One principal expressed, “My family had the biggest impact. My son was entering his junior year, and I wanted to be sure [he] and his classmates had the opportunity to learn and that discipline was taken care of at the campus.” Another principal replied, “My aunt who was the first to go to college in the 1970's. She was a teacher, became a counselor, a school administrator, and then a [assistant] superintendent.” Thus, these Latina principals were motivated by the following individuals to become principals: mentor principals/administrators and family.

On the other hand, one principal revealed that no principal inspired her to pursue a career in educational administration. She expounded, “No one. I knew from an early age that I wanted to be a teacher, because my life was changed for the better. [I had]

great teachers.” Throughout her professional career, she found greater purpose. She concluded, “I lead because I feel I can contribute to a greater purpose, and when I feel that my purpose has been fulfilled, I look for the next challenge where again, I can serve a greater audience with a greater purpose.” Indeed, this principal’s path to leadership was illuminated by great teachers and a greater purpose.

Questionnaire Responses: Individuals who served as a mentor to Texas high school Latina principals.

In the sixth question, 16 of the 16 participants responded to the question of the individuals who served as professional mentors to the Texas high school Latina principals. The question also addressed how these mentors helped these principals reach their goals. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 30

Questionnaire Responses: Mentors Who Impacted Texas High School Latina Principals and Helped with Goal Achievement

Question 6. Who has served as a mentorship role in your professional career? How did they help you achieve your goals?
1. The principal and lead assistant principal I worked with while I was an assistant at the high school trained me to stay focused, be firm, fair and consistent and to have empathy and compassion for our students and families. The principal provided me with opportunities to learn all aspects of an administrator role. I was fortunate to be at the high school when our campus was awarded the Bill and Melinda Gates Early College Grant. Our campus continues to be one of only a handful that provide early college opportunities for all students.
2. My aunt, twin sister who is also a school principal, and a previous colleague.

Table 30 Continued

Question 6. Who has served as a mentorship role in your professional career? How did they help you achieve your goals?

3. There have been several district level personnel who have provided various levels of support. For the most part, and due to the size of our district, my superintendent [Dr. Mark Quiroz] has been the greatest mentor. What I have learned most from him is the art of listening to hear rather than listening to respond. He enrolled me in the Thompson Principal Leadership Academy so that I can learn from other principals across the state. [Dr. Quiroz] tells me often that I have a long career ahead of me and I have only scratched the surface of my talents and abilities. He has tremendous faith in me which is a great confidence booster.
4. Past principals have served as mentors in my professional career as well as other administrators and educators.
5. My colleagues throughout the district and my Associate Superintendent. Just by listening and coaching you through any issue they helped me find self-discovery of how to solve many things on my own.
6. I think the principals that I have worked under have been mentors in my professional careers. I learned from all my principals even the ones that in my mind were not very good. From them I learned how to improve and do better. I learned and most admire my first middle school principal. He was very knowledgeable and always said that his job was to prepare me to be principal. When I was district math dean, I also looked up to my two supervisors and the district's superintendent. They were honest with pointing out my strengths and my areas of improvement. They also addressed my questions and concerns.
7. My first mentor was an elementary principal and she helped me by making sure that I practiced alongside her during my internship and I continued to have an educational relationship that I could easily have her support and guidance if I needed it.
8. I have learned from each supervisor I have had. I don't really have one person that I would say has helped me achieve my goals, but they have all provided me with opportunities to lead and make decisions. It is through those experiences and reflections with supervisors that I became well rounded, learned instructional practices, and how to build a community with my staff.
9. Our current superintendent, and come to think about it, the two big steps that I have taken in my career have been influenced by 2 strong women.
10. I've just always worked for some amazing leaders. When I was a high school assistant principal, I worked for two very transformational leaders. They just inspired me to reach higher levels. They trusted in my decision making and really took the time to invest in me to develop my leadership skills. They always encouraged me to move to the next level and ultimately, I did.

Table 30 Continued

Question 6. Who has served as a mentorship role in your professional career? How did they help you achieve your goals?

11. My superintendent that was here while I was a counselor and a dean of instruction. His name is [Raul Garcia]. He gave me the opportunity to be a dean and he gave me the opportunity to be a principal. He guided me throughout the process and encouraged me to lead with my heart. He taught me and other aspiring leaders many things through modeling and reflection. He was very involved with the district leadership team while he was a superintendent, Although I knew I could, he pushed me at the right time to do it.
 12. My parents and their expertise in handling difficult situations, have served as mentors in this period of my career. I also have colleagues who participated in New Principal Meetings for the first three years of my position that are sounding boards for any ideas. My central office administration also serves as a checks and balance for me to ensure that I stay on track with personal and campus goals I have set for myself.
 13. The principal who hired me and encouraged me to pursue administration. He gave me a solid foundation of experience, provided positive guidance and encouragement, connected me with other experienced administrators who became mentors for me also. He believed in me and gave me opportunities to demonstrate my abilities.
 14. When I began my principalship, I was fortunate to have supervisors that served as mentors for me. They each played an instrumental role in guiding me to develop instructional practices and leadership methods that I still use today. I know that I can always reach out to them for advice and support if necessary. I have the utmost respect and admiration for each of these women.
 15. There have been many people who have impacted my professional career, I would say that the greatest impact was a fellow administrator. She was always available to remind me to stay true to me and my beliefs, she reminded me to never allow others to destroy everything that I work so hard to accomplish. She was also a minority female that overcame unimaginable odds to be a wonderful educator and leader. Sadly, my mentor passed away last year.
 16. [Only the name of the principal was given as a response by the participant.]
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The principals described the individual(s) who have served in a mentorship role in their professional career. They further elaborated on how these mentors helped them achieve their goals. I observed two emergent themes from the questionnaire responses: mentor principal and superintendent. Of the 16 responses, nine principals replied that their mentor principal or assistant principal had supported their professional career. One

principal stated, “The principal and lead assistant principal I worked with while I was an assistant at the high school trained me to stay focused, be firm, fair and consistent and to have empathy and compassion for our students and families. The principal provided me with opportunities to learn all aspects of an administrator role.” Another principal expressed, “The principal who hired me and encouraged me to pursue administration. He gave me a solid foundation of experience, provided positive guidance and encouragement, connected me with other experienced administrators who became mentors for me also. He believed in me and gave me opportunities to demonstrate my abilities.” Therefore, these principals benefited from the mentorship of their principal for insight into the principal role.

Moreover, four of the 16 principals were mentored by their school district superintendent. One principal stated, “My superintendent that was here while I was a counselor and a dean of instruction. His name is [Raul Garcia]. He gave me the opportunity to be a dean, and he gave me the opportunity to be a principal. He guided me throughout the process and encouraged me to lead with my heart. He taught me and other aspiring leaders many things through modeling and reflection. He was very involved with the district leadership team while he was a superintendent. Although I knew I could, he pushed me at the right time to do it.” Another principal replied, “There have been several district level personnel who have provided various levels of support. For the most part, and due to the size of our district, my superintendent [Dr. Mark Quiroz] has been the greatest mentor. What I have learned most from him is the art of listening to hear rather than listening to respond. He enrolled me in the Thompson

Principal Leadership Academy so that I can learn from other principals across the state. [Dr. Quiroz] tells me often that I have a long career ahead of me and I have only scratched the surface of my talents and abilities. He has tremendous faith in me which is a great confidence booster.” In summary, these Latina principals benefited from the mentorship of principals and superintendents. These mentors helped these Texas high school Latina principals achieve their professional goals.

Alternatively, two principals testified that their family helped them achieve their professional goals. One principal expressed support from two of her family members and a previous colleague, “my aunt [and] twin sister, who is also a school principal, and a previous colleague.” Another principal mentioned, “my parents and their expertise in handling difficult situations, have served as mentors in this period of my career.” In summary, the principals described the individual(s) who have served in a mentorship role to support their professional career.

Questionnaire Responses: Future professional Texas high school Latina principals.

In the seventh question, 16 of the 16 participants outlined their future professional goals. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 31

Questionnaire Responses: Texas High School Latina Principals and Their Future Professional Goals

Question 7. What are your future professional goals?
1. Good question. I’m not quite ready to leave the campus setting. There are days when I am physically and mentally exhausted and think that maybe I should apply for a central office job. Then I think about how I’d miss the kids and staff. So then I just recharge and pray to stay healthy.

Table 31 Continued

Question 7. What are your future professional goals?
2. My goal is to retire within 1-2 years and not pursue employment in education.
3. I am currently a high school principal in a small 4A district. Eventually, I would like to transition to a larger school district as a campus principal or to central office as a curriculum director. My ultimate goal is to be a professor in an education program at a university.
4. I would like to continue moving up to higher administrative positions maybe continue education.
5. After I obtain my Doctorate I would like to work in a more global role with a district or IHE. I definitely would like to lead my current school into a second blue ribbon school honor.
6. I am in my first semester as a high school principal. I enjoy being at a campus and collaborating with teachers and interacting with students. For now, I will remain in this position for several years. I believe that organizations need consistency and stability to do better and become better. I am not ruling out maybe holding a position in central office in a department that works with teacher preparation.
7. To continue doing what I am doing or to be an administrator at the district level.
8. I truly enjoy being a campus principal. I also enjoy mentoring future leaders. I'm not sure if a central office job is in my future - I do not have aspirations of becoming a superintendent. Although, I would like to eventually work in a capacity that allows me to mentor other administrators.
9. Retire.
10. I have been a high school principal now for five years and have accomplished some amazing goals, however again I feel the pull to do more with a greater audience. I believe I have enough knowledge, skill, and credibility to help move the district further in its mission for academic excellence. I'm not sure in what capacity, but I do believe a district position is next for me.
11. Recently divorced, I have considered superintendency certification. Not sure if I will do that. Looking to retire well when the time comes. I want to continue to grow as an educator.
12. I would like to complete my PhD in education before my eldest son graduates from Texas A&M. He is currently attending College Station and is a sophomore in the Corps of Cadets. Once I complete that goal, I may choose to become a professor and work to positively impact teachers in training as they prepare to embark on this rewarding profession.
13. Eventually I aspire to a district level leadership position. In my current role, I still feel that there is much to be accomplished and improved upon. I would love to be in a position to support campus administrators.
14. I earned a Superintendent certification, and I hope to one day have an opportunity to serve as an Assistant Superintendent for C&I [curriculum & instruction].
15. This is my first year as a building principal, I love what I do. I have not really thought about what's next, I'm enjoying what I do too much!

Table 31 Continued

Question 7. What are your future professional goals?
16. I really just want to retire from [name of school] and maybe start my own consulting company with turn around work.

The principals shared their future professional goals. I detected two themes from the questionnaire responses: practice at a school campus and seek a central office position. One principal affirmed she is not ready to leave the campus setting. She further elaborated, “I’m not quite ready to leave the campus setting. There are days when I am physically and mentally exhausted and think that maybe I should apply for a central office job. Then I think about how I’d miss the kids and staff. So, then I just recharge and pray to stay healthy.” Another principal remarked, “This is my first year as a building principal, I love what I do. I have not really thought about what’s next, I’m enjoying what I do too much!” Overall, these principals confirmed a desire to remain at the campus level to complete a work in progress and achieve set goals.

Furthermore, Eight of the 16 principals responded that their ultimate career goal was to be in a central office position, such as the superintendency. One principal stated, “I have been a high school principal now for five years and have accomplished some amazing goals; however, again I feel the pull to do more with a greater audience. I believe I have enough knowledge, skill, and credibility to help move the district further in its mission for academic excellence. I’m not sure in what capacity, but I do believe a district position is next for me.” Another principal commented, “I earned a Superintendent certification, and I hope to one day have an opportunity to serve as an

Assistant Superintendent for C&I [curriculum & instruction].” Hence, these principals desired to expand their level of impact in education.

Two noteworthy aspirations were to pursue a Ph.D. degree and work as a professor. One principal stated, “I would like to complete my Ph.D. in education before my eldest son graduates from Texas A&M.” This principal aims to serve as a professor and train pre-service teachers. Another principal revealed, “My ultimate goal is to be a professor in an education program at a university.” Thus, these principals communicated their future professional goals.

Questionnaire Responses: Texas high school Latina principals give advice to aspiring principals

In the eighth question, 16 of the 16 participants shared advice for aspiring principals. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 32

Questionnaire Responses: Texas High School Latina Principals Offer Advice for Aspiring Principals

Question 8. What advice do you have for aspiring principals?
1. This is not for everyone. The demands are like no other job. You hear it all the time that the high school is a monster, it’s true. Yet, if someone has the passion and dedication to work tirelessly for the good of the kids then this is for you. An aspiring principal needs to also have a strong support system. You cannot have distractions. I’ve seen when there’s a lack of dedication and time, the campus will fail. You have to take ownership of everything.
2. Never forget what it is like to be a teacher. Coach, mentor, show empathy, and be a good listener to teachers. They are in the trenches, not us!

Table 32 Continued

Question 8. What advice do you have for aspiring principals?
3. Learn everything you can about special education and finance. Learn how to handle conflict head-on with poise and dignity. Parents need to be heard and will often insult you to get a rise out of you - don't take these conversations personally and never stoop to their level. Teachers are humans and will make mistakes - remember you were once in their shoes. Take different positions/teaching assignments to gain valuable experience. I requested a transfer to DAEP [Disciplinary Alternative Education Program] to learn more about that program. I then accepted a position in another district as a special education teacher and gained valuable experience in special ed law. I was also the district testing coordinator/campus principal in my previous district (small 3A). So basically, learn as much as you can and you'll never have to rely solely on others for information.
4. Always put students first and never forget where you came from.
5. Build relationships first with everyone you come in contact with. Be a good listener and be present and in the moment when you are communicating with people.
6. The advice that I have aspiring principals is to work hard in any position that they hold, respect others, don't complain, find solutions to situations, ask for help when in need, follow through, and enjoy the work that you do.
7. To support teachers and students and be a resource, have an open-door policy with all stakeholders, goals need to be realistic and achievable and the attitude that "we are in it together".
8. Always take the time to learn and reflect. You will make mistakes, but it is what you do moving forward that counts. You can study as many scenarios as you want, but you will only actually learn by doing. Make it a goal to dialogue with peers about your ideas, take risk, and make change happen.
9. Enjoy your work. If you are not happy doing it don't do it.
10. Stay humble, hungry, and trustworthy. Those are the values at the core of my work and it has allowed me to do some amazing things with any staff I have worked for. Always notice everything. Affirmation needs to be constant. Spend time with kids and staff. Roll up your sleeves daily and do the same work you expect others to do. Love what you do and you will never work a day in your life.
11. My advice is to be ready. Learn as much as you can. Move up the ladder and gather experience. Learn curriculum and instructional delivery. Refine your problem solving and communication skills which are extremely important. Learn how to "put out fires" effectively. Surround yourself with people as committed as you are. Also, understand that kids are not the problem. In most cases, it's the adults. Being a principal can be lonely but it is the most rewarding field of education.

Table 32 Continued

Question 8. What advice do you have for aspiring principals?
12. Have a growth mindset -- for yourself and your campus. Be innovative in your delivery and in your expectations and don't accept anything less. Ask for help when you need it. When you roll up your sleeves with your staff to work on areas of focus, they will respect you more. I do not ask my staff to do anything that I wouldn't be willing to do. I've traveled on field trips, attended games, worked with parents in the parent center, hosted events, sat at desks with students, had lunch with students and teachers during the day and the list goes on and on. Make yourself visible and do not isolate yourself.
13. Be prepared for long hours and emotional ups and downs. Becoming a principal has many challenges and everyone is looking to you for guidance, support, encouragement, etc., and others are looking for your flaws. I had to realize that you can never make everyone happy but you can cultivate an environment that fits you and the majority of faculty and staff so that overall, everyone knows that they are valued and that decisions are with students' best interest in mind. Being a campus principal is demanding but so worth it!
14. I would recommend for aspiring principals to be involved in all aspects of the school. All the experience they acquire will assist them in their future goals. As they prepare themselves, it is essential to commit to continuous learning (have a strong foundation for instructional practices) and develop positive relationships with colleagues and school staff. Aspiring principals must define what they believe in and stand for so that others are drawn to follow.
15. NEVER give up!!! Remember to stay true to who you are while playing the game.
16. Stay strong and push for what you know is right.

The principals imparted advice for aspiring principals. I encountered two themes from the questionnaire responses: leadership identity and learning by doing. Nine of the 16 principals mentioned the importance of self-identity, such as character, personal values, and work ethic. One principal disclosed, “Stay humble, hungry, and trustworthy. Those are the values at the core of my work and it has allowed me to do some amazing things with any staff I have worked for. Always notice everything. Affirmation needs to be constant. Spend time with kids and staff. Roll up your sleeves daily and do the same work you expect others to do. Love what you do and you will never work a day in your life.” Another principal contributed, “Always put students first and never forget where

you came from.” Collectively, these principals emphasized a sense of self to successfully lead a high school.

Additionally, five of the 16 principals advised embracing opportunities to learn about various aspects of the principalship. One principal recommended, “I would recommend for aspiring principals to be involved in all aspects of the school. All the experience they acquire will assist them in their future goals. As they prepare themselves, it is essential to commit to continuous learning (have a strong foundation for instructional practices) and develop positive relationships with colleagues and school staff. Aspiring principals must define what they believe in and stand for so that others are drawn to follow.” Another principal added, “Learn everything you can about special education and finance. Learn how to handle conflict head-on with poise and dignity. Parents need to be heard and will often insult you to get a rise out of you - don't take these conversations personally and never stoop to their level. Teachers are humans and will make mistakes - remember you were once in their shoes. Take different positions/teaching assignments to gain valuable experience. I requested a transfer to DAEP [Disciplinary Alternative Education Program] to learn more about that program. I then accepted a position in another district as a special education teacher and gained valuable experience in special ed law. I was also the district testing coordinator/campus principal in my previous district (small 3A). So basically, learn as much as you can and you'll never have to rely solely on others for information.” In summary, Texas high school Latina principals counseled aspiring principals to be centered in their self-identity as a leader and to seize learning opportunities.

Questionnaire Responses: Texas high school Latina principals indicate whether they are interested in a follow up interview (audio recorded).

In the ninth question, 16 of the 16 participants indicated whether they would agree to a follow up interview. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 33

Questionnaire Responses: Texas High School Latina Principals Who Would be Open to a Follow up Interview (Audio Recorded)

Question 9. Would you be open to a follow up interview (audio recorded)? If so, please type the word "yes" and list your email address in the space below. If you are not interested in a follow up interview, please type the word "no" and list your email address in the space below. I will remove your email from the list of future correspondence.

1. yes
2. yes
3. yes
4. yes
5. yes
6. yes
7. yes
8. no
9. yes
10. yes
11. no
12. yes
13. yes
14. yes
15. yes
16. yes

Out of the 16 responses, two participants indicated that they would not be interested in proceeding with a follow up interview.

Phase I Demographic Survey Findings

Demographic Survey Responses: Texas high school Latina principals' country of origin

In the first question, 16 of the 16 participants listed their country of origin. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 34

Demographic Survey Responses: Texas High School Latina Principals' Country of Origin

Question 1. Country of origin.
1. United States
2. USA
3. USA
4. Mexico
5. USA
6. United States
7. United States of America
8. USA
9. United States
10. United States
11. United States
12. Mexico
13. United States
14. United States
15. United States
16. USA

Sixteen Texas high school Latina principals listed their country of origin. Out of the 16 principals, 14 listed the United States as their country of origin. Two principals listed Mexico as their country of origin.

Demographic Survey Responses: The cultural identity of Texas high school Latina principals

In the second question, 16 of the 16 participants stated their cultural identity. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 35

Demographic Survey Responses: The Cultural Identity of Texas High School Latina Principals

Question 2. Cultural Identity (Example: Mexican-American, Central American)
1. Mexican-American
2. Mexican-American
3. Hispanic
4. Mexican-American
5. Hispanic, Mexican-American
6. Mexican-American
7. Mexican-American
8. Mexican-American
9. Mexican-American
10. Hispanic
11. Mexican-American
12. Mexican-American
13. Mexican-American
14. Mexican-American
15. Mexican-American
16. Mexican-American

Out of the 16 participants, 14 participants identified as Mexican-American and two identified as Hispanic.

Demographic Survey Responses: Texas high school Latina principals' languages

In the third question, 16 of the 16 participants answered the languages spoken by Texas high school Latina principals. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 36

Demographic Survey Responses: Languages Spoken by Texas High School Latina Principals

Question 3. What languages do you speak?

1. English and Spanish
2. English and Spanish
3. English and Spanish
4. English and Spanish
5. English/Spanish
6. English and Spanish
7. English and Spanish
8. English/Spanish
9. English and Spanish
10. English and Spanish
11. English and Spanish
12. English and Spanish
13. English and Spanish (not 100% fluently)
14. English/Spanish
15. English and Spanish fluently
16. English and Spanish

The principals listed the languages spoken. All 16 respondents stated that they speak both English and Spanish.

Demographic Survey Responses: The age range of Texas high school Latina principals.

In the fourth question, 16 of the 16 participants indicated their age range. The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 37

Demographic Survey Responses: The Age Range of Texas High School Latina Principals

Question 4. Indicate your age range.
1. 40-49
2. 50-59
3. 50-59
4. 40-49
5. 40-49
6. 50-59
7. 50-59
8. 40-49
9. 40-49
10. 40-49
11. 50-59
12. 50-59
13. 50-59
14. 50-59
15. 40-49
16. 50-59

The principals indicated their age range. Out of the 16 principals, seven principals are in the age range of 40-49 years, and nine principals are in the 50–59-year age range.

Demographic Survey Responses: Texas high school Latina principal teaching experience across school placements

In the fifth question, 16 of the 16 participants specified years of teaching experience across the following school placements: elementary (PK-5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), and high school (grades 9-12). The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 38*Demographic Survey Responses: Teaching Experience Across School Placements*

Question 5. How many years did you teach at each of the following school placements: elementary (PK-5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), and high school (grades 9-12)?

Principal count	Years of teaching elementary (PK-5)	Years of teaching middle/junior high (Grades 6-8)	Years of teaching high school (Grades 9-12)	Total years of teaching experience combined
1	3	0	0	3
2	0	12	0	12
3	0	1	8	9
4	18	2	2	22
5	0	0	9	9
6	0	2	5	7
7	11	0	0	11
8	8	0	0	8
9	0	0	8	8
10	0	0	6	6
11	0	0	8	8
12	0	0	16	16
13	0	0	5	5
14	0	0	11	11
15	0	2	6	8
16	7	1	0	8

Overall, the 16 principals averaged 9.4 years of teaching experience. The minimum teaching experience was 3 years, and the maximum teaching experience was 22 years. Five principals completed teacher experience at the elementary level, six principals completed teacher experience at the middle/junior high level, and 11 principals completed teacher experience at the high school level.

Demographic Survey Responses: Texas high school Latina principal experience across school placements.

In the sixth question, 16 of the 16 participants itemized years of principal experience across the following school placements: elementary (PK-5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), and high school (grades 9-12). The responses of each participant are listed in the following table.

Table 39

Demographic Survey Responses: Principal Experience Across School Placements

Question 6. How many years were you a principal at each of the following school placements: Elementary (PK-5), Middle/Junior High (Grades 6-8), and high school (grades 9-12)?

Principal count	Years of principal experience elementary (PK-5)	Years of principal experience middle/junior high (grades 6-8)	Years of principal experience high school (grades 9-12)	Total years of principal experience combined
1	1	0	8	9
2	0	0	8.5	8.5
3	0	0	6	6
4	2	1	1.5	4.5
5	3	0	1	4
6	0	7	0.5	7.5
7	10	1	8	19
8	0	0	1	1
9	0	0	4	4
10	0	3	11	14
11	0	0	6	6
12	0	0	6	6
13	0	0	5	5
14	0	10	7	17
15	0	0	7	7
16	0	5	2	7

Inclusively, 16 principals averaged eight years of principal experience. The minimum principal experience was one year, and the maximum principal experience was 19 years. Four principals had elementary leadership experience, six principals had middle/junior high leadership experience, and 16 principals had experience at the high school level.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the questionnaire findings from the first phase of my study. The first phase of this study consisted of an open-ended questionnaire sent to 114 Texas Latina high school principals through the Qualtrics online survey platform. The questionnaire is comprised of two sections: (a) open-ended questions regarding the leadership perspectives of Texas high school Latina principals and (b) demographic and background survey questions. In turn, an open-ended questionnaire was sent to 84 Texas Latina high school principals, and I received 16 questionnaire responses ranging from November 10, 2019, to March 6, 2020.

In the next chapter, I provide the findings from the second phase of my study. The second phase of this study entails the virtual interview responses from seven Texas high school Latina principals. My selection criteria for a purposeful sample for the seven principals was the following: (a) one from each geographic location as noted in Chapter III (Figure 5) and (b) three years of principal leadership experience. In the event no principals volunteered to participate in the interviews in a specific geographic region, I moved to the adjacent region to determine a participant. In the table below, I exhibit a

representation of the seven virtual interview participants by geographical area and educator service region (ESC) within the state of Texas.

Table 40

Phase II: Seven Texas High School Latina Principal Virtual Interview Participants

Principal count	Texas geographical region	ESC region
1	South Texas	1
2	South Texas	1
3	East Texas	4
4	South Texas	1
5	South Texas	1
6	Central Texas	20
7	South Texas	1

Chapters V through XI encompass the seven virtual interview responses regarding the lived experiences of seven Texas high school Latina principals, with each chapter representing an individual case study. In Chapter XII, I present a cross-case study analysis of both the open-ended questionnaire and the seven principal case studies.

CHAPTER V

CASE STUDY 1: LATINA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL #1-SOFIA

Introduction

In the second part of this study, I interviewed seven Texas high school Latina principals in reference to their life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. This chapter is the first of seven case study chapters that provide insight into the lived experiences of Texas high school Latina principals. Each case study chapter contains three sections. In the first section of each case study, I provide the community context and school demographics per the most recent posting from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In the second section, I present the interview analysis through the principal's life journey to address the research questions in this study.

Research Questions

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?
2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?
3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

In the third section, I examine the interview responses through the Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens. Sofia is pseudonym for the principal interviewed.

Community and School Demographics

Sofia resides in south Texas, within a large city where 95.4% of the population is comprised of Latinos/as (U.S. Census, n.d.). This large city is located along the U.S. Texas/Mexico border across from another city on the Mexican border. These two cities have a rich history of international trade, originating from the late 1800s and continue to thrive through the 21st century (U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Mexico, n.d). For example, this U.S. border city ranked in the top five out of top 20 U.S. airports, seaports, and border crossings in the year 2018 with over \$200 billion in total world trade dollars (World City, 2019). This port engages in trade with the following partners: Mexico, China, Malaysia, Thailand and France.

The established trade relationship between the U.S. and Mexico via this large south Texas port has also provided educational opportunities for multicultural and multilingual students. This large city contains two major public institutions of higher learning: (a) an international university providing approximately 8,000 students with a range of baccalaureate and masters programs, and (b) a college serving approximately 10,000 students, offering associate and baccalaureate degrees and certificates (U.S. News & World Report, 2020). This large south Texas city also encompasses two independent public-school districts. The first school district averages 25,000 students a year, and the second school district projected district enrollment for 2020-2021 is over 43,000 students. Both school districts are designated as Districts of Innovation,

indicating that both school districts are exempt from certain sections of the Texas Education Code, such as district governance, curriculum, state assessment system, state accountability system, school finance, federal requirement, state or federal requirements applicable to open-enrollment charter schools (TEA, 2020b).

Sofia is employed in one of the two public school districts previously mentioned. She is the head principal of an early college high school designated by TEA. Early College High Schools (ECHS) are open-enrollment high schools with the intention to meet the educational needs of underserved students, such as at-risk and economically challenged students, to receive both a high school diploma and either an associate's degree or at least 60 credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. ECHS collaborate with Texas institutions of higher education (IHEs) to reduce barriers to college access and provide rigorous instruction and accelerated courses for dual credit at no cost to students. In 2018-2019, Sofia's ECHS earned an A accountability (90-100) for exemplary performance. State accountability ratings are based on three domains: (a) Student achievement, (b) School Progress, and (c) Closing the Gaps. The ECHS also earned five distinction designations in the areas of ELA/Reading, Science, Postsecondary Readiness, Mathematics, and Comparative Closing the Gaps. The campus is comprised of the following ethnicities: 99% Latino/a, 0.5% White, and 0.5% Asian. Among the 420 students, 87.1% are economically challenged and 7.6% are English learners (ELs).

Interview Analysis of Principal #1 Sofia

In this second section of the chapter, I provide the interview analysis of Sofia's lived experiences to address the three research questions in this study.

Research Question One: How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?

The descriptions of how Sofia's leadership experiences were shaped by her background are clustered into three themes: (a) educational experiences, (b) family influence, and (c) work ethic.

Educational Experiences

Sofia began her educational journey in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico and she moved to Laredo, Texas upon completion of the third grade. Her transition from the Mexican school system to the U.S. school system was not a seamless transition. Sofia shared that bilingual education programs were non-existent during this timed period. Unlike her younger brothers and sisters who were placed in grade levels respective to their ages, Sofia was placed back in first grade with students who were three years younger.

At that time, the principal of the elementary that we attended, placed me and my brother, I had another sister, but they were younger. So, they started in the grade that they were supposed to be. So, I was placed back in first grade. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

After repeating first, second, and third grade years in their entirety, Sofia was finally promoted to fourth grade. Within a six weeks span, she rapidly advanced from fourth grade to the fifth grade, gaining momentum attributed to a solid content background, strong math skills, and a grasp of the English language. During her high school junior year, she was inspired by her geometry teacher and declared she would serve in the

education profession. Sofia overcame repeating three years of schooling to graduate high school at the classification of a junior at the age of 18.

I did my junior high years, seventh and eighth grade, and then I went to high school in United ISD. And I did my freshman year, and my sophomore year. But the other district required two or three less credits than United ISD. So, I asked my mother to move me to Laredo ISD. That way I could go to summer school and graduate as a junior, which I did. So, I graduated at 18. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Upon graduation, she attended Laredo College, which is now TAMU International, and participated in the college student work study program with financial aid assistance. Sofia' work study assignment was to serve the secretary for the Dean of Athletics in Student Services, where she completed tasks such as making copies and answering phones. The staff took her under their wing and planted a seed for a continuation of higher education. Particularly, the secretary was dating a gentleman who worked for the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, housed at Our Lady of the Lake University, a private Catholic university located in San Antonio, Texas. The secretary envisioned Sofia attending Our Lady of the Lake University and encouraged her to submit an application. Within two and a half years of undergraduate courses, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in math and a minor in Spanish. Sofia proceeded to complete her master's degree in Educational Administration.

Family Influence

Sofia was born in Laredo, Texas, but resided with her family in Nuevo Laredo, México for the first three years of her childhood. Her father provided the main source of income as a bricklayer. He earned a living by crossing the U.S./Mexico border daily to work in Laredo, Texas. Meanwhile Sofia's mother took care of the domestic responsibilities. Sofia reached a critical moment in her life journey when she decided to transfer to Our Lady of the Lake University. Her father supported her education, but he did not want her to go attend school so far away.

And it's funny, yeah, as Latinas, my dad didn't want to let me go. Yes. [Laughs] Sounds familiar? He did not let me, he did not want to let me go, because as a bricklayer, he worked with contractors, and he worked with architects. And I guess he would hear stories about kids' wild parties and stuff, when they left for college. He was worried. [Emotional] I'm sorry if I choked up, it's because . . . Well, my mother stepped in, and she said, "If she wants to go, she's going." So, I left, and I saw my dad cry when I left. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Sofia's college drop off experience entailed she and her mother traveling by Greyhound bus to San Antonio to attend the university orientation and tour the dormitories. Sofia secured a dorm room and a university staff member gave both a ride back to the bus station. Sofia's mother boarded the bus to return to Laredo, and Sofia stayed in San Antonio. She lived in San Antonio for two and a half years and participated in a work study program where she was assigned to work for the secretary's

boyfriend (from her previous work study) at the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. In 1991, Sofia graduated with a baccalaureate degree in math and a minor in Spanish. Shortly after graduation, she married and worked as a teacher in both the middle and high school placements while studying for her Master's degree in Educational Administration. In Sofia's early administrative career, she recalled being a young assistant principal and working with older teachers.

I don't know if this is a Latina thing or a Latina mentality, when I was an assistant principal, I was 30. And so, I was working with teachers that were 40, 50 and 60. And as Latinas, we are taught to respect our elders. You know, you need to respect your elders, and you know, you give them the respect. And so, I, as an assistant principal, I was, you know, in a position to give directives. You know, you're going to do this and you're going to do that. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Despite being in a position of authority, Sofia's family background influenced how she interacted with teachers who were older.

Work Ethic

Moreover, Sofia credits the establishment of a strong work ethic and a solid reputation to her success as a principal. She has proven herself as a dependable, punctual employee who has remained consistent in following through with her job responsibilities.

It's the work ethic. I'm not absent. I've been absent, [but] I have 150 days of sick leave and annual leave. So, if I'm absent it's because I'm sick, or I really needed

to be absent. So, I'm bringing it up, and I tried to be on time. I follow through with whatever documents need to be done, with whatever things need to be taken care of. You know, [if] the district says we need to do this; we're having a meeting on that. I'm on time. I follow through. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Along with the follow through of job responsibilities, Sofia's commitment to the job validated her ability to be a team player. Her work commitment was observed and noted by other employees.

So, when I was a math dean, I worked alongside the Director of Accountability, and the Director of Secondary Education. And so, we were there at the central office, and when I had to stay behind to do the district assessments every six weeks, sometimes I would stay until 8:00 at night, 9:00 at night, and they would be there. And then they would come by, "Are you still here?" "Yes sir. I'm finishing this." So those are the people that make decisions when it comes to selecting, you know, officials. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Thus, through Sofia's demonstration of a robust work ethic and a passionate commitment to her job, she earned a solid, respectable reputation. She maintains visibility in her job, and models professional behavior for her teachers, students, and community.

I think I'm a good employee. I'm a good, reliable employee, you know. They haven't had any, you know, major problems or major issues with teachers going

over there saying that, you know, "That principal is abusing or the principal is rude or the principal doesn't want to talk to us." Or parents like, you know, "We can never find the principal." So, I'm available. I like the work. I think it's a good work reputation. And that's what I tell the teachers, no matter where you go, you better take care of your work reputation. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Indeed, Sofia's educational experiences, family influence, and work ethic have impacted her perceptions of leadership and her role as a Latina high school principal.

Research Question Two: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?

Sofia described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. I outlined Sofia's challenges into three prevalent themes: (a) work and personal life balance, (b) stereotypes, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals.

Work and Personal Life Balance

When Sofia was in her seventh year as a middle school assistant principal, she transferred to an assistant principal position at a high school, serving her preferred student age population. Ironically, she stayed in this position for one year by choice describing her high school assistant principal experiences as, "It was tough; it was a tough year. It was probably, and it has been the toughest year of my life, of my career" (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020). The tough squeeze from the job was not due to Sofia's relationships with her administrative team or colleagues. In fact, Sofia indicated her administrative team had indeed established trust and

confidentiality in their working relationships. The tough squeeze came from the high school extracurricular duties. Sofia recalled some of these duties impacting her personal life.

After school meetings, helping with assessments, doing a lot of ARDs, dealing with discipline issues. I think that year, what got to me, is having to attend football games, basketball games, softball games, soccer games. You know, banquets for the ROTC [Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps], cheerleader banquets, band banquets. And to me, if you're an administrator, you have to show the support for the teachers and their programs and the students. So, I mean if I got invited, I would go. But it did take a toll where I was not being home, because I had to attend all of these things. That's, when it started. And by that time, I already had two children. . . So at that time I was spending a lot of time at school. I remember one year I was in charge of the, I don't remember if it's the PSATs, or the SAT and the kids were going to take it on a Saturday. And then we were on a Friday night, my husband and my two kids, setting up chairs and tables in the gym, to get ready for the next day. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

The high school extracurricular duties took such an overwhelming toll on Sofia's life that she had a critical conversation with her head principal at the end of the school year.

So, after that year, I told [name of head principal], "I can't continue at this pace. I can't. Not because I don't want to. Not because I don't like it. Because I need to take care of myself." And it was affecting, it was, it was just too much

physically. That more than anything because I would get home at 6:00, 7:00, 9:00, 10:00, depending if it was a basketball game. It was late. And then the next day, I'm late again. So, I said, "I'm leaving, I can't." And he's like, "Don't leave."
(Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

At Sofia's request, she was granted a transfer to a middle school. In her first day as head principal of a middle school, Sofia had to apply her problem-solving skills to generate student schedules for each student at her campus. She led the middle school campus for seven years, but her energy level began to plummet in the last two of seven years as she tackled a major campus construction project.

I was getting tired. I was getting to the point of exhaustion. I mean, we got another construction project. The school got a new gym, huge gym and track and field. Huge, like they're beautiful facilities. And I said, "You know what, I can't, I cannot continue at this pace." Maybe try something else, maybe do something else, and you know, nothing was coming up. A [elementary instructional facilitator] position opened for elementary. Okay, here we go again. Elementary.
(Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Sofia found a slower pace as an elementary instructional facilitator; however, this was not the final step in her work trajectory. She would move on other administrative roles.

Stereotypes

Sofia acknowledged experiences of being gender and culturally stereotyped in the workplace. She recounts an incident as an assistant principal and her interaction with a Latino custodial worker.

And sometimes I did get challenged by older men. And, these are the ones that challenged me the most were the older men. Even the custodian. I told the custodian when I was an assistant principal to do something, and he told me, “*Cuando acabe lo que tengo que hacer lo hago*” (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

The English interpretation of the phrase mentioned above would be something to the effect of, *I'll do it when I'm good and ready*. Sofia perceived the custodian's response as an insult to her role as a Latina assistant principal. As a result, she had to carefully plan her response in a professional manner while asserting her authority.

And so, I had to go and vent with somebody. . .and yell it out and scream it out. I can't believe, and this is this and, you know, say my profanities and like blah blah blah blah, and then calm down. And then start writing, start documenting. On this day, I asked you to do this. On that day, and you told me exactly what he said. You're reminded that when I asked you to do something, you need to do something as per your contract, you know, and now their duty is defined.
(Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Instead of further escalating the conflict with the custodian, Sofia chose to apply her knowledge of policy to address the situation without imposing her personal emotions.

So, I always went back to policy, and writing is not my strength. I had to write and then have somebody else read it and tell me what's the tone? Change this word. So, I've learned to document and take away adjectives. And this is just through experience. I don't want your opinion; I don't want anything. Just tell me

what happened, and what the policy is, and let somebody else decide. And so those things, you know, help. The documentation. The documentation is the one and backed up by policy. So, at that beginning, that was my first case with that custodian that told me I'll do it when I, when I finish. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Sofia further expressed how incidents like the one previously mentioned molded her perspective as a leader. She noted that she became a leader by encountering these challenges along her job path.

The other man [male custodian], you know, it starts changing your perspective when you start doing things. You can't be in the background and say, "Okay, I'm going to become a principal, or an assistant principal." You become it when you go through those challenges and when you go through those problems, issues, you know, grievances, whatever you want to call it. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Despite the challenges she has endured in her career, Sofia reflected on these moments as learning opportunities that contributed to her growth as a leader.

Advice for Aspiring Latina Principals

Sofia went through ten job application attempts before she obtained her first administrative role, and she accepted elementary and middle school assistant principal positions despite her desire to work in a high school setting. Her perception in accepting the elementary and middle school assistant principal roles was to seize the opportunity to

enhance her leadership skills and learn as much as possible. Sofia offers the following recommendations for aspiring Latina principals.

I would say that, to take every opportunity, even if it's something they don't want to do. Because you do learn from every job that you have. You know, sometimes they say, "Oh, I don't want to be an assistant principal at an elementary. No, I don't want to do this." But if that's the opportunity that's there, and that's going to lead to what you want, then you need to take that. You know, sometimes they say, "No, I'm going to wait until I get a middle school, or I'm going to wait until I get a high school," and you can't do that. You need to take what's there, because it becomes part of your resume, and it becomes part of having knowledge.

(Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

By perceiving these job opportunities as prospective learning moments, Sofia's knowledge base has expanded. In turn, she has refined her leadership skills.

If you ask me about middle school, I can tell you about middle school. If you ask me about elementary, I can tell you about the Rigby PM (reading comprehension benchmark assessment) and the TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory), and you know, Terra Nova (diagnostic assessment across multiple subject areas) and the kinder and the pre-kinder and if you asked me about high school, I know about high school. So, I think it just makes you well rounded and not say, "No, I'm not going to apply for that because that's not what I want to do." Go ahead and you do that and just do a good job. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Another piece of advice for aspiring Latina administrators is to understand that one's decisions will be challenged by others. Therefore, possessing a strong knowledge base in policy is crucial to performing the demanding job of a principal.

I think what's really important is to know policy. And to know what you can and can't do. Because there's a lot of opinions everywhere. But when somebody tells me, "Well, we did this and we did that." Okay, where is it in writing? Because you're going to get challenged on the decisions that are made. And if you have that policy to back you up, you're going to win. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Sofia also described another example in her job when she was challenged by an employee regarding a directive she had previously given. The employee filed a grievance, and Sofia had to justify her decision-making process at a formal grievance hearing. In the grievance hearing, she articulated how her decision-making process was consistent with school district policy, and she was supported by central administration regarding her actions to give a directive to the employee.

Research Question Three: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Sofia described her job trajectory to the high school principal role. I outlined Sofia's trajectory into three prevalent themes: (a) teaching experiences (b) administrative placements, and (c) mentorship experiences.

Teaching Experiences

After college graduation, Sofia returned home to the Laredo area to teach Spanish and math at a middle school. She taught for approximately three years before transferring to teach math at the high school where she remained teaching algebra, geometry, and algebra II for seven years. During this time period (1984-1985 to 1992-1993), the State of Texas had implemented the Texas Teacher Career Ladder, an incentive program that paid salary supplements from \$1,500 to \$6,000, depending on their career ladder placement (TEA, 1998). Promotions were based on classroom performance, meeting professional development requirements, and years of teaching experience (Erlandson & Wilcox, 1985). Sofia participated in the Texas Teacher Career Ladder incentive program and enrolled in a master's degree program in educational administration. In 1993, the Texas Career Teacher Ladder was abolished; however, Sofia persisted and persevered in completing a master's degree in educational administration without the incentive stipend. Equipped with a master's degree, she started the application process for both middle and high school assistant principal positions.

Sofia applied for administrative positions on ten occasions and did not receive any call backs for interviews for either of the ten times that she applied. She was offered a middle school math coordinator position by a former teacher colleague who became principal of the middle school. At the middle school, she worked beyond her duties and volunteered for activities to bolster her leadership experiences. Specifically, while some of the principals chose to take a summer vacation, Sofia volunteered to coordinate the summer school program. An elementary assistant principal position vacancy was

announced, and Sofia applied knowing elementary was not her preference. She was selected to serve as an elementary assistant principal for a campus of 900 students. The campus contained the following special education units: autistic, epilepsy, and fundamental life skills. She acquired a strong foundation working with special education students and navigating the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) process.

Administrative placements

Sofia's first administrative placement was to serve as an assistant principal at a middle school campus of 1,300 students, where she remained in this position for seven years. In the eighth year, she transferred to an assistant principal position at a high school. As previously stated in the results of research question two, the high school assistant principal position was her most difficult year. After serving only one year as high school assistant principal, she requested a transfer back to the middle school.

At the middle school, Sofia was not comfortable with the politics, and she contemplated leaving the administrative world all together and returning to the classroom. She followed through on submitting an application to teach Spanish in a neighboring school district. On the drive to her interview for the Spanish teaching position, Sofia received a phone call that would impact her work trajectory. The phone call was from a former assistant principal colleague who was promoted to central office.

And he would call me *hijita* "little daughter." He was an older gentleman.

"*Hijita*, where are you going?" "Sir, I'm going for an interview. I can't stay there.

I need to look out for myself." "No, no, no, no. *Hijita*, come and interview for district math coordinator. And so, I was named math coordinator for the district,

which was good. I got to meet all the math teachers from the district, from all the schools. We would have meetings to work on curriculum and resources and curriculum-based assessments for the entire district. So, I did that for five years, at the central office. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

After completing five years as a district level math coordinator, Sofia learned about three head principal middle school vacancies posted in the district. She consulted with her husband regarding the decision to apply for these vacancies, and her husband encouraged her to apply.

That year, two middle schools opened for principal, which is [name of school] and where I was the math coordinator. And I said, "You know what, I'm going to apply for this." And I wasn't ready yet. You know, I, I didn't want to do it still. I wanted to wait until I was older to do it. And, you know, I talked to my husband and my husband said, "Look, here's the opportunity. If I were you, I would take the opportunity, because you don't know when another middle school is going to become available." (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Sofia secured her first head principal position at one of the middle schools where she previously served as an assistant principal. When she arrived for her first day of her head principal job, the assistant principal was waiting for her and informed her that no one single schedule had been generated for any of the students. In other words, Sofia had to roll her sleeves up and hit the ground running. She remained the head principal at the middle school campus for seven years, but the exhaustion began to set in the last two years as she endured a major campus construction project. She pondered leaving the

principal realm and transferring to an elementary instructional facilitator position, a job role with a slower pace.

Although the elementary instructional facilitator position was a lower pay grade, Sofia requested to be employed in this position. She was granted the elementary instructional facilitator position, and her responsibilities included analyzing data, modeling lessons, and finding resources to support instruction. In addition, Sofia's hall duty assignment was at the Pre-K wing, a drastic reduction in pace in comparison to hall duty during a rapid five-minute class exchange at a middle or high school campus. The slow pace, however, was too slow, and Sofia considered other job opportunities. At that point in time, a group of four or six principals had retired or moved out of the district, creating vacancies. Sofia applied for two principal vacancies: elementary head principal and early college high school principal. She was selected to lead the early college high school campus, consisting of 19 teachers and 430 students. After serving 30 years in education, Sofia finally found the right pace and right fit.

So here at [name of early college], what attracted me is that there's no band, there's no football, there's no athletics, it's academics. . .I do not have an assistant principal. So, you know here it's just me. There is one full time counselor, one counselor that comes three times a week, a secretary, a registrar, and a bookkeeper. And I just recently got a dean of instruction. But, uh, yeah, so I was doing testing, I was doing testing. I mean the numbers are, (laughing) compared to that testing we had to do at [previous middle school], you know, the high school and the other elementary, the testing here was, was pretty good. So, I

could handle it. So, I found, I found a good fit for me... and I think the district also found a good fit for this position in me. After being here, I think I would want to retire from here. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

As previously stated, Sofia found the right fit in leading an early college campus. For the 2019-2020 the early college campus ranked seven in the state and placed number 61 across the nation.

Mentorship Experiences

As Sofia held various job duties throughout her educational and professional career. She credits numerous individuals for inspiring her to pursue a career in education. First, Sofia recalled working as a work study in Laredo College (TAMU International), in the Office of the Dean of Athletics. The secretary of this office was dating a gentleman who worked for the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, housed at Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas. They both helped Sofia navigate the college application process and encouraged her to apply to Our Lady of the Lake University. Sofia was accepted to Our Lady of the Lake University, and she graduated with a bachelor's degree in math and a minor in Spanish.

Second, when Sofia completed her master's degree in Educational Administration, she applied for assistant principal positions at both the high school and middle school placements. She applied 10 times, and she did not receive any responses from the 10 applications submitted.

I didn't get called any of those times. And so, then around 1997, a teacher that was there with me at the high school had gotten a position [in the Laredo area] at the other middle school, as the math coordinator. And then she got selected to be a principal. So, she kind of recommended me like, "Hey, [name omitted], apply for this, you'll be good for this." So, I applied for a math coordinator at a middle school, and I got the position. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

As a result of Sofia's prior work experiences and established relationships with her peers, she was able to obtain a math coordinator position through a principal who was once her teacher peer.

Third, Sofia acknowledged that her work reputation and networking were factors in securing her second administrator role, a middle school assistant principal.

A position opened at [name of school] for assistant principal. And it just so happened that, you know, networking. You know, it's good to network, and you work with people regardless of, you know, because you want work and you want to do a good job for the people that you're working for. But it just so happened that the sister-in-law of the middle school principal, worked at [Sofia's previous workplace]. So, when I got picked up, the principal told me, "My sister told me a lot of good things about you." So, I got picked up as an assistant principal at a middle school. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Sofia continued to serve as an assistant principal at the middle school campus for seven years.

Fourth, Sofia further described the dynamics of the middle school campus administrative team, and expressed her head principal was a good mentor.

[Name of principal] was the principal, and we had a very good team. You know, it's a middle school, 1300 kids, and he always told us, "My job is to get you all ready to be principals." That's how, what he would tell us at our meetings. So again, I learned a lot from him. It was an awesome time. I thought I was going to be there forever. It was a very, very good situation. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

The middle school head principal eventually moved on to be head principal at a high school campus, and he brought Sofia with him to serve on his administrative team.

Researcher's Reflection

My personal reflections are italicized to convey my perceptions about the interview data collected. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems. *As Sofia described her educational background, I was stunned to discover that she had to repeat three grades in their entirety. Despite this adversity, Sofia graduated high school earlier than anticipated. How different would Sofia's life be if she would have started school in a dual language program? I visualized the possible outcomes such as Sofia being given the opportunity to develop both of her English and Spanish literacy skills.*

Moreover, I recalled my feelings when Sofia described how she caught a glimpse of her father crying the day she left for college. Sofia's voice cracked, and she became emotional. She apologized for being emotional. I told her that she did not have to apologize. My eyes started watering, and I could feel what she was feeling. This emotional experience was my first experience as a researcher to connect with the emotions of my interviewee. I was concerned that she may feel uncomfortable if I were to probe any further, and I chose not to dive deeper into the topic.

When the interview was over, I had to take a few moments to reflect and process the emotions that I experienced. I learned that I may experience a range of emotions when interviewing participants about their lived experiences. As a researcher, I need to understand when an interviewee has reached an emotional point in the interview where they may feel uncomfortable. My responsibility is to reassure the interviewee that they have a voice in whether to proceed with the interview.

Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

Sofia's life journey was analyzed through the Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). As previously mentioned in Chapter II of this study, LatCrit scholars study the intersectionalities of oppression that impact Latinos, such as race, gender, language, nativism, and class. Through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Sofia's interview: language and identity.

Language

In the early 1970s, Sofia moved to Laredo, Texas after completing the third grade in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. When she enrolled in the Texas public school system, she was placed back in first grade with classmates three years younger. She had to repeat first, second, and third grades in their entirety. During this time period, Sofia noted that bilingual education programs were non-existent. She recalled the principal's justification for placing her back in first grade, "the principal wanted for us to pick up the English language" (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020). Consequently, Sofia received instruction in an English only environment.

Despite the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Supreme court passing critical legislation to support English learners around this time period, Sofia was retained in three grade levels. Hence, she was denied the appropriate bilingual education support ordered by federal legislation. Some of this significant legislation included *Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964*, which prohibited discrimination based on race, color, and national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 1964). Today, the Office for Civil Rights enforces Title VI legislation collaborating with

state and local officials to investigate civil rights violations, including the failure of school districts to provide equal educational opportunity for national origin minority students who have a limited proficiency in English (U.S. Department of Education, 10, January, 2020).

Another legislative milestone impacting English learners was the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. The act was introduced in 1967 by Ralph Yarborough, Texas senator, and was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was considered the first official federal legislation to address the educational needs of English learners (Immigration to the United States, 2015). Section 701 of the Bilingual Education Act (1968) declared the following:

In recognition of the special educational needs of the large numbers of children of limited English-speaking ability in the United States, Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance to local education agencies to develop and carry out new and imaginative elementary and secondary school programs designed to meet these special educational needs. For the purpose of this title, ‘children of limited English-speaking ability means children who come from environments where the dominant language is other than English’

In turn, the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was a crucial step for bilingual education as it provided federal assistance to support bilingual education programs.

For Texas, state legislators acted quickly to adhere to the 1968 Bilingual Education Act by initiating a bill to cancel the 1918 Texas law of teaching English only.

The 1918 English only law permitted Texas teachers to punish Mexican-Americans students who were caught speaking Spanish at school. Examples of punitive actions towards Mexican-Americans speaking Spanish at school included monetary fines for students being caught speaking Spanish (a penny for every Spanish word), standing on a black box, and writing, “I must not speak Spanish.” (Rodriguez, n.d.). Therefore, Senator Joe Bernal of San Antonio and Representative Carlos Truan of Kingsville passed the Texas Bilingual Education Bill in 1969, legalizing bilingual education and repealing the 1918 Texas English only law. (Blanton, 2004). Thus, both the 1968 Bilingual Education Act and the Texas Bilingual Education Bill of 1969 symbolized a victorious return of bilingual instruction in Texas.

Another important milestone in support of bilingual education was the 1974 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols*, which determined that schools would be in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act if they “failed to provide students who do not speak English with adequate instructional procedures” (*Lau v. Nichols, 1974*). Thus, this Supreme Court ruling ensured the continuation of bilingual education programs. Since the *Lau v. Nichols* case, critical race scholars have studied how language raciolinguistic ideologies continue to suppress Latinos (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Stein, 2018). In turn, these deficit notions perpetuate the marginalization of Latino students.

Identity

Respeto (Respect)

In Sofia’s early administrative career, she recalled being a young assistant principal and working with older teachers whose ages ranged 40-60. Although Sofia was

in a position of authority in her workplace and giving directives to elders was an expectation of her job role, she acknowledged how her upbringing clashed with the dominant social norms of her work environment.

As Latinas, we are taught to respect our elders. You know, you need to respect your elders, and you know, you give them the respect. And so, I, as an assistant principal, I was, you know, in a position to give directives. You know, you're going to do this and you're going to do that. (Principal 1 Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

In other words, asserting authority over elders is a contradiction of Latino social norms. In the Latino culture, *respeto* is the belief in demonstrating respect and obedient behavior toward figures of authority, older people, parents, and relatives. (Calzada et al., 2012; Comas-Diaz & Duncan, 1985; Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006). The cultural expectation of *respeto* is instilled in Latino children and reflected in the Spanish language with words, such as *Don* (male), *Doña* (female), and *Usted* (formal pronoun you).

Marianismo and Machismo

Sofia encountered experiences of resistance in the workplace, and much of this resistance came from older men. As previously mentioned, she recounted an incident where a Latino custodial worker was insubordinate to her directive. This interaction was an example of a power struggle where Sofia navigated the expectations of both her leadership role and her cultural gender role as the male Latino custodian asserted his masculinity, an expectation of the Latino gender role. This contradiction within the

Latino culture is also known as the dichotomy of *marianismo* and *machismo*. As previously stated in Chapter II of this study, the term *marianismo* was introduced by Evelyn Stevens (1973) to describe women's subordinate position in Latin American society and to bring attention to the glorified gender-role expectations of women (Castillo et al., 2010; Ertl et al., 2019; Kosmiki, 2017; Mendieta, 2016).

Moreover, the ideology of *machismo* is “presumed to be derived from an Iberian or Latin American cultural essence, and applied by anglophone scholars and popular authorities since the 1950s to flag, admonish, or deride hypermasculinities of variable forms” (Cowan, 2017, p. 619). One of these variable forms of hypermasculinity is stereotypical behavior aimed at suppressing women. Arrizón (2020) and Kawabe (2020) argued that *machismo* behavior further impedes female career advancement by perpetuating cultural bias towards women across national boundaries (Arrizón, 2020; Kawabe, 2020). Hence, Sofia's conflict with the Latino custodian is an example of gender and cultural bias.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented Sofia's life journey, the first of seven case study chapters of Texas high school Latina principals interviewed regarding life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

In the first section of this case study chapter, I provided the community context and school demographics. In the second section, I presented the interview analysis to address the research questions in this study. The results from the first research question revealed that Sofia's leadership experiences were shaped by her (a) educational experiences, (b) family influence, and (c) work ethic. In response to the second research question, Sofia described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. These challenges were grouped into three prevalent themes: (a) work and personal life balance, (b) stereotypes, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals. The results of the third research question address Sofia's job trajectory to the high school principal role. I outlined Sofia's trajectory through her (a) teaching experiences, (b) administration trajectory, and (c) mentorship experiences. Finally, through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Sofia's interview: language and identity.

In the next chapter, I provide the interview responses with respect to the lived experiences of Isabella, the second of the seven Texas high school Latina principals. I also demonstrate how Isabella's interview responses align with the dimensionalities in LatCrit and provide insight on the Texas high school Latina experience in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

CHAPTER VI

CASE STUDY 2: LATINA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL #2 ISABELLA

Introduction

This chapter is the second of seven case study chapters that provide insight into the lived experiences of Texas high school Latina principals in reference to their life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. Like the first case study, this chapter contains three sections. In the first section of each case study, I provide the community context and school demographics per the most recent posting from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In the second section, I present the interview analysis through the principal's life journey to address the research questions in this study.

Research Questions

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?
2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?
3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

In the third section, I examine the interview responses through the Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens. Isabella is a pseudonym for the principal interview.

Community and School Demographics

Isabella resides in the southernmost tip of Texas, also known as the Texas Rio Grande Valley or *El Valle* according to Spanish speakers (Southern Careers Institute, 2020). The Texas Rio Grande region extends from the mouth of the Rio Grande River, where it flows into the Gulf of Mexico, up to 100 miles inland covering Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo, and Starr counties. (Vigness & Odintz, n.d). By the year 2040, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) officials predicted the population of the Rio Grande Valley will double (Kelley, 2019). In 2019, the Rio Grande Valley counties represented an estimated total population count of 1,377,861 (U.S. Census, n.d). The 2019 estimated census population and race/ethnicity breakdown by county is listed in the table below:

Table 41

2019 Rio Grande Valley Estimated Population and Race/Ethnicity by County

County name	Total population count	Percent Latino/a,	Percent White	Percent Black or African American	Percent Asian
Cameron	423,163	90.0%	8.6%	0.8%	0.8%
Willacy	21,358	88.5%	8.5%	2.7%	0.9%
Starr	64,633	96.4%	3.3%	0.4%	0.2%
Hidalgo	868,707	92.5%	5.9%	0.9%	1.0%

Note. U.S. Census notes some estimates presented come from sample data, and thus have sampling errors that many render apparent differences between geographies statistically indistinguishable.

Moreover, Isabella is employed in a school district that TEA classified as Other Central City Suburban, which signifies that her school district is located in a county with a population of between 100,000 and 1,019,999, and its enrollment is at least 15% of the largest district enrollment in the county, equal or greater than 897 students (TEA, 2020). For the 2018-2019 school year this school district served 4,930 students consisting of 0.1% African American, 99.6% Hispanic, and 0.3% White. Of the 4,930 students, 97.6% are economically challenged and 25.4% are English learners (TEA, 2020).

Campus Background

Isabella's campus is situated within 25 miles of the Rio Grande River and U.S. Texas/Mexico border. During the 2018-2019 school year, the student enrollment at Isabella's high school campus was 1,411, and the campus consisted of the following ethnicities: 99% Hispanic, 0.6% White, 0.1% AA, and 0.1% American Indian. Of the 1,411 enrolled students, 98.2% were classified as economically disadvantaged and 18.8% were English learners. For the 2018-2019 school year, Isabella's campus earned a B accountability rating.

In addition, Isabella's campus is a designated T-STEM Early College High school with an emphasis in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Isabella's campus maintains a collaboration with South Texas College, providing the following year-round dual enrollment programs: (a) Associate of Arts degree in Business Administration, Criminal Justice, or Interdisciplinary Studies, and (b) Associate of Science degree in Medical Science, Engineering, or Computer Science. Students also have access to advanced academic classes such as Advanced Placement (AP) and UT on

Ramps to earn college credit. Specifically, UT ONRamps provides distance education courses through a dual enrollment model. These courses span STEM, Arts, and Humanities with the college credit transferable to any Texas public higher education institution.

Interview Analysis of Principal #2 Isabella

In this second section of the chapter, I provide the interview analysis of Isabella's lived experiences to address the three research questions in this study.

Research Question One: How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?

Isabella's leadership experiences were shaped by: (a) language adversity, (b) education journey, and (c) family cultural expectations.

Language Adversity

Isabella is bilingual; she is fluent in both English and Spanish. Her first language was Spanish, and at the age of 10, she moved to the United States from Reynosa, México, a border city directly across the México/U.S. border from Hidalgo, Texas. As Isabella progressed through the Texas public school system, her English language acquisition increased. Her parents, however, continued to experience challenges with the English language and relied on Isabella for translation assistance. Isabella described how translating for her parents inspired her to aspire for greatness, "seeing their struggles in the language. I would have to translate for them as well. I think that also motivated me to go further" (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020). In turn,

Isabella played a crucial role in translating for her parents and bridging the U.S. and Mexican culture in her home.

Moreover, as a high school student, Isabella was ridiculed for her Spanish accent, being that English was her second language. Nevertheless, she persisted in finishing high school and felt more comfortable in a college setting with a more diverse population.

During my high school years, my English was not as strong. I had the little accent, and people would always make fun of me because of my accent. You know, that accent. I finished high school. I started college. I was working part-time and going to school. In college, [there] were people with all types of accents, so that's when I relaxed, and I enjoyed my college years. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

The language discrimination that Isabella suffered in high school would yield future consequences with respect to raising her children as bilingual speakers. She expressed regret in not emphasizing bilingualism in the home out of concern that her children would face the same language discrimination experiences she faced in high school.

Because of my experience growing up in high school where they would make fun of me because of my accent, I didn't want my boys to go through that. And now, I regret it. They understand it but they, they communicate with like, my dad who doesn't speak a word of English. But they understand, you know, they try to talk it [but], they sound more White than [Mexican]. And I regret it. Like, I, now I'm like, why did I do that to them? (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020).

Thus, Isabella's personal and educational experiences with language adversity shape her role as a principal.

Education Journey

Isabella's parents attended school in México, but they did not finish high school. Isabella's father, a farmworker, completed up to the third-grade, and her mother, a housewife, completed up to the sixth grade. Despite her parents not attaining a high school diploma, they emphasized the expectation for Isabella to attend college, "They always wanted us to go to college. And always to them, it was college. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020). Although Isabella's parents were not native to the Texas public school system, they monitored her academic progress through school report cards.

And even though my parents were not educated, they would check my report cards. They would check to see, they were not able to help me and at home, of course, not because, you know, they didn't have the education, they didn't know the language, but my mom would check my report cards. And if I had bad grades, oh man I would get it. I didn't even want to get home if I got in trouble. So, they always instilled that hard work. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Isabella followed through with her parents' expectations by graduating from high school and attending college. In the same time period, she married and became pregnant with her second child. Considering college part-time and working full time with a son and another child on the way, she started to feel overwhelmed. At this point in her

education path, she decided to flip her schedule to working part-time and going to school full time.

It was tough. It got to the point that I finally said, "I can't do it all." I'm one of those that, I want to do it all. I don't need anybody; I can do it myself. And I finally told, at the time my husband, now I'm divorced. But I finally told him, "I'm going to go work part-time, and I need to go to school full-time. I need to finish school or I'm not going to finish. And that's what I did. I mean, I went to school full-time. I was still raising my little one. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Regarding graduate studies, Isabella chose to enroll in a master's degree program in Educational Administration when her youngest child was attending high school.

I waited for my master's until my kids were older. I didn't want to take away from them and from my time with them. So, my young one, which is the one at A&M right now, was already in high school. That's when I decided, let me do it online, let me get my master's. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Isabella earned an online master's degree in Educational Administration with a principal certification through Lamar University. She is currently divorced and has two sons: the oldest son is a software engineer and a graduate of the University of Texas at Dallas, and the younger son is currently attending Texas A&M University at College Station, majoring in biomedical engineering.

In reflection of her educational trajectory, Isabella credits her success to the educational values and resilient work ethic implanted by her parents.

I think I felt like I had something to prove. That's why I continued my education. You know what? We can do it. Not only because we're from México, or because I didn't have the background, that we can be successful. So, I think being, Latina, being a minority did play a role. The opportunities that we got here in the U.S, and that's what my parents always instilled in us. Education, education, education. And that's your way out, you know? I think that helped us being that my dad was a farm worker and seeing how hard he worked. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Hence, Isabella's family background and educational experiences had some bearing on her Latina identity and role as a principal.

Family Cultural Expectations

Isabella described her parents' expectations and their influence on her leadership perspective. For instance, in her high school years, she aspired to be a secretary; however, her mother desired for Isabella to be a nurse or a teacher. Isabella rejected the expectation of being a nurse or a teacher. She summoned up the courage and responded to her mother.

Growing up I remember one time she told me when I was in high school, she said, "*Mija, quiero que seas enfermera o maestra.* And, I remember telling her, "*Tas loca. Ni maestra, ni enfermera, voy hacer.*" And it's funny because in high school you know how they have clubs, and they had wanted me to join the future

teachers club, and I said, "You're crazy. . . I don't think so." I wanted to be a secretary. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Indeed, Isabella wanted to have ownership in choosing her own profession.

In addition, Isabella noted her mother's housewife role and visualized a different role for herself. She pictured her future self as an independent woman.

My mom stayed home, so she was always there for the cooking and the cleaning. And that's one thing that I always said, "That's not what I want to do." You know, I don't want to rely, and I don't know if it sounds good or bad, but I think us females, especially the Latina females, sometimes have been stereotyped to stay at home. You clean. You cook. And I didn't want that for me. And I said, "I am not going, [to] follow that [stereotype] of you [staying] at home. You depend on a man." (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

This notion of depending on a man was a belief shared by Isabella's father. The idea of the man being the head of the household clashed with Isabella's ideas about her future.

My dad's mentality is, you depend on the man. The man is the one in charge of the house. But at the same time, he did want me to get an education, but still depend on a man. And I was like, "No, that's not going be me. I can't. I want to be my own person, have my own voice."

(Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Although Isabella's father supported her dream of an education, he expected her to play a dependent role in the dynamics of her future household. Within these future dynamics, she would accept her future husband's position as the lead of the house. Isabella refused

this expectation asserting the desire to establish her identity and voice in her future household.

Furthermore, a family tragedy propelled change in Isabella's family role structure. When her mother passed away, Isabella's father redefined her role. Her role consisted of new responsibilities that would impact her siblings. Isabella recollected her father's words.

When my mom passed away, [he said] "You make all the decisions." And I'm like, "Why me?" Because you're the educated one. And you know, my brother, like I said, high school, maybe some, community college. My sister dropped out. She got her GED. So, for my dad, I'm the one that has accomplished the most. So, he's very proud, and I know that he's always talking about my accomplishments, and a lot of the decisions that involve. . . he always calls me for different things. *Mijita* what do you think? And when my mom passed away, I had to make all the decisions because ... "You're the educated one. You're the one that knows. You take care of it." (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020).

Subsequently, Isabella's father chose to empower Isabella as a decision maker regarding family affairs. These family cultural expectations and experiences contributed to Isabella's identity. In short, Isabella's leadership experiences were shaped by: (a) language adversity, (b) education journey, and (c) family cultural expectations.

Research Question Two: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?

Isabella described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. I outlined Isabella's challenges into three themes: (a) personal/work balance, (b) stereotypes, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals.

Personal Life and Work Balance

The principal job can be demanding to the point of disrupting the personal and work life balance. In reference to the job demands of the principalship, Isabella explained how “the job is challenging. It's not what it used to be. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020). She divulged how the work demands impacted her family life.

I'll be honest with you, though, the job did take a toll on my marriage. The time I spent at work, and not being home did take a toll on my marriage. I'm not saying that's what caused the downfall of my marriage. But I think as I started moving up, my ex-husband started feeling like, like I was more. You know what I mean? Like, he started feeling less. Like *que tenia más autoridad yo*. And he felt like he wasn't at my level (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020).

As mentioned above, Isabella spoke of her husband's perception of losing his positional stance in the family household. This position was not only symbolic; he was no longer the breadwinner of the family. Isabella's job promotion to the high school level resulted

in a pay raise. She articulated the differences in salary earnings for an elementary principal in comparison to a high school principal in her school district.

High school you're talking \$100,000 plus. Elementary, you're at 70 some, 80. So it's about a 15 to 20,000-dollar difference. But of course, [at the] elementary you don't have games, weekends, [and] you don't have all that comes with all that extra. My ex made very good money, so when he was making more money than I was, he was happy. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020).

Besides the differences in salary between the elementary and high school levels, Isabella noted her job responsibilities at the high school included working with more men, an aspect of the principal role that her ex-husband did not accept.

When I moved to the high school [as an] assistant principal, that's where the jealousy started, because I started being with a lot more men, you know, coaches, and stuff like that. So, I think that's where his insecurity kicked in. And that's where, where I saw some of the downfall. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020).

Presently, Isabella is divorced but does not express any regret with respect to her personal life and job path.

My kids are not little anymore, so. . . I can stay late. I can work on the weekends, versus if my kids were little. You know what I mean? And I know it's about the regrets here. I think one of my regrets was that I did not get my master's a little bit earlier. But I waited until my kids were older. But that's the only thing. But

other than that, I don't have really any regrets whatsoever. And, and I enjoy what I do. I love what I do. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020).

Certainly, the job responsibilities of the principalship have impacted Isabella's personal life. In the face of personal life changes, such as a substantial pay increase and divorce, Isabella moves forward with no regrets, expressing a passion and commitment to her profession.

Stereotypes

As a high school principal, Isabella encountered stereotypes in both the workplace and in the community. Concerning the workplace environment, she has supervised both male and female assistant principals. Specifically, she recalled being challenged by the male assistant principal and discerned the need to prove herself as a competent leader.

I have my right-hand, assistant principal who wants to do everything for me. And I'm like, "No, I've got to do this myself." And he's like, "Why, if I can do it for you?" Because I feel like maybe he thinks that I can't do it because I'm a female. You know what I mean? So, I feel like I can do it. I'm okay. You know, it's like, back off. I can do it. But sometimes I feel like he thinks that I can't do it. You know? So, I feel like I have to prove myself. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

With respect to stereotypes from the community, Isabella expressed disappointment in a conversation she held with a male school district employee, who

implied she obtained her high school principal position through an inside connection, not through her own merit. She was saddened to learn how this man had inaccurately perceived her ability to secure a leadership role.

You know what the sad part is? This perception that people have. I was helping at one of our parades here in [name of location] because I work in [name of school district], which is 40 minutes away. And somebody . . . he works in [another] school district, but he is not in [education]. He doesn't have a degree. And he's like, "Hey, are you still in [previous school district]?" I said, "Actually no, I'm in [current school district]." And he's like, "Oh really, so what are you doing over there?" I said, "I'm the high school principal." And he's like, "What? You're the high school principal?" I said, "Yeah." He says, "Oh my God you might have very good connections over there." And I'm like, "No, I interviewed for the position and I got it." Right away they assumed that somebody got me that position, that somebody put me in that position. And I'm like, no I interviewed, and I got the position. But that's the assumption. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Additionally, Isabella combatted biased assumptions regarding her job transition from the elementary campus to the high school campus. Notably, these biased notions were conveyed to Isabella from the woman who was selected to fill the elementary job vacancy.

When I moved from the elementary to the high school, "Well, why did she move? Why did they move her? What did she do? Did she sleep with someone?"

That's why they moved her?" No, I wanted the experience; I wanted to learn. Like, I needed the change. I was bored. And, the girl that took over my position, she's like, "I want you to know that I didn't want. . . I was not pushing you out." And I'm like "You didn't push me out." I didn't leave so that you could replace me. I left because I wanted to." (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Accordingly, Isabella justified the reason for her job transfer to stomp out negative assumptions for transition to the high school placement.

Advice for Aspiring Latina Principals

Considering the personal and professional trials Isabella has confronted in her journey, she offered words of wisdom for aspiring Latina principals. First, “we're stronger than sometimes we believe ourselves to be. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020). In other words, we do not know our own strength. Indeed, throughout Isabella’s principal trajectory, she has encountered obstacles and has persevered through personal and professional challenges. These challenges served as learning moments for Isabella to flourish as a person and grow as a leader.

Second, Isabella advised future Latina principals to stare fear in the eye, even if this fear stems from intimidation tactics of the male gender. For example, when Isabella first assumed a leadership role at the high school campus, she implemented changes that resulted in defiant behavior on behalf of the male coaches. These male coaches threatened to jump over her position in the chain of command to call a school board member. Isabella chose to confront the threat head on.

Don't be intimidated by the job, or by the fact that you might end up with a lot of male assistants that some-They feel like intimidated by you. . . When I did start, I'll be honest with you, I did have some of the coaches, I came in and made some changes. You know, they threw the, "Well, I'm going call so and so right away. Like, call the board member." And I think they expected me to back down. And I said, "Sure. Here. Here's the phone. Call him. By all means. Go ahead." And they looked at me like, "Oh, shoot she's not ..." you know? (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020).

Certainly, Isabella invited the male coaches to follow through in contacting the school board member as a gesture of refusing to back down from a threat.

Third, Isabella recommended that Latinas should exude confidence in their leadership position, regardless of the status quo. As previously stated in Chapter II of this study, the Texas high school principal role has traditionally consisted of White men. Thus, the population of Texas high school Latina principals is less than the population of Texas high school White male principals. Undeterred by working in a male dominated field, Isabella asserted that Latinas should not permit themselves to feel intimidated by the lack of gender and ethnic underrepresentation.

Just be confident. Know that just because we are females, or because we're Latinas, we're a minority that we don't know what we're doing. I think that, in itself, and people do tell me that, like I walk the school like I own the place. And I might not know everything. And I'm honest when I don't know, I'll [say I will] get back to you. But don't feel intimidated . . . Don't feel like you can't do it

because you're a female or we sell ourselves short. You know what I mean? Like you shortchange yourself, cut yourself short because we feel like, no well I'm, I'm Mexicana, and then I'm a girl, no forget it. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020).

Therefore, Isabella encouraged Latinas to demonstrate confidence in a leadership realm traditionally occupied by White men. In lieu of feeling intimidated, she emboldened Latinas to feel empowered to represent their gender and culture. As outlined above, Isabella depicted challenges throughout her life journey regarding: (a) personal/work balance, (b) stereotypical encounters, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals.

Research Question Three: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Isabella described her job trajectory to the high school principal role. I grouped Isabella's trajectory into three prevalent themes: (a) teaching experiences (b) principal experiences, and (c) mentorship experiences.

Teaching Experiences

Isabella has over 20 years of total teaching and principal experience in Texas public schools. She has taught at the following school placements: elementary (grades PK-5) for 18 years, middle school/jr. high (grades 6-8) for two years, and high school (grades 9-12) for two years. Isabella recounts her elementary teaching experience, specifically in bilingual kindergarten and first grade. She accounted her success in the classroom to a strong command of the Spanish language.

The fact that I was bilingual helped me a lot because being that we're so close to the border, of course, we have a lot of recent immigrants. And when I was doing elementary education, I was a kinder teacher and a first-grade teacher. So, that helped me a lot. I always got the bilingual class. I always got the recent immigrants because my Spanish was so strong. And it is still that strong.

(Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Additionally, being bilingual has also benefited Isabella's ability to communicate with Latino families and apply cultural competence to connect with Latino/a students and parents.

Spanish has helped me a lot. Even now, in the high school because of the areas we serve here. I think the kids identify with me too, because our background is similar to what they go through. And they identify, and I identify with the parents very well. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Although Isabella was once mocked for her Spanish accent as a student, her bilingual skills have proved to be a blessing for her current students, parents, and community.

Principal Experiences

Isabella served as an assistant principal and head principal at the following school placements: elementary assistant principal (grades PK-5) for two years, middle school assistant principal (grades 6-8) for one year, high school assistant principal (grades 9-12) for one year, and high school head principal for one year. In her first year as the head high school principal, Isabella chose not to expedite any major changes until she was able to assess the needs of the school. She also invested this first year in building

relationships with her teachers and staff. As the second-year approached, she made changes and anticipated that some teachers would be placed outside of their comfort zone. She understood that a little resistance from the teachers is part of the change process to maximize student achievement.

I got hired in late July, or mid-July. So, I didn't make a lot of changes. Now, this is my second year coming up, I'm making the changes. So, I think throughout the year the teachers started feeling more comfortable with me. But now that I'm making the changes, I'm beginning to see a little resistance again because I'm changing schedules. I am moving teachers around, so there's some resistance. This is my second year. I'm starting from the beginning, let's say ... Last year I didn't want to move too much, because I didn't know a lot from the principal standpoint. Now, I already know more of the master schedule, the teachers, [and] the needs of the school. I'm making those changes, and I'm getting some resistance. I've already gotten calls from the superintendent and from the board members. But that's what I need. That's what we need. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Moreover, Isabella received the support of her superintendent and school board to proceed with the change process she had implemented. Specifically, the school board acknowledged the need to hire a principal from outside of their community to execute change on the campus without local political influences. Being that Isabella resided in another community, she fit the role.

Thankfully, when I came in the board members were pretty much on board, and they said, "We're going to let her do her job" . . . And the board members needed somebody that would come in from the outside. I'm not from the area. I don't know anybody. And I started making those changes. I'm not influenced by the teachers or who's there, or who they're related to, or who they know because I don't know anybody. So that helps. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Theoretically, Isabella was granted autonomy from the school board to lead her campus and materialize her plan for change.

Mentorship Experiences

Initially, Isabella did not see herself in a leadership role, and she had no desire to become a principal until two principals (one male, one female) recommended that she consider a future in school administration.

I had a principal, a female principal who I would see, and I had always said, "No, I don't think I want to be a principal. No, that's not for me." But when I saw the way she worked, her work ethic, and she's, you know, *también*, Latina, but she was elementary. She had been at the junior high, and she told me, "If you haven't thought about it, maybe you should look into administration." She said, "You would be a good leader." (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Likewise, a male principal had also suggested that Isabella consider the principalship.

I have a friend who used to be my principal when I was in elementary, *también*. He was one of the ones that a while back told me you know, "you could consider principal." And I said, "You're crazy. I'll never be a principal." I remember telling him that. And, I call him a lot now. He's done public, he's done [name of charter school]. And I call him for guidance. (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

When Isabella was offered the opportunity to lead the high school campus, she reached out to the Latina principal who initially encouraged her to become a principal.

When I was going to get this high school position as principal, I called her because she was one of the ones I put for a reference. And I said, "They offered me the job." And she said, "Well, you better take it." I said, "I don't know." She said, "You can do it. You better take it. You are strong. You can do it." (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Hence, these two principals planted a seed of inspiration in pursuing a career in leadership when Isabella did not see herself in this role.

As she stepped into her new high school head principal role, Isabella received support through the mentorship of two women, a former principal who once occupied her principal position and an assistant superintendent.

I was scared. I'll be honest with you. At first, like can I do it? But you will always have someone out there who will be able to help. Do I have a support system? I do. In the district, one of the ladies that was assigned to kind of mentor me, she was a principal there before me. She used to be a principal there at the

high school, so she's been there. . . And then, one of our ladies, the assistant superintendent also was there a while back, and she's very, very supportive.

(Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Furthermore, Isabella sought guidance from a previous male principal and previous male superintendent to help her navigate her new high school principal role. She maintained a good rapport with these administrators in her previous workplace campuses. She expressed her gratitude, “Thankfully, when I left [previous school district], I left [on] very good terms. My ex-principal. . . he hasn't done high school, but he's done elementary. He's done junior high. I call him for advice” (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020). Isabella is grateful for leaving her previous campuses on good terms and continues to reach out to these leaders for guidance and mentorship.

Specifically, Isabella received advice from her previous school district superintendent prior to transitioning into the head principal position. The superintendent suggested that she "remember the ABCDs of high school: athletics, band, cheer, [and] dance” (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020). After her leadership transition, she continued to maintain a good relationship with the previous superintendent.

And I even call my ex-superintendent from [previous school district]. When I need help, I have a good relationship with him. I'll call him and say, "Sir, this and this." And he's worked with my current superintendent. He used to be a principal when my superintendent was his superintendent. So, he knows. So, it works. So,

like I tell him, he's like, "Well don't do this. And don't do that. And make sure you do this." (Principal 2 Isabella, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Remarkably, Isabella had no intention of becoming a principal until two principals, as previously mentioned, recommended that she consider a future in school administration. Throughout her professional journey, Isabella has established a network of mentors to help her navigate her leadership role. Isabella described her job trajectory to the high school principal role through three prevalent themes: (a) teaching experiences, (b) principal experiences, and (c) mentorship experiences.

Researcher's Reflection

My personal reflections are italicized to convey my perceptions about the interview data collected. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems.

In the interview, Isabella expressed regret in choosing not to teach Spanish to her children. She suffered so much ridicule for her Spanish accent as a student that she did not want her children to suffer the pain she had suffered. Now she regrets that her children are not fluent in Spanish. I empathized with Isabella's feelings of regret. I understood that she had to consider suppressing an aspect of her culture from her children, in order to avoid the possibility of painful experiences for her children in the future. I reflected on what I would do if I were in Isabella's situation. As a bilingual Latina woman, I always wished for my future children to be bilingual (English and Spanish). My hope is that my future children will be able to communicate with my mother, who only speaks Spanish. However, I did not experience the language discrimination that Isabella encountered. How many other Latino families have faced this cultural dilemma? Ultimately, Isabella chose what she thought was best for her family, and I understood her reason. I do not pass judgement, and I admire her courage to share her story.

Latino Critical Race Theory

Isabella's life journey was analyzed through the Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). As previously mentioned in Chapter II of this study, LatCrit scholars study the intersectionalities of oppression that impact Latinos, such as race, gender, language, nativism, and class. Through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Isabella's interview: language and identity.

Language

Throughout high school, Isabella was mocked by her classmates for having a Spanish accent. This accent mockery is an example of an oppressive act to Isabella's identity as a Latina. Speakers with accents often confront social stigma and biased attitudes despite their linguistic competence (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Hansen & Dovidio, 2016; Montgomery & Zhang, 2018). Additionally, Nelson et al. (2016) supported the previous research of Bergman et al. (2008) and Ryan et al. (1977) and found that women with Spanish accents were rated less competent in terms of communication and knowledge in comparison to individuals with North American accents. Thus, accent stereotyping and its intersection with gender stereotypes are both examples of dimensions of oppression that impact Latinos.

Consequently, this accent stereotyping experience negatively impacted Isabella to the point that she decided not to teach her children Spanish out of fear of them going through the same trauma she experienced in high school. Later, Isabella expressed regret in not teaching her children to speak Spanish fluently. As a result, her children do speak some Spanish but experience a language communication gap with their grandfather.

Scholars note that the loss of the native language always yields intergenerational communication consequences, specifically between children (Garcia, 2003; Guardado, 2006; Kouritzin, 1999; Schecter & Bayley, 2002; Thomas and Cao, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1991). Hence, Isabella's intent to suppress her native language from her children due to fear of future discrimination is an example of an oppressive phenomenon within the Latino culture.

Identity

Marianismo and Machismo

As a young woman, Isabella visualized her future as an independent woman. This independent woman role contradicted Isabella's family expectation to be a wife depending on a man. This clash of role expectation is also known as the contrasting dichotomy of *marianismo* and *machismo* as previously stated in Chapter II of this study. In Isabella's case, her father was the breadwinner of the family, and her mother was a housewife. While the father supported Isabella's pursuit of a higher education, Isabella indicated her father expected her to depend on a man. Particularly, Isabella explained her father's mentality was that a woman should depend on a man, because the man is the one in charge of the house.

Cultural Role Expectations

Further, Isabella confronted her cultural role expectations in the relationship with her husband. For example, Isabella's high school job promotion included a substantial

increase in pay that surpassed her husband's earnings. In turn, Isabella had become the breadwinner of the family. This change disrupted the family role dynamic and sparked feelings of insecurity on behalf of the husband. The husband's insecurity became one of the contributing factors in her divorce.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented Isabella's life journey, the second of seven case study chapters of Texas high school Latina principals interviewed regarding life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

In the first section of this case study chapter, I provided the community context and school demographics. In the second section, I presented the interview analysis to address the research questions in this study. The results from the first research question revealed that Isabella's leadership experiences were shaped by her (a) language adversity, (b) education journey, and (c) family cultural expectations. In response to the second research question, Isabella described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. These challenges were grouped into three prevalent themes: (a) personal and work life balance, (b) stereotypes, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals. The results of the third research question address Isabella's job trajectory to the high school principal role. I outlined Isabella's trajectory through her (a) teaching experiences, (b) principal experiences, and (c) mentorship experiences. Finally, through

the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Isabella's interview: language and identity.

In the next chapter, I provide the interview responses with respect to the lived experiences of Valentina, the third of the seven Texas high school Latina principals. I also demonstrate how Isabella's interview responses align with the dimensionalities in LatCrit and provide insight on the Texas high school Latina experience in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

CHAPTER VII

CASE STUDY 3: LATINA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL #3-VALENTINA

Introduction

This chapter is the third of seven case study chapters that provide insight into the lived experiences of Texas high school Latina principals in reference to their life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. Like the previous case study chapters in this study, this chapter contains three sections. In the first section of each case study, I provide the community context and school demographics per the most recent posting from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In the second section, I present the interview analysis through the principal's life journey to address the research questions in this study.

Research Questions

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?
2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?
3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

In the third section, I examine the interview responses through the Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens. Valentina and Valentina ISD are pseudonyms for the principal and her district.

Community and School Demographics

Valentina resides in a large city east of the Houston metropolitan area where one can kayak down the San Jacinto River and observe the “world’s tallest war memorial at San Jacinto-15 feet taller than the Washington monument-honoring all those who fought for Texas’s independence” (San Jacinto Museum of History, 2018). The San Jacinto River runs into Galveston Bay, inlet of the Gulf of Mexico. TEA classifies the school district as Major Suburban, indicating that it is (a) it is in the same county as a major urban district, (b) its enrollment is at least 15% that of the largest major urban district in the county or at least 4,500 students.

Early College Campus

The early college campus is consisted of approximately 400 students with the following ethnicities: 76.1% Hispanic, 11.7% White, 9.2% African American, and 1.5% Asian. Of the 400 students, 63.2% are economically challenged and less than 1% are English learners. The administration consists of one head principal, one assistant principal, one counselor, and one college readiness staff member. The early college campus earned a TEA “A” rating with three distinction designations. A distinction designation recognizes school districts and campuses for outstanding achievement based on the outcomes of several performance indicators. In 2019, the early college high school TEA distinction designation breakdown was: (a) Academic Achievement in

English Language Arts/Reading, (b) Top 25 Percent Comparative Closing the Gaps, and c) Postsecondary Readiness.

Interview Analysis of Principal #3 Valentina

In this second section of the chapter, I provide the interview analysis of Valentina's lived experiences to address the three research questions in this study.

Research Question One: How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?

The descriptions of how Valentina's leadership experiences were shaped by her background are clustered into three themes: (a) family background (b) educational experiences, and (c) work ethic.

Family Background

Valentina's family settled in a large city east of Houston, where oil refinement was the dominant industry. Valentina's mother and father were both born and educated in this community, and graduated from the same public high school. Her father worked in the oil refinery industry, and her mother was a teacher in a private Catholic school. Valentina was born in this same community and began her educational journey at the same private Catholic school where her mother was employed. She benefited from a discounted tuition due to her mother's employee status. Valentina attended the Catholic private school through eighth grade.

Educational Experiences

During this time period, a private Catholic high school was not available, and Valentina transferred to a public high school to complete grades 9-12. She was

automatically tracked into Honors or college track courses and joined school clubs, such as drum and bugle corps to meet new friends. Valentina successfully graduated in the top 10% of her high school class. However, in reflection of her high school experience, Valentina expressed she did not receive much college guidance from her high school counselor. This lack of high school counselor support yielded financial consequences.

I really didn't get a lot of guidance from my counselor, and my mom didn't really know enough at the time because I graduated in the top 10%. And, I wasn't in the National Honor Society. I wasn't involved in those academic organizations, because I didn't know about it. But also, I didn't know that at the time I would apply for Texas A&M, and I could have gone there for free. So, my counselor didn't even tell me that at the time. So, not knowing, I stayed. And being a little bit scared of going off, I stayed here at the community college for a year, and then I transferred to A&M. So, you know, I realize now how much I could've saved my parents, just going straight to A&M. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Despite the missed opportunity for a possible scholarship, Valentina's parents were able to financially support her college education, as well as the college education for her brother and sister.

After high school graduation, Valentina completed summer courses at a local community college and successfully tested out of multiple subject areas, including Spanish. Equipped with 44-46 college hours, Valentina transferred to Texas A&M University aspiring to be a public counselor and serve families. She declared a major in

psychology and added a teaching certificate per her mother's recommendation. Her mother suggested, "While you're there, you need to go ahead and get your teaching certification, because it's always good to have a backup plan" (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020). Valentina followed her mother's advice and graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in Psychology and a minor in Spanish with a Texas teacher certification in both Psychology and Spanish.

Work Ethic

Considering Valentina's background, rooted in family and education, she developed a robust work ethic, thus, shaping her leadership experiences. She described how her solid work reputation preceded her when the school superintendent offered her the role of head principal of the Early College High school. The school superintendent was aware of her leadership skills and potential to repair the school climate and the partnership between the Early College High School and the local community college.

He was very honest, and he said he was aware of my record. And, he felt that my experience and my personality and just the things he heard about me would be perfect for this role in repairing a lot of the damage that had been done (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

The superintendent's comments were perceived by Valentina as a validation of all her hard work and respectable work reputation. The superintendent was new to her school district, and he had previously worked in south Texas, where early college high schools have been established. He requested Valentina to step up and lead the only early college high school in the area.

It was a great feeling because he wasn't in our district very long. I kind of just stay under the radar. I'm not out there touting everything that I do, and I'm not a front, a middle of the stage person. I'm behind the scenes. I work really hard, and I do everything I can to help the people around be successful, but I don't want the spotlight. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

The superintendent further described Valentina as a hard worker, trustworthy, honest, and possessing good leadership skills and the ability to build strong relationships.

As long as I've worked in the district. I felt that I had a good reputation. So, his comments to me that day just verified that for me. That other people in the district did know that I was a hard worker, that I was trustworthy, that I was honest, that I was able to build strong relationships with people, and that I had good leadership skills. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Hence, the superintendent's confidence in Valentina's ability to lead an early college campus signified a major endorsement of her work ethic.

In addition, Valentina applied her psychology education background to build relationships and collaborate with others. These background experiences have impacted her leadership style and decision making.

I always try to think about the other person's perspective. I think a lot of that has to do with my psychology background, and just trying to understand where people are coming from-before I make judgments, and before I make decisions.

I'm a collaborative leader, so I do want input. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Valentina also gave an example of how she considers input from her coworker through collaboration. She valued her coworker for thinking differently from the way she thinks.

One great thing about my coworker is that he thinks completely differently from the way that I do. So, when I come up with an idea, he's the first one to say, "Well, what happens if this? What about this?" And I'm like, "Hadn't thought about that, so thanks." (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Concisely, Valentina's family background, educational experiences, and highly regarded work ethic molded her leadership experiences.

Research Question Two: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?

Valentina described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. I outlined Valentina's challenges into three prevalent themes: (a) administrative experiences, (b) work/personal life balance, and (c) stereotypes.

Administrative Experiences

Valentina experienced a unique opportunity to be an interim assistant principal at her high school alma mater. She embraced the interim assistant principal role and felt her placement was a good fit. The following year, she was selected to be the assistant principal at her alma mater and occupied this role for seven years before moving on to be the high school academic dean. The high school academic dean position was not a

major challenge per se, but Valentina described the academic dean position as an eye opener, exposing her to a different aspect of school leadership.

I was assistant principal, probably six or seven years, and then I became an academic dean. And so that gave me a completely different perspective. Because, I was working with the adults versus working with the kids. I could not believe. I could not believe! I mean because if, you know, it's just... We're all professionals, and you're an adult. So, why am I having to get after you like I get after one of the kids? It's ridiculous. That was probably the most eye-opening experience for me is working for that piece [academic dean's perspective]. Because adults were doing things that I would have never imagined, and I was having to deal with from the administrative perspective. And so that was really interesting. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

As the high school academic dean, Valentina was challenged to confront employees about their behaviors and document her reprimands and directives. She conquered this learning curve and gained insight into another aspect of the principalship.

Moreover, when she was selected to lead the early college campus as the head principal, she discovered that the school had a turbulent history. The campus had endured multiple principal turnovers, specifically, four principals in a five-year period, and the school district/college collaboration partnership was damaged.

There are 16 teachers here, and they felt let down by the previous principal. And so, I had to rebuild the trust there. And the college had some changes in leadership, but, that relationship would have pretty much been destroyed. So, I

had to go in and prove myself there. It was a lot of work to get this where it is now (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Valentina worked to address the negative perceptions of the faculty about student behaviors and oversaw daily communication between the school and the college through a campus liaison. Some of the challenges that Valentina encountered were related to student progress monitoring and college attendance.

Continuing to try to grow our relationship, making sure that we have our students on some kind of a monitoring system with the college. That's been a huge thing for us, trying to monitor them. Because when they're over there, I don't... I can't call an instructor and say, "How is this kid doing?" I have to rely on them, if they decide to let us know. If a kid is failing, we don't know until the end. And if they're supposed to graduate, and that was a class they needed for graduation (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Since Valentina took over the campus, the partnership between the school district and the college has improved. She appointed a liaison to build trust and advocate for the students.

And it's gotten better, with the relationship that we build, but that stress is there.

We transitioned our liaison from the vice president of academics to the lead counselor. She believes strongly in the whole purpose of our school, and so, she has been a huge advocate for us at the college level. That has helped us

tremendously in trying to grow what we're doing here. I still feel like there's so much to do. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Indeed, the reparation of a school district and college partnership is not accomplished overnight. Valentina just completed her sixth year at the early college, and four of those six years she invested energy in front loading or investing additional time and energy to finally feel comfortable with how the school district and college relationship had progressed.

Work/Personal Life Balance

Valentina's role as a principal has its stress points that impacted her personal time. In comparing the traditional high school to the early college high school, the stressors were constant but manifested in different forms. For instance, at the previous campus, Valentina was responsible for approximately 2,600 students, and at the early college campus, the student population consists of approximately 400 students. However, Valentina recalled having more extracurricular duties at the traditional high school, overlapping into her personal life. In contrast, the early college campus does not have any extracurricular activities. Valentina provided a picture of the difference in administrator duties for both campuses.

I continue to be stressed, but I went from a school... at point we had 20, 24, 2600 students. But here [at the early college campus], we have 400 students. So, you know, it's a completely different thing. . . But everything I did at the high school, as an assistant principal, I'd been over technology. I'd been over the building. I'd been over extracurriculars. . . But here [at the early college campus], I have an

assistant principal/academic dean. He and I are the only administrators on the campus. I have one counselor. I have one college and career readiness person. . . I mean, it's a very small staff (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

In addition, the disciplinary infractions at both high schools looked different. The traditional high school infractions were more in quantity, consisting of confrontational behaviors, where most of the early college high school infractions were passive, such as truancy.

Everyday drama. The fights. Cussing teachers out. You know. At one point, I had a kid that would come in late every day and cuss my secretary out. Every single day. . . And so, you know, we don't have that kind of issue here [early college campus]. Our issues here are skipping. They take a day off to go to the college, but they don't go to their college class. And, we don't know until they get dropped from the [college]class (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Valentina affirmed that college instructors are not obligated to take attendance, but the partnership between the school district and college has grown in a positive direction as her campus continues to streamline student attendance tracking.

Stereotypes

Valentina elaborated on how she invested extra work hours into her first head principal position at the early college high school. As a woman, she perceived herself having to prove that she was worthy of her job.

When I first started, and this could be just my perception of things, but I feel like, as a woman, I had to work twice as hard to be considered, or to be seen equivalent to what a man does on a regular basis. And so, I did. When I started, I was here from 7:30 am to 8:00 pm sometimes, or 9:00 pm, or weekends just trying to make sure that everything I did was on point and accurate. And, you know, done to the best of my ability, because I wanted to make sure that I was showing that I was worthy of having this job. That, I deserved it. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Valentina maintained this arduous work schedule for about four years until she felt established at her campus. She commented that women, in general, do have a double standard across job occupations.

But you know, in most environments in school, I really do believe that you kind of do have to work a little bit harder than your male co-counterparts, to kind of earn that respect and to prove yourself. It's not fair, but I think across the board, if you look at women in any kind of occupation, they're going to tell you the same thing. I mean, that's just the reality of the world that we live in . . . Make sure that you understand that. Because it's a real thing. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Valentina shared that her best friend is also female head principal of a junior high school, and both have discussed how women in leadership are perceived in comparison to men. Valentina described that her personality is more like a go with the flow, and she

will assert herself when making a point for something she feels strongly. On the other hand, her best friend adopts a more direct approach and is perceived as more abrasive.

One of my best friends is a principal at a junior high school. . .She comes across very... she's direct and to the point. And so, when a woman does that, then they're considered to be, like, bitchy. You know? But when a man does that, he's assertive. So, you know, those are the, the stereotypes that we had to fight (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Valentina and her friend have discussed at length their leadership personalities are perceived by others. They acknowledged that their approaches are both different, but not wrong. They have their own leadership styles. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Research Question Three: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Valentina described her job trajectory to the high school principal role. I outlined Valentina trajectory into three prevalent themes: (a) career trajectory (b) mentorship experiences, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina leaders.

Career Trajectory

Upon graduation from Texas A&M University with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a minor in Spanish, Valentina worked as a counselor for Lee Community College and focused on serving single mothers who were struggling and wanting to get their education. Her employment relied on grant funding, and when the grant funding ran out, she was hired to teach at a high school that served affluent

students. Valentina preferred to teach at her high school alma mater, where the students were predominantly Latino. At that time, Valentina's mother taught at the alma mater campus, and the school district policy did not permit Valentina to work at the same campus with her mother. Five years later, Valentina's mother retired from the alma mater campus, and Valentina requested a transfer and had an opportunity to work with her assistant principal, the same assistant principal she had as a high school student.

Valentina had the opportunity to learn the administrative ropes as an interim assistant principal and was selected to be the assistant principal the following year. Within seven years, she was promoted to academic dean, where her duties shifted focus to staff issues. The head principal retired and she did not apply for his position. She did not feel she was ready. When the early college high school campus principal position opened, Valentina was interested and she applied. She was not selected for the job. She was disappointed but continued to learn more at her academic dean role. Also, she was offered junior high principalships, but she was not interested. Finally, she was named head principal of the early college high school campus. Her superintendent felt that her experience, personality, and the things he heard about me would be perfect for this role. Valentina has completed her sixth year at the early college campus, and she plans to continue making a difference for her students, who are predominantly Latino.

I definitely have a lot of work to do here. And, that's a big thing for me. There are things that I want to accomplish before I even think about moving on from here, and I love it here. I mean, I really love it, so I don't foresee myself trying to move anywhere on my own, unless I get moved somewhere (laughing). But that,

hopefully won't ever happen. I really feel like there's so much work to do here. And, in our community, we have 76% [of the] Hispanic [population] at our school...It inspires me to continue here, because it's such an amazing feeling when you have those kids, you know, struggle through and their parents are struggling, but they earned a high school diploma and an associate degree.

(Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Valentina has inspired her students to be successful in earning both a high school diploma and an associate degree. In turn, these students return to their community to pay it forward.

Even if they have to pay for the university level, they're paying for two years, not four. If we're able to get them where they need to be, it's just huge. It's a huge thing for our kids. They come back to the community and then they pay it back. And that's what we want. I don't foresee myself moving any time soon. But now I kind of don't have an excuse if I wanted to go back (laughing) and get my doctorate. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

As a leader who has family and educational roots in this community, Valentina has found the perfect fit as head principal of an early college high school.

Mentorship Experiences

When Valentina engaged in her official administrative position as a high school assistant principal, she was guided by both the academic dean, an African-American woman, and her head principal, an African American man. Notably her head principal was also her assistant principal when she was a high school student. Both mentors

helped Valentina navigate her new leadership role in a predominantly White workplace. The African American male principal encouraged her to pursue leadership, and she held him with high regard.

He really took me under his wing, and he is the person who really helped me with my aspirations to go into administration. Because at the time, I really considered becoming a school counselor. But then I realized how much paperwork they do and not as much counseling. So, I had the opportunity to be an interim assistant principal. I was getting teacher pay, but I was in the role of assistant principal at [name of high school], and I loved it. I mean, I just fell in love with the positive influence that you can actually have on the students on a regular basis. And being such a needy campus, I mean, I just felt like that was the place I needed to be. I loved it (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Her interim assistant principal position experience paid off, and she transitioned to an assistant principal at the same campus where her predecessor, an African American woman, was promoted to academic dean. Valentina credits both her African American male principal and African American female academic dean for guidance in a predominantly White working atmosphere.

The woman who had been in that position previously became academic dean, so she was still at our school. And she started out with the kids that I took over, so she had had them for two years, and then I picked them up, and so, when they were juniors. She was super involved with them, and helping me. And she's also

a huge influence in my journey. [She is an] African-American female. I say that not... I guess to just kind of... It's a different perspective when you're a minority in a predominantly White working atmosphere (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Both of Valentina's mentors were leaders of color, and they guided Valentina in navigating a predominantly White work environment. Through their mentorship, Valentina developed the leadership skills to work through workplace barriers.

I think they had a lot of understanding, because they had a lot of experience in how things work and why. It really gave me a lot of guidance and how to get through things and not take things personally and work through things, even if there are barriers. And both had a lot of experience with that. I know that they were a huge, positive influence on me and my career, giving me some of those skills to work through things. And, you know, and it's weird because then, I never really... Even to this day, don't think of myself as a minority, per se. But I know I am, in being a female, number one. Being Hispanic. Those are things that can work against you, and, you know that as well. But it's just has never been something that I've ever felt a negative impact because of this (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Valentina acknowledged how being both a woman and Hispanic can act as barriers against her in the workplace. However, the negative experiences in the workplace were minimized with the presence of outstanding mentors as previously mentioned.

Advice for Aspiring Latina Principals

Throughout Valentina's job trajectory, she has learned from both positive and negative experiences. She noted these experiences have provided her with opportunities to grow as a leader, and she shared the following insight for aspiring Latina principals. First, she encouraged aspiring Latina principals to be confident in their ability to lead.

Be confident. Do have confidence that you can do it. Because when I got moved here [the head principal role], I didn't think I was ready for a principalship. But, once I got here, I realized that everything I had to this point had prepared me for where I'm at (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Second, Valentina advised aspiring Latina principals to learn from both good and bad experiences. These experiences are opportunities for learning and will enhance one's professional development. Valentina commented, "Everybody has good and bad experiences, but you learn from all of that. My other thing is, to learn as much you can from your successes and your failures, so that you can improve (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020). Third, Valentina revealed that we do not know it all. We are not perfect. She reassured future Latina principals the expectation is not to be perfect.

I try to make sure that I'm improving myself with everything that I do. I don't think I know it all. I'm the first one to tell anyone. I'm going to tell you right now; I don't know everything. But I do know this, and I do know that, and if you ask me a question, I'm going to give you the best answer I can give you. If I don't

know the rest of it, I'll find out, and I'll get back to you. It's okay not to be perfect. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

Fourth, Valentina described that leaders need to collaborate with others who hold different perspectives than her own. Multiple perspectives are important in decision making for the welfare of students. By having an open mind to new perspectives, Valentina is able to effectively problem solve.

You need someone who thinks differently than you to help you see different perspectives, because it's a big world, and those decisions that you make don't just affect you. They affect everyone around you, and so having different perspectives to consider really helps. Ultimately, I have to make the decision, and I have to believe in the decision I make. Sometimes people aren't happy, because I didn't go with their idea. But it's my decision, and so I have to be able to defend it. I love to hear other people's opinions and ideas, but sometimes taking pieces of all that is the best way to come up with a solution. So. Stay open. That would be the main thing. Stay open to others' ideas and thoughts, because they're thinking in different ways than you that can help you grow. (Principal 3 Valentina, personal communication, May 2, 2020).

In summary, Valentina's described her trajectory to the principalship with examples of leadership and mentorship experiences throughout her career path. In turn, she shared her wisdom and leadership experiences with aspiring Latina leaders.

Researcher's Reflection

My personal reflections are italicized to convey my perceptions about the interview data collected. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems.

At the midpoint of my virtual interview with Valentina, I lost my home internet connection. I was frazzled. I reset my wireless router (5 minutes), and I rejoined the virtual meeting. I was relieved that Valentina was still online. We continued the interview; however, I felt as if I lost some of the momentum built up prior to my home internet failure. I thought about what I could have done differently. I realized that I needed a backup plan. In the future, I can use my cell phone as an internet hotspot should the wi-fi not recover after resetting the wireless router.

After I completed the interview with Valentina, I reflected on how the school system had failed her. On the surface, it seems as if the school provided Valentina with a high-quality education, because she graduated in the top-ten percent of her high school class. Tragically, the school failed in guiding one of their top students in the direction of a four-year university with a scholarship. If the school failed one of its best students in mapping out a plan after graduation, they failed all students. Later, Valentina learned she could have qualified for a scholarship to attend Texas A&M University.

As a top ten percent Texas high school graduate, I personally identified with Valentina's experience. In my transition to junior high school, I almost fell victim to an academic tracking trap. I was instructed to bring a letter home for my parent to sign. This letter requested parent approval of my academic schedule for the next school year. My father was not home from school yet, so I asked my mother to sign it. This letter was

in English, and my mother hesitated to sign the letter. She suggested that I wait for my father to come home from work to sign the letter. My father read the letter and was upset that my academic schedule was pre-programmed for the regular academic track. He was disappointed that I was set up for regular academic classes, and no one (teachers or counselors) recommended me for anything more challenging. In fact, no one called my home to justify why I was pre-programmed for this track. I was not aware that academic tracks existed. Instead of following the regular academic track, my father enrolled me in advanced academic track (college bound). And at that point in time, I did not have to prove my academic potential. I was granted this change simply because my father requested this move in writing. Who made decisions regarding my intellectual abilities without obtaining parental feedback? As a student, I assumed everyone was in the same playing field. In high school, I was one of the few students of color taking advanced high school courses. I was motivated to work harder and fight to stay in these courses. If my father believed in my potential, I was determined to prove it to everyone else. My determination paid off. I was the one of two Latina high school students who graduated in the top ten percent of my class and earned an academic scholarship to a four-year university.

Latino Critical Race Theory

Valentina's life journey was analyzed through the Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). As previously mentioned in Chapter II of this study, LatCrit scholars study the intersectionalities of oppression that impact Latinos, such as race, gender, language, nativism, and class. Through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Valentina's interview: education and stereotypes.

Education

In comparison to Latino immigrant families who experience challenges in navigating through the Texas public school system, Valentina's parents were graduates of the Texas public school system. Particularly, Valentina's mother served as an educator in both the private and public-school sector. In other words, Valentina was set up for academic success with a strong family support system. Valentina attended the same private elementary school where her mother taught, and this early education served as solid foundation for her to succeed when she transferred to a public high school. As a result, Valentina graduated in the top ten percent of her class.

Nonetheless, Valentina was disenfranchised by her high school counselor. Specifically, Valentina was excluded from National Honor Society, and she was not encouraged by her school counselor to pursue an education at a major 4-year institution. Instead, Valentina attended the local community college then transferred to Texas A&M University, paying full tuition fees. Valentina later learned that as a top ten percent graduate, she could have attended Texas A&M University for free, saving her parents a substantial amount of money.

As previously stated in Chapter II of this study, Critical Race Theory, researchers have unveiled systems of inequity faced by Latina/o students in U.S. schools, such as biased notions regarding Latina/o students. Valentina's educational experience is an example of an educational inequity to inform social justice change agents in educational contexts. Foremost, Valentina has become a change agent of social justice and an advocate for Latina/o high school students. She described the reward in serving struggling Latina/o students to achieve both a high school diploma and an associate degree. Therefore, Valentina counters the historically oppressive nature of educational institutions by bridging high school and college for Latina/o students.

Stereotypes

Valentina pointed out how women leaders encounter gender stereotypes in high school leadership, a White male dominated workplace as presented in Chapter II of this study. Specifically, the White male-dominated culture is difficult for aspiring Latina principals to navigate the political and hidden culture of educational administration. Valentina discussed how a woman's assertion is perceived negatively in comparison to a man, where a man's assertion is perceived as leadership. She also mentioned a female principal peer, who led with a more candid approach, but she was perceived as too abrasive. Therefore, gender bias is an example of an intersectionality of oppression that perpetuates the marginalization of Latinas.

Additionally, Valentina perceived being held to double standard when she became a head principal. As a woman, she believed she had to work twice as hard to be considered as an equal to her male peers. As previously stated in Chapter II of this study,

the right fit of the principalship is subjective and is shaped by the dominant culture. In other words, Latinas are excluded from the *good old boy* networks. Consequently, Valentina would work late into the evenings and weekends to prove her worth. Four years later, Valentina felt like she was well established enough to tone down her arduous work schedule. Thus, the dominant culture of the high school principalship can act as a barrier for Latinas to thrive in leadership.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented Valentina's life journey, the third of seven case study chapters of Texas high school Latina principals interviewed regarding life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

In the first section of this case study chapter, I provided the community context and school demographics. In the second section, I presented the interview analysis to address the research questions in this study. The results from the first research question revealed that Valentina's leadership experiences were shaped by her (a) family background, (b) educational experiences, and (c) work ethic. In response to the second research question, Valentina described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. These challenges were grouped into three prevalent themes: (a) administrative experiences, (b) work/personal life balance, and (c) stereotypes. The results of the third research question address Valentina's job trajectory to the high school

principal role. I outlined Valentina's trajectory through her (a) career trajectory, (b) mentorship experiences, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina leaders. Finally, through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Valentina's interview: education and stereotypes.

In the next chapter, I provide the interview responses with respect to the lived experiences of Emma, the fourth of the seven Texas high school Latina principals. I also demonstrate how Emma's interview responses align with the dimensionalities in LatCrit and provide insight on the Texas high school Latina experience in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

CHAPTER VIII

CASE STUDY 4: LATINA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL #4 EMMA

Introduction

This chapter is the fourth of seven case study chapters that provide insight into the lived experiences of Texas high school Latina principals in reference to their life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. Like the previous case study chapters in this study, this chapter contains three sections. In the first section of each case study, I provide the community context and school demographics per the most recent posting from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In the second section, I present the interview analysis through the principal's life journey to address the research questions in this study.

Research Questions

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?
2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?
3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

In the third section, I examine the interview responses through the Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens. Emma is a pseudonym for the principal and her district.

Community and School Demographics

Emma resides in the Texas Rio Grande Valley region and is employed in Hidalgo County. In 2019, the population of Hidalgo county was 868,707 and ethnicity groups consisted of 92.5% Latino, 5.9% White, 0.9% Black or African American, and 1.0% Asian (U.S. Census, n.d.). Emma is employed in a school district within Hidalgo County that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) classified as Other Central City Suburban, indicating that her school district is in a county with a population of between 100,000 and 1,019,999, and its enrollment is at least 15% of the largest district enrollment in the county, equal or greater than 897 students (TEA, 2020). As of 2019-2020, Hidalgo County encompassed approximately 20 public school districts (TEA, 2020).

Campus Context

The campus is an early college campus. Early College High Schools (ECHS) are open-enrollment high schools that enroll historically underserved students, such as at-risk and economically challenged students, to receive both a high school diploma and either an associate's degree or at least 60 credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. ECHS collaborate with Texas institutions of higher education (IHEs) to reduce barriers to college access and provide rigorous instruction and accelerated courses for dual credit at no cost to students. For the 2018-2019 school year, the campus earned a B (80-89) for recognized performance by serving many students well and encouraging high academic achievement and/or appropriate academic growth for most students. State accountability

ratings are based on three domains: (a) Student Achievement, (b) School Progress, and Closing the Gaps. Out of these three domains, the School Progress domain exhibited the highest score. During the 2018-2019 school year, the school served a population of 1,055 students composed of 99.9% Hispanic and 0.1% White ethnicities. Within the student population, 90.8% are classified as economically challenged and 46% are English learners (ELs). Remarkably, Emma attended this campus as a student and has experienced full circle by returning to the campus as a head principal. She started her eight year.

Interview Analysis of Principal #4 Emma

In this second section of the chapter, I provide the interview analysis of Emma's lived experiences to address the three research questions in this study.

Research Question One: How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?

The descriptions of how Emma's leadership experiences were shaped by her background are clustered into three themes: (a) family and educational background, (b) bilingual/bicultural identity, and (c) work ethic.

Family and Educational Background

At the age of 24, Emma graduated from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) with a bachelor's degree in social work. She secured her first job as an Eligibility Specialist with the Hidalgo County food stamp agency, which is currently known as Texas Workforce Solutions. During this time, Emma observed her friends and coworkers participating in the teacher alternative certification program (ACP). She was

inspired to apply for the ACP and was accepted. The ACP program consisted of conducting classroom observations at an elementary school, but she was not able to complete the ACP due to a life changing event.

I saw that a lot of my friends, coworkers, were going into education. And they were doing the alternative thing. I said, "Yeah, I want to go back to school." I went into an elementary [school] to do the observations in the summer. It was '96. Summer of '96. And then, so, I felt a little strange. . . Well, I ended up pregnant (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma came to a crossroads in deciding whether she should finish the ACP program or return to the Hidalgo County food stamp agency. Unsure and not feeling ready to continue the ACP program, she chose to go back to the county agency. In reflection, Emma was satisfied with her decision because the four months of morning sickness she experienced would have been a challenge if she became a teacher.

When you go through that morning sickness for four months, there was no way I was going to be able to keep that teaching job the first year. See, what a first-year teacher goes through, I wouldn't have survived. I would have had to quit. I would have been done. I don't know how teachers do it. There is no way I could do that. So, I went back to the food stamp [agency]. Did that for a while, and then I ended up working with an employment and training office here in Hidalgo County (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma continued to work for the county agency, leading the youth program currently known as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (formerly Job Training

Partnership Act). In this youth program, she partnered with local high schools to provide job training to approximately 5,000 high school students. Emma networked and collaborated with high school administrators across Hidalgo County. This collaboration prompted Emma to reconsider a profession in education. However, when she inquired about teacher salaries, she was disappointed to know that teachers made less than what she was making. Emma hesitated and decided to remain at Workforce Solutions for another year. In summer 2001, Workforce Solutions underwent a change in contractors, causing a domino effect of moving offices and shuffling of supervisory roles across programs. Emma concluded this agency change was the right time for her to reconsider a career in K-12 public education. This transition would also suit her family situation, as her son was approaching the age of four. Emma took the leap into the public-school job sector and secured a fourth-grade teaching position at a school district within Hidalgo County.

Bilingual/Bicultural Identity

As previously stated, Hidalgo County is located on the U.S./Mexico border, and Emma was reared in this bilingual community. She described how speaking Spanish has influenced her ability to build relationships with parents.

Everybody speaks English and Spanish. So, I mean, I think here in the valley [Rio Grande Valley] it's just a normal thing. My Spanish isn't perfect. But I can switch. I can address parents in Spanish and keep those relationships going (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

As mentioned above, 90.8% of Emma’s high school campus is economically challenged. However, Emma has experienced an influx of affluent Mexican families seeking to enroll their child in her school. She expressed feelings of intimidation in dealing with these families despite her expertise in the education field.

I do feel sometimes a little intimidated by the higher social economic people that come from Mexico, because they come in, and they pay tuition. Or, they rent a house for their kid or whatever. And, they have expectations of me to be like this very, highly educated... And I mean, I am, but you know, I tell them, “*Están viniendo a una prepa*” [You all are coming to a high school]. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma further noted a student mobility phenomenon in her district where students, who are U.S. citizens, commence their elementary education in Mexico, and then transfer to the Texas public school system to complete their high school diploma. Consequently, these students face challenges in navigating the Texas public school system due to language, culture, or retaking high school courses due to lack of transfer credits.

They’re U.S. citizens. So, you know how in Mexico, after *secundaria* [middle school, junior high], there's a little issue there. If you're a U.S. citizen, they don't really allow you to continue the *prepa* [high school]. Or, they give them a hard time. So, we get, on average, every school year, since I've been there, 40 recent immigrants. First-year immigrants. They range from, [finishing] *secundaria* [middle school, junior high], and they're starting their first year at *prepa* [high school], or they're still at that *tercer año secundaria* [ninth grade], which is your

ninth grade. Right? And then some come even a little older. The majority of them are U.S. citizens. I tell the parents, "Don't bring me a 17-year-old." They're practically done with their high school, in Mexico, their *prepa* [high school], and I'm telling them, and you're barely going to bring them, like, really? Now you're going to have them start *prepa* [high school] again. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma's cultural knowledge of the bicultural community and ability to work with the student mobility dynamics between the U.S./Mexico border have shaped her leadership experiences. In turn, these experiences have influenced her role as a Latina principal.

Work Ethic

Emma's leadership experiences have contributed to her perspective on maintaining a strong work ethic. She believes in actively contributing her part, indicating that one must roll up their sleeves and work alongside her assistant principals.

What I learned from the people that I worked under, is that you have to work as hard as everybody else. If not, you will not have anybody's respect. So, if you expect your administrators to be at lunch duty in the cafeteria for both lunches, then you better be there too. Not so they can see me. No. It's because that's just how I was trained. You go; you get dirty too. Because if not, until they see you in that, they're not going to respect you (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma discussed how modeling the grunt work in leadership has cultivated a culture of respect and trust among her administrative team. Her constant presence has reinforced high expectations and consistent routines for her campus.

After they see [I'm] here, then [I] say, "Okay, you know what, guys? I need to go take care of this. You already know what to do. You already know what to do because you've seen me do it." When I have principal meetings, and I'm not in the cafeteria, I'm texting them [assistant principals]. "Who's in the cafeteria?" "We're here already." "Okay, make sure you watch this table." You know, I know everything that's going on. And the visible part, I'm everywhere (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma further noted that she maintained her visibility by abandoning the ideal shoe fashion for women, also known as the high heeled shoe. She encouraged the female assistant principals on her team to leave the high heeled shoes at home in order to keep up with her expectations for visibility.

But I'll tell them, "Come on." Or, you know, even wearing those high heeled shoes. You know? Come on. Don't show up with big old wedges and think you're going to be able to keep up with whatever. So, I tell them, "don't bring those shoes." (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Hence, Emma's perspective of role modeling and maintaining visibility are leadership behaviors that she attributes to bolstering a sturdy work ethic. Overall, Emma's family background, bilingualism, and work ethic are a part of her background, influencing her role as a Latina principal.

Research Question Two: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?

Emma described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. I outlined Emma's challenges into three prevalent themes: (a) politics, (b) work and personal life balance, and (c) high school duties.

Politics

In her third year, Emma is starting to feel more established at her campus, but she is aware of community and school politics and their influence on future job placement. She keeps her mind focused on serving children and tells herself to keep pushing forward.

But then, the fun part, the kids. All that fun stuff kind of outweighs the few parents that want me to fail. And it's because of a few people that want to cause trouble. I just have to keep telling myself, it's okay, it's okay, keep pushing, keep pushing. The majority of people know I'm there for the right reasons, and so right before the pandemic, right? Every year we wonder, like, "Ah, am I going to be another year, or are they finally going to move me to central office? (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

In consideration of Emma's question regarding whether she will continue as principal or be transferred to central office, she is not referring to a job promotion. Emma is noting the hidden political agendas that play a role in removing principals from their leadership positions and appointing them to central office positions as means to isolate them from the public, which is perceived as a demotion.

Work/Personal Life Balance

The demands of the principalship can take its toll on one's personal life. In Emma's case, the principal role has caused stressful moments where she has contemplated leaving her position. At times, the stress has been so overwhelming that she has shed tears.

It gets very stressful at times, where you just want to. . . You can ask my husband, how many times have I told him, "I don't think I can do this anymore." You know? I don't think I can do another year. There [are] moments when things happened on campus. Everything falls on me, right? And so, I just want to give up. I feel like a failure. I'll cry here with him. And then, I eventually get over it. But man, how much more am I going to... Why do I do this to myself? (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Moreover, Emma acknowledges that she would not be able to do her job if she had young children and questions how others do the principal job with small children and maintain their marriage.

I mean, I honestly don't know if I would have been able to do it if I didn't have... If I had small children. And I mean, I know people do it. But, I don't know how their marriage and family life survive, you know? Because, my husband, he's very supportive, and I think you have to have that communication and that trust. Right? Because, I tell my husband, "Hey, you know, this is what's going to happen this week. This is going to be a long week." (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Furthermore, Emma considers her husband as a pillar of support. She explained that her family dynamics are different than the traditional Latino household. For instance, Emma is the breadwinner, and her husband is a stay-at-home father.

I'm in a different situation. My husband is a stay-at-home dad. Well, now my son's older, right? But still, he can be a stay-at-home dad. He's kind of disabled, but you know, he's okay, but he doesn't have a job. So, I'm the breadwinner. And so, I tell him that, "Let me; I like what I'm doing. Let me do it, and we're okay." So now that my son is older, my husband joins a lot of events [for me]. So, I don't know. I mean, it just, knock on wood, right? It kind of worked out.

(Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Regarding future aspirations, Emma loved the idea of moving to another area of Texas; however, her aging parents is a deciding factor in her remaining in south Texas.

I guess in the future if I were to be a little bit more of a risk taker, I would love to move somewhere. . .to another area of the state. Maybe in the future, not too far, because I'm getting older. But, I mean, that's something I think about. I would love to do it. I'm just, my parents are still alive, thank God, so I don't know, I wouldn't want to move away. But you know. That's really what holds me back.

(Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Considering the challenges Emma has encountered throughout the principalship, she has established a family structure that works for her marriage.

High School Duties

Emma described the time commitment of a high school principal, as often this duty is extended beyond the typical school day. For instance, when Emma is obligated to attend games or evening school activities, her work time can interfere with personal and family time. Nevertheless, Emma willingly chooses to continue the high school principal lifestyle.

We choose to be in this position. You know? We're choosing to be secondary administrators, and you have to be there. When we have games, for example, the evening games; that's a big deal. So, you could have a game, two, even three times a week in the evening. If you can't do your duties, well, then, what do we do? You have to really be honest with yourself, and say, "Can I handle it? Can I really do this?" And be honest because if you're going to lie to yourself and say, "Oh, yeah, yeah, I can do it all. I can." (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma further describes how pursuing a doctorate can be more challenging if one is a high school principal in comparison to working in central office. At this point, she does not see herself starting a doctorate program due to the time commitment required of a high school principal.

I see people from central office that are getting their doctorate, and they're going to night school or all that. I think, "Yeah, I wish I could do that." No way could I do that, being the high school principal. I mean, I'd kill myself. I would literally become ill with stress. I wouldn't put myself in that situation. I know there [are]

high school administrators that do it, but I personally wouldn't. Right, and not at the campus. I mean, because you have to be at 110%. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

In summary, Emma depicted the sacrifices and struggles throughout her journey to the high school principalship. She discussed the politics, work and personal life balance, and high school duties as challenges in her principal role.

Research Question Three: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Emma described her job trajectory to the high school principal role. I outlined Emma's trajectory into three prevalent themes: (a) job trajectory (b) mentors, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals.

Job Trajectory

After teaching for three years, Emma was up for a new challenge. She moved to a new campus where the assistant principal quit on the first day of teacher professional development. The reason for the assistant principal quitting was due to a quarrel with the head principal, an individual who Emma perceived to have a negative reputation.

Nobody wanted to work with that principal. Nobody wanted to go to her campus, and I said, "Look. I don't know her. I'm not going to judge before I even know this person." So, I said, "I'll go, and then when nobody even wanted to dare be her assistant, I said, "I'll do it." I mean, why not? Here's my chance. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

With a non-judgmental mindset, Emma saw a window of opportunity. She took the initiative to contact the Human Resources Department and inform them that she would be attending school for a master's in Educational Administration and requested to serve as a facilitator. The Human Resources Department responded that they would consider her request upon principal permission.

I was going to teach, but then the assistant principal left. The first day of professional development she got up and just said, "I'm leaving." So then, I called my assistant principal who was still in HR [human resources], and I said, "Hey, sir, I'm going to go back and get my master's in principalship or leadership." I said, "Could I get in and do it as a facilitator since we don't have anybody?" And he told me, "Yeah, well, talk to the principal and you know, if she's willing to take you in like that, we'll give you the job." (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma's request was granted, and she held a temporary principal certification for five years. She was only able to endure two years at the campus as she realized the head principal's negative reputation was beyond reproach.

I was able to secure an assistant principal, let's say temporary certificate for five years. And so, I stayed there for two. How can I say it? It's very hard for me not to work well with people, but this principal really was stressing me out. And, it wasn't going to work. So, I asked for a transfer, and I told HR [human resources], "Look, if it doesn't work," I said, "You're going to have to help me out, and get

me out." I knew nobody wanted to be there. And I was one of the few who was brave enough. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

In turn, Emma was granted a transfer to an assistant principal position at her alma mater high school. After serving four years, her principal stated her help was needed at a junior high campus and she said "Put me where you need me" (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020). Emma served as an assistant principal to the junior high for two years, and when her head principal was promoted to the superintendency, Emma secured her first head principal role at an alternative education campus. After one year, she proceeded to be the head principal at an elementary campus, and within a year, she was promoted to a high school head principal position.

Mentors

Throughout Emma's job trajectory, she relied on the knowledge and mentorship of various individuals to navigate the principalship. She was supported by a Latino head principal mentor, a Latina assistant principal, and a Latina head principal colleague.

Latino Head Principal Mentor. In Emma's high school assistant principal role, her Latino head principal mentor taught her the importance of urgency and visibility during passing periods.

When I first got there, I didn't understand that concept, that urgency. Right? You also have to be on and that urgency has to be there. So, I would be in my office working on whatever, and the bell would ring. So, [name of former head principal] would say, "Mrs. Emma, don't forget, we have a passing period." Well, I thought, okay, well, the bell rings. As long as I go out there before the tardy bell

rings. (laughs) Well, he was very subtle in how he would correct my behavior. So, he would go to my office, “[Mrs. Emma!] Passing period.” Okay, I’m going. It took me a while to realize what he was trying to tell me. He was trying to tell me, “You need to be out there when the bell rings.” Not a minute or two after. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma was influenced by her mentor in such a way that she has incorporated this mentality with her current administrative team. She sees herself in their professional growth experiences and identifies with the same learning curve of her assistant principals.

So now, I do that with my administrators. And it is the same learning curve that I had. I already know they're thinking the way I used to think. They don't get it that I want them out there now. Because the fights happen right when the bell rings. The fight isn't going to wait for you to come out of your office. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Latina Assistant Principal. Emma was inspired by a Latina assistant principal peer on her team. The assistant principal was about 10 years her senior, and along with her Latino head principal mentor, they collaborated on maintaining discipline at the campus.

Back then, she was in her late 40s. I was in my mid 30s, and I'm 48 right now. She was very just stoic, very professional, and I learned the discipline. I love that component of... Because [former head principal] and her, we, it was so awesome. I mean, aside from the academics, we wanted to have a drug free school. . .Our

discipline was tight. And they knew that we were all strict. And so, I learned from them that if we don't have discipline in the campus, starting with the freshmen, [name of former principal] used to say, we need to get them, and not get them, but we need to tighten, keep them tight, the first six weeks. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Emma's assistant principal mentor also supported her to accept her first head principal position of an alternative campus. Emma recalled experiencing some hesitation in accepting the position.

My principal, she was also a very good mentor for me. She said, "Look, it's a principalship, take it." I said, "But what am I going to do at the academy?" There's no kids. It's a small campus. And, I felt I was going to be bored, and she says, "Just take it. It's the title that you want to have. You want to start." So, I did that, and then I went to the elementary [as head principal] for one year. . . And then I finally came back to the high school [as head principal]. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

With the support of mentors, Emma accepted the head principal role at the alternative campus and experienced a rapid track trajectory to the high school principal position.

Moreover, Emma continues to maintain a network of mentors to support her throughout her principal role. Remarkably, she and a former Latina colleague are now both high school head principals in the Rio Grande Valley. They communicate often to exchange ideas and share their leadership experiences.

I went and visited her in the fall. And she was telling me, “You know what? What you taught me there at the high school about, come on, be in the halls, Let's go. Let's go.” That’s what she's doing there. She says, "Man, that's what I had to do here because the security guards were like. . . *bueno* [laid back], and she's like real high energy. Like, worse than me. And, she's like *nombre*, [I kid you not], I have them all over the place. I'm like, "Yeah, that's good. That's good." So, she took a lot of what we did at our high school over there with her. And that's how you survive. Because you can't do it all by yourself. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

Therefore, Emma’s applied knowledge from mentors and networking have helped her navigate the challenges of the job. She acknowledged that one cannot do this job by one’s self.

Advice for Aspiring Latina Principals

In Emma’s journey to the principal role, she has learned some valuable lessons on how to navigate the principalship. She shared her knowledge with respect to being fearless, anticipating change, being honest with oneself, and practicing self-reflection.

Be Fearless. Emma expressed Latinas need to be fearless in their leadership role despite public criticism.

And I think, for a female Latina, I think we do have that fearless in us. Right? Like, to be fearless, and I think that's really what you need. You know, to be fearless and not hesitate. People will criticize. Like, *mira* [look], you know, look at her, she thinks...I mean, I've jumped into a fight. I've jumped into the

basketball court to stop a fight. And at the end it's like, "Hey. I'm in charge. I'm the principal here. Like, you're not going to do what you want in my campus." I mean, if they don't like it, they can go complain. But I take a lot of pride. You have to have pride in your campus and your community and say, "Hey, I'm here for the kids, and you're not going to mess with me, you know?" (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

As a principal, a priority is to advocate for the safety of the students, and Emma demonstrated pride in her campus and community.

Be Ready for Change. According to Emma, anticipating and accepting change is a mindset required of future Latina principals. She stated, "Be ready for change. I mean, you can't be one of those that doesn't like change. Because change is going to come. Look at the pandemic. Oh my gosh. You know? I mean, that's a whole other story (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020). In the statement above, Emma referenced the sudden closing of schools in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Practice Self-Reflection. Emma expressed a concern for the aspiring Latina leaders who were reared in the digital age of the Internet and cellphones. She suggested future generations should be more aware of how they spend their time in self-reflection.

Let's say if young Latinas are going to read this, let's say they're in their 20s, early 30s. They're a different generation. They grew up with a cell phone. Like, our high school kids. But my concern. Like I tell my students. I tell them, "Guys, you all don't use your time to think." "You're never going to think because always you're

always on your phone." They don't use that time to think. I think that's really important that they self-reflect. It's a component of life. (Principal 4 Emma, personal communication, May 2, 2020)

In summary, Emma described her life track from teaching to the high school principal role. Her life track was outlined into three emergent themes: (a) job trajectory, (b) mentors, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals.

Researcher's Reflection

My personal reflections are italicized to convey my perceptions about the interview data collected. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems.

After I completed the interview with Emma, I recognized that she was the second Texas high school Latina principal that I had interviewed who was the family breadwinner. Isabella (Chapter VI principal case study) was also a breadwinner in her family. In Isabella's case, being the breadwinner contributed to problems in her marriage. In Emma's case, she noted being the breadwinner has not impacted her marriage.

Furthermore, I learned about an immigration phenomenon at Emma's high school campus. She described the mobility trend of U.S. citizens living in Mexico, completing elementary and middle/junior high, and migrating back to Texas to complete their high school diploma. Emma explained that these students face an uphill battle with language and state testing. This phenomenon is a topic that I would like to explore in future study. I am interested if this development takes place at other high school campuses along the U.S./Mexico border.

Latino Critical Race Theory

Emma's life journey was analyzed through the Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). As previously mentioned in Chapter II of this study, LatCrit scholars study the intersectionalities of oppression that impact Latinos, such as race, gender, language, nativism, and class. Through the application of LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Emma's interview: identity and immigration

Identity

Emma indicated that her husband is a stay-at-home dad, and she is the breadwinner of the family. This gender role dynamic is a contrast to the *marianismo* and *machismo* dichotomy. As previously stated in Chapter II of this study, the term *marianismo* was introduced by Evelyn Stevens (1973) to describe a women's subordinate position in Latin American society and to bring attention to the glorified gender-role expectations of women (Castillo et al., 2010; Ertl et al., 2019; Kosmiki, 2017; Mendieta, 2016). In this case, Emma breaks the gender role expectations of Latina women by becoming the sole financial provider for her family.

Moreover, the ideology of *machismo* is "presumed to be derived from an Iberian or Latin American cultural essence, and applied by anglophone scholars and popular authorities since the 1950s to flag, admonish, or deride hypermasculinities of variable forms" (Cowan, 2017, p. 619). One of these variable forms of hypermasculinity is stereotypical behavior aimed at suppressing women. Arrizón (2020) and Kawabe (2020) argued that *machismo* behavior further impedes female career advancement by perpetuating cultural bias towards women across national boundaries (Arrizón, 2020;

Kawabe, 2020). Hence, Emma's husband breaks the gender role expectations of Latino men by supporting Emma in her career advancement.

Immigration

Emma stated she was reared in the Rio Grande Valley along the U.S./Mexico border; thus, she is bilingual and bicultural. Through her bilingual ability, she communicates with families who enroll their children at her high school. In particular, Emma discusses an immigration phenomenon of U.S. citizens who initiate their education in Mexico, completing grades kinder through junior high and transfer to her early college campus to attain bilingual skills and complete a high school diploma. Emma confirmed that the Mexican education system does not allow or may present challenges for U.S. citizens to complete a high school diploma in Mexico. Therefore, she has about 40 students at her campus who fall within these circumstances. In some cases, these students transfer as old as the age of 17, and they must retake ninth grade courses in order to receive Texas public high school credit. Hence, by retaking high school courses, the students experience challenges in navigating the language and culture of the Texas public school system and delay their graduation further than the traditional high school student.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented Emma's life journey, the fourth of seven case study chapters of Texas high school Latina principals interviewed regarding life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b)

cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

In the first section of this case study chapter, I provided the community context and school demographics. In the second section, I presented the interview analysis to address the research questions in this study. The results from the first research question revealed that Emma's leadership experiences were shaped by her (a) family and educational background, (b) bilingual/bicultural identity, and (c) work ethic. In response to the second research question, Emma described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. These challenges were grouped into three prevalent themes: (a) politics, (b) work and personal life balance, and (c) high school duties. The results of the third research question address Emma's job track to the high school principal role. I outlined Emma's journey through her (a) job trajectory, (b) mentors, and (c) advice for aspiring Latinas. Finally, through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Emma's interview: identity and immigration.

In the next chapter, I provide the interview responses with respect to the lived experiences of Martina, the fifth of the seven Texas high school Latina principals. I also demonstrate how Martina's interview responses align with the dimensionalities in LatCrit and provide insight on the Texas high school Latina experience in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

CHAPTER IX

CASE STUDY 5: LATINA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL #5 MARTINA

Introduction

This chapter is the fifth of seven case study chapters that provide insight into the lived experiences of Texas high school Latina principals in reference to their life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. Like the previous case study chapters in this study, this chapter contains three sections. In the first section of each case study, I provide the community context and school demographics per the most recent posting from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In the second section, I present the interview analysis through the principal's life journey to address the research questions in this study.

Research Questions

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?
2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?
3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

In the third section, I examine the interview responses through the Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens. Martina is a pseudonym for the principal.

Community and School Demographics

The school district is a system of six magnet schools throughout the Rio Grande Valley, encompassing an area of 3,643 miles, serving students from the following three Rio Grande Valley counties: Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy. The district is classified by TEA as a Non-metropolitan Fast Growing school district. The classification of a school district as Non-metropolitan Fast Growing signifies an enrollment of at least 300 students, and the school district enrollment has increased by 20% over the past five years (TEA, 2020).

The district is an open enrollment academy within a public-school district, indicating no cost to attend, and bus transportation is free of charge. This school district is also considered a Texas School District of Innovation (TEA, 2020b), meaning that the school district is exempt to an extent from certain sections of the Texas Education Code, such as district governance, curriculum, state assessment system, state accountability system, school finance, federal requirement, state or federal requirements applicable to open-enrollment charter schools. Each of the school district's four high schools offer a specialized subject area focus ranging from science engineering, health professions, medical professions, and world scholar via an International Baccalaureate program with an opportunity to earn university credit at no cost. Different from most Texas public high schools who participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL), this school district competes in volleyball, basketball, and soccer through the Texas Charter School

Academic and Athletic League (TCSAAL) and coordinates intra district competitive play in volleyball, basketball, co-ed softball, flag football and soccer. With respect to academics, the school district students remain active in UIL Academic competitions.

Campus Context

The campus earned an A (90-100) accountability rating from the Texas Education for Agency (TEA) for exemplary performance by serving most students well, encouraging high academic achievement and/or appropriate academic growth for almost all students, and preparing most students for eventual success in college, career, or the military. The campus achieved seven of seven campus distinction designations: (a) English Language Arts/Reading, (b) Science, (c) Comparative Academic Growth, (d) Post-Secondary Readiness, (e) Mathematics, (f) Social Studies, and (g) Comparative Closing the Gaps (TEA, 2019). During the 2018-2019 academic school year, the campus served 774 students. Out of the 774 students, 40.6% were economically challenged and 1.2% were English learners. The ethnicity make-up of the campus was 75.7% Hispanic, 12.9% Asian, 9.3% White, and 0.9% Black/African American (TEA 2019).

Interview Analysis of Principal #5 Martina

In this second section of the chapter, I provide the interview analysis of Martina's lived experiences to address the three research questions in this study.

Research Question One: How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?

The descriptions of how Martina's leadership experiences were shaped by her background are clustered into three themes: (a) family background, (b) educational background, and (c) work ethic.

Family Background

Martina was reared in Donna, a town in the Rio Grande Valley region of Texas. At the age of two, Martina's father passed away, and she lived with her mother and two older brothers. In Martina's home upbringing, she recalls speaking Spanish before she spoke English.

I've been talking Spanish before I spoke English. Well, obviously it helps because I mean, knowing two languages is better than knowing one, and three is better than two and so forth. But I will say in the Valley, I would say more people speak Spanish than not. So, it's been helpful, but it's not been critical. I'm assuming like if I had been in Missouri or some other, where you're one of the few. But here, I mean, almost everyone is bilingual (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Martina notes that being bilingual has helped her communicate with her Spanish speaking parents, establishing trust in her ability to serve their children.

It definitely helps because we have a lot of parents that come in that only speak Spanish. There are a few people, especially the younger generation that don't [speak Spanish]. [The parents] really feel comfortable, and they want to speak with you and share with, because you speak their language, so that does bring

them comfort and then confidence in what you're doing for their kids (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Currently, Martina lives with her husband, four children, and a live-in nanny. Thus, her family background has impacted her role as a Latina female principal.

Educational Background

Martina attended school in Donna, Texas up through the eighth grade and transferred to a specialized high school for health professionals in a neighboring school district.

I am originally from the Rio Grande Valley. I am from a little town called Donna, Texas. Lots of poverty there, so we all have the same mindset of education being the key to success, and that is something my mom instilled in me all the time, me and my older brothers. I went to Donna schools up through 8th grade, and at that time, that would've been 1987, '88. There was a new school in [neighboring town] for health professions. I wanted to be a medical doctor, and so I applied, and I got into what we call [name of high school]. I was there for four years (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Martina graduated from the specialized high school for health professionals and was accepted at Baylor University as a pre-med biology major. She aspired to be a medical doctor. However, during Martina's senior year, her mom became seriously ill, and Martina moved home immediately after graduation to take care of her mother. She was granted an emergency teaching permit and taught Science at the high school level.

I applied to Baylor University. So, I spent my next four years at Baylor University, I was a pre-med bio major. At the end of my senior year, my mom got ... She was, kind of always been ill, but she got very, very ill. So, I thought, "Well I can't, I can't go to medical school." I came home because my brothers had taken care of her pretty much for four years while I was away. I needed a job, and I became a teacher (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Tragically, Marina's mother passed away before Martina completed her master's degree in educational administration, but Martina's two older brothers have accompanied her in her academic accolades.

Moreover, Martina's educational journey continued to the doctoral level. With the support of her husband and four children, Martina commenced a doctoral degree in educational administration in 2011 and graduated in May 2016. In reflection, Martina noted that she had not previously thought of a doctoral degree in educational administration as a bachelor's degree was considered a major accomplishment by her family.

Because never in my life before had I thought of that [doctoral degree], because in my family, it was huge to even have a bachelor's degree. I mean, that was the maximum. You know what I mean? And that was great. (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Hence, Martina plans to apply her multiple degrees to serve as a school district superintendent or possibly open her own school. She believes in serving her community and helping students maximize their potential.

I think that would be something really great to afford that opportunity to kids that are like us in this area, that [have] a high poverty, low education, something different for them. We have a lot of potential, a lot of gifts [student talent] that are just untapped. (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

In turn, Martina's educational journey has shaped her leadership experiences and influenced her role as a Latina female principal.

Work Ethic

Martina's mother instilled a dedicated work ethic that Martina implemented throughout her job roles. Specifically, Martina recalled her mother's words shaping her leadership behaviors. Martina believed her committed work ethic was observed and noted by both the superintendent and the hiring committee for the head high school principal position.

When I was a teacher, when I was an assistant, now, work ethic. That's been one thing that you know, my mom always told us, you have to be the best at what you do. It doesn't matter if you are a street sweeper; you've got to be the best street sweeper. Or, the boss-... you've got to be the best boss. And that entails a lot of hard work, long hours, dedication, doing things that people maybe aren't willing to do. I think she [the superintendent] saw that, she was obviously the head of

that [principal] hiring committee. (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

In addition, the hiring committee stated they experienced challenges in contacting Martina's references. Martina affirmed that her work ethic has not changed, and she encouraged the hiring committee to contact anyone outside of her reference list as they would attest to her robust work ethic.

But if I had to say it's the work ethic, because that's never changed. I remember when I applied as assistant principal, now of course they do the interviews in the summer, and I know the principal had said, "You know, we're having a hard time with the references that you listed, because we're not able to reach them." And I said, "Well, they're on there", and I said, "It doesn't matter who you call, they're going to tell you the same thing because I work hard, I work well, and I've done a good job everywhere. So, it doesn't matter who you call or who you ask." And I remember just leaving. Because it's true. It didn't matter. (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Furthermore, Martina discussed maintaining a reputable work ethic by empowering teachers who have demonstrated leadership potential. She described her collaborative leadership approach.

There are few teachers that I see or several that have the potential and the capacity. A few of those that have stepped up to say, "How can I help you?", or I have approached them to say, "We have this new ... I have this new idea." Right? And that's actually how some of the programs that I brought to this [campus], or

that I started here. . . that's how they just sort of flourished. It was an idea. I talked with these teacher leaders, and it's like, you were all on the same page. And, that's what I like about the principalship here, or that's my style. I'm not above you; you're not below me. We're all just one team, because we take care of the kids, period. So, how do we make that better? Whatever we need to do, we just get it done. (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Thus, Martina's family background, educational background, and work ethic have contributed to her leadership experiences. These leadership experiences have shaped her role as a Latina female principal.

Research Question Two: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?

Martina described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. I outlined Martina's challenges into three prevalent themes: (a) interim head principal experience, (b) leadership transitions, and (c) stereotypes.

Interim Head Principal Experience

Martina had the unique opportunity to act as interim head principal for four months on a campus where she remained the assistant principal; therefore, she had to fulfill the tasks of both positions until a head principal was selected. Additionally, she was in the final stages of her doctoral dissertation. Martina recalled the head principal interview committee process.

That hiring committee I will say, I swear there was at least 20 people there. . .The superintendent was there, two principals were there, teachers were there, [and]

students were there. I mean this was a big interview committee. I was able to showcase to them everything I had done in my short time. I don't know, maybe eight, seven months, as a principal at a new campus, and doing the transition, serving as assistant [assistant principal], serving as interim principal at the same time because the duties haven't gone away, it was divided by two instead of you know, I don't know three. So, showcasing the portfolio, everything I had done I think really just ... I mean, I would think that they considered she's done all this in a short time, given the constraints that they were under with all the drama that was going on because the principal that left, and there was still all of this that she was able to do for the campus. And they knew of course, that I'm from the area. I'm a graduate of this district, so I think all of those things. (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Indeed, Martina's responsibilities as both an assistant principal and interim principal and doctoral student can be considered challenges on her journey to the principalship.

Remarkably, Martina overcame these challenges and secured both a head principal position and her doctoral degree approximately in the same year.

Leadership Transitions

Martina noted differences in duties and mindset between the assistant principal position and the head principal position. As an assistant principal, Martina discussed challenges in prioritizing instruction when the duties of the assistant principal mostly consisted of managerial tasks.

When I jumped to assistant principal, first of all you're taking care of the whole campus, but as an assistant, yes, the learning is essential. But, unfortunately as an assistant, it's more managerial, right? Making sure the schedules are set, making sure the kids are in the cafeteria, they're in the lines, [and] they're getting to the buses. I mean, you have to prioritize instruction, but unfortunately, it's very managerial. I worked very, very hard as an assistant principal. I mean, those were long days, lots of time, and so, when I moved over here as principal, I said this job isn't as difficult (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Thus, Martina perceived the assistant principal role to be more difficult than the head principal position as the challenge was prioritizing instructional leadership over the managerial aspects of the assistant principal role.

In comparison, as a head principal, Martina stated she was challenged with a different scope of work. Specifically, her duty was to steer the campus with a visionary leadership approach, considering parents and other stakeholders in the decision-making process. In other words, she had to transition from a managerial mindset of the assistant principal role to a visionary leadership mindset as a head principal.

The assistant principal was so tough, but the principalship is not managerial heavy, but it does consume your mental, I guess, ability capacities. There's a lot of vision and running and making sure that you are considerate of all stakeholders, right? Because students are very important. They're what we're here for. But sometimes the parents, at least at this school, and probably within general with the principalship, my goodness, they take a lot of my time, you

know? So, it's just a different scope of work, but you have to have a lot of vision.

(Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Moreover, Martina addressed the responsibility of the campus budget as another aspect of the head principal role that she did not experience as an assistant principal. She described some examples of how she applied visionary leadership in conjunction with the campus budget.

I guess one big thing is budget. That's one thing I didn't do as an assistant. The budget and the rules for that, timelines with that. That's one thing. The other thing is planning. I guess at least two, three, five years in advance, you know. Always know what direction your campus is headed towards; that way you can lead your people. . . And so, it's very important that we stay on top of what we're doing, and we're planning for the future to make sure that three years from now, four years from now, our seniors have X, Y and Z versus, "Oh, well for next year I think seniors . . .", no that's too late for us. We need to make sure we are the best all the time (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Martina further noted that her campus is the highest achieving high school in terms of student achievement and student performance. As previously stated, her campus earned seven of seven academic distinctions in 2019 from the Texas accountability system. She summarized the challenges of each leadership role, ranging from the teacher to the head principal.

As a teacher you take care of your classroom. . . As an assistant, you take care of your campus, but just the details, right. And the principalship, you've got to know

where you're going. You've got to navigate, because people will follow you.

(Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Hence, Martina's leadership transition experiences were perceived as challenges in route to the head principal position. These challenges also served as learning moments enhancing Martina's leadership capacity.

Stereotypes

Martina outlined some of the gender stereotypes mentioned in the dissertation research she conducted regarding Latina female superintendents in the Rio Grande Valley area. She commented that her school district previously had a female superintendent for 15 years, contradicting the status quo. Traditionally, the Texas superintendency role has been a male dominated profession. Martina shared her research findings regarding gender research bias among hiring committees.

And our superintendent of 15 years was a female. Now we have a new superintendent. He is a male. In our world, our tiny, tiny world, it is not like the research indicates. However, in the real world... based on my research, obviously, we found the majority of teachers in elementary, and of course those teachers if they made it to a principalship, it was usually at the elementary. And so, why aren't they at the high schools or middle schools? For the research I did, it's because number one, males are led to believe that they are better with numbers and finances and discipline. And, when you think of high schools with big organizations, money is a big thing and discipline is a big thing. No, I of course don't agree with that, but unfortunately, I think that's some of the mindset

that's still prevalent in many of the hiring committees. Unfortunately. If you're not male, then that doesn't make you a good candidate for the high school principalship, unfortunately for some. (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Therefore, Martina affirms challenges in women attaining high school head principalship positions due to stereotypical notions.

Currently, Martina's school district superintendent is a male, and she has observed some changes with respect to an increase in athletic events in her school district. She believes the addition of these athletic events may or may not be correlated to the male superintendent's influence. Martina gives some examples of the changes she has observed.

The only sports we have are PE courses, and then PE clubs, which we will have volleyball tournaments during lunch, basketball tournaments during lunch. But I will say this is where a difference comes in. I shared with you that our past superintendent was female, and she was here for 15 years. And this could or could not be correlated, but now we have a male superintendent. He's been here for almost two years, and now we have something called the Superintendent's Cup, which now we do have four to five sports events incorporated throughout the year. Two in the fall, three in the spring. So, five Saturdays I guess, we would work supervising those events (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Martina further mentioned that her school district was only able to implement three of the five events in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, Martina described the challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role through the interim principal experience, leadership transitions, and stereotypes.

Research Question Three: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Martina described her job trajectory to the high school principal role. I outlined Martina's trajectory into three prevalent themes: (a) job trajectory, (b) mentors, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals.

Job Trajectory

As previously mentioned, Martina was a pre-med major and graduated from Baylor University. After graduation, she moved back to the Rio Grande Valley area to take care of her mom. Martina was granted an emergency teacher certification permit, and she secured a job teaching high school science in her home school district. As her home school district grew in population, a new ninth grade campus opened, and in accordance with school district policy, she received a mandate to transfer to the new ninth grade campus. Specifically, the school district had a policy of last one hired, first one to move to a new campus.

Initially, Martina was disappointed in moving to another campus. Nevertheless, this obligatory transfer to the new ninth grade campus opened the door to new leadership possibilities.

I was a science teacher, high school of course, for five years and then [name of school district] decided to open a 9th grade campus. Last one in; first one out. So, when they opened the 9th grade campus, guess what? You're moving on, and I was like no! But actually, it was the best thing that could've happened, because it was a new campus, the 9th grade campus. I got to be the department chair, got to teach yearbook, which some people would say that's terrible, but it was actually great because I learned so much. . .I was there for six years. So essentially, I taught Science, high school Science for 11 years (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

During this time, Martina earned her master's degree in educational administration and a Texas principal certificate. She was selected to lead as an assistant principal at her alma mater high school, which served students aspiring to be health professionals. After seven years, she decided to apply for another assistant principal position at the neighboring high school campus focused on Science curriculum. This position was a lateral move with respect to job title, but Martina expressed her justification in applying for the same position at another high school campus.

When I was a teacher, I acquired my masters. I did the principal certification. I was ready, this opportunity [assistant principal position at alma mater high school] was just perfect. So, I applied. I got the job, and I served as an assistant principal at my old high school. . . I was there for seven years. At that point, I think I knew my job very well. The kids were great, but it was like, I didn't think

I was ready to be principal. I just knew I was sort of maxed out in that space
(Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Thus, Martina applied and was chosen to serve as an assistant principal position at the neighboring campus.

Furthermore, four months into her assistant principal role at the new campus, the head principal left, and Martina was appointed to interim principal. After participating in the interview process, she secured the head principal position permanently. Martina has completed six years as a high school head principal at this campus, and in total, she has 13 years of combined experience as a high school assistant principal and high school head principal. With respect to future endeavors, Martina aspires to be a school district superintendent or open a school of her own. Hence, Martina's job trajectory to the head principal position was presented through a sequential description of her career journey.

Mentors

Martina credited numerous individuals for inspiring her to pursue a career in educational leadership: (a) a Latina female principal, (b) a Latino male principal, (c) Latina female superintendent, and (d) administrator colleague. First, as a teacher, Martina initiated communication with her Latina female principal and volunteered to assist with administrative duties. Martina recalled how her mentor helped her grow professionally.

At the time, I was a teacher, so I couldn't see how that would help me later. I just was happy to help the school and help the students and help her. But this particular principal, Ms. [name of principal], I think it was just a lot on her,

because it was sort of last minute when they opened that campus. I think she was very welcoming to any assistance that she could have. I don't know that she actually said, "I'm going to provide this leadership opportunity for Martina because ...", but it was just a matter of, "Oh, you want to help? Great." But that was good because there are some principals that designate special people or favorites to certain things, and they're the only ones that get to keep working, whereas this person was like, "Hey, you want to help? Wonderful. I welcome the help." And so just by doing that, it gave me a lot of growth professionally and personally because you learn that you are able to do this and that. (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Through the mentorship from the Latina female principal, Martina gained knowledge regarding the principalship.

Second, a Latino male principal saw Martina's leadership potential when Martina had not yet seen the potential within herself. Consequently, she was inspired her to continue her educational journey. Martina remembered how her mentor's statement resonated with her as she contemplated applying for a doctoral program.

I remember one time, and this statement was later that it resonated. We were probably talking about department chair responsibility or something, and I guess I showed sort of doubt, like how, "How would I be able to do that Mr. [name of mentor]?" And, he said, "Well, you know, you're a leader, and people will follow you. You just don't know it yet." And I thought, "What does that mean?" And later, years later I thought, "Wow." I think, you know, especially he ... That was

one statement that I thought of when I was contemplating starting the doctoral program, and I thought, "I guess he saw something in me that I didn't see in myself." And so, I'll see him every once in a while. And now, he's retired, but I still think of that today. You know that meant a lot, that one statement (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Therefore, a Latino male principal planted a seed of inspiration for Martina to pursue her doctoral degree.

Third, Martina considered her school district Latina female superintendent as an excellent role model. Throughout the superintendent's 15-year leadership term, Martina was inspired to apply as a teacher, assistant principal, and head principal. In reflection, Martina acknowledged that she might not have applied for any of these positions if it were not for this superintendent's strong leadership qualities.

I think what continues to resonate when I was a teacher, when I was an assistant, and even now and I think at the time when I applied for this job, the superintendent was female, and she was a strong leader. I mean she was excellent. If she weren't the superintendent I might've not applied, but she was very supportive and always making sure we looked at the big picture, considered the students. I mean she was an excellent role model (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Hence, the Latina female superintendent provided inspiration as an excellent role model for Martina to grow professionally.

Fourth, when Martina was an assistant principal at her alma mater high school, she met a young female colleague assistant principal who had already achieved her doctorate. Martina was impressed with her peer, and visualized herself with a doctorate.

The following year, they hired another assistant, and she had her doctorate. And I thought, she was very, very bright. She was very, very kind. And I think, when I saw her, I thought, "I could probably do that." . . . By that time, of course, I had my masters, but when I met this um, young lady, I thought, "Wow." You know she, I guess in a way, inspired me, because I saw what she could do (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Thus, Martina's visualization of obtaining a doctoral degree converted into action, and Martina earned her doctoral degree in May 2016.

Advice for Aspiring Latina Principals

Considering Martina's personal and professional journey, she offered pearls of wisdom for aspiring Latina principals: (a) put the students first, (b) follow your heart, and (c) be open minded and reflective. First, Martina emphasized students should be the number one priority.

Number one-whatever you do, make sure you always put the students first. . . . Because, if it works that's great, and if it didn't work, you always know you did it for the right reasons. . . .Even if it's going to cost us more work, even if we're going to have to spend more money, that is why we're here. And, you will never go wrong; you will never go wrong. (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

In other words, Martina highlighted that leadership decisions with students in mind will always be the right choice.

Second, Martina advises future Latina principals to follow their heart. She described the intrinsic rewards of changing students' lives.

Number two-do things with your heart, because if you're waiting, because they're not going to pay me, or it's going to be ... I am more than willing to do things not for money, but because it's the right thing to do for the kids. [They] are our future, I mean, it's like, "Oh, I've heard that before." But man, I can't stress that enough. These kids, I mean you just have to push them forward, give them the opportunity, and you will change their lives. That's fantastic. (Principal 5
Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Therefore, Martina expressed the significance leading with heart, and how educational leaders can profoundly impact a student.

Third, Martina recommended that aspiring Latina principals be open minded and practice self-reflection.

That's a big thing, making sure you're very open minded. . . You have to really be humble, because you are the leader. But, you have to be a human first. The heart, again, being considerate and being able to be reflective and take a step back. Each stakeholder that's involved in that conversation or that event, you know, what's their perspective? And take a step back and say, "Okay, as a neutral party, as best you can do that, what is the best decision for this student?" If it's not

about a student, which it almost always is, then in particular, whoever is involved, what is the best? (Principal 5 Martina, personal communication, May 3, 2020)

Thus, Martina encouraged Latinas to be open minded and practice self-reflection to understand other individuals' perspectives. As outlined above, Martina depicted her job path to the high school principal role through three emergent themes: (a) job trajectory, (b) mentors, and (c) and advice for Latina principals.

Researcher's Reflection

My personal reflections are italicized to convey my perceptions about the interview data collected. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems.

Out of the seven case studies, Martina was the only Texas high school Latina principal with a doctoral degree. When the interview took place, the world was in the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic caused Texas schools to close indefinitely and provide virtual instruction. Accordingly, I was concerned I would not be able to continue my study. After interviewing Martina, I was more determined to finish my own dissertation. Martina shared she was a first-generation college student who experienced the death of her father at a young age and the death of her mother after college graduation. Nevertheless, Martina persevered to achieve her educational goals. At this point, I understood this global pandemic was not enough to hold me back from attaining my own educational goals. Thank you for the motivation, Dr. Martina.

Latino Critical Race Theory

Martina's life journey was analyzed through Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). As previously mentioned in Chapter II of this study, LatCrit scholars study the intersectionalities of oppression that impact Latinos, such as race, gender, language, nativism, and class. Through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes transpired in Martina's interview: gender and scholar.

Gender

As referenced in Chapter I of this study, Latina high school principals are underrepresented at both the national and state level. First, I presented the dominant culture of educational administration as a White, male dominated field. Second, I discussed the *good old boy network* as a suppressor of women attaining leadership roles. Third, I introduced LatCrit to study the intersectionalities of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression impacting Latina/o people. In consideration of the oppressive societal and institutional forces mentioned above, Martina has thrived in the high school principal environment, which continues to be an underrepresented field for Latina women across Texas. For context, Martina's high school campus was constructed in 1989. Twenty-six years later, in 2015, Martina was named as the first ever female head principal. Notably, the school district superintendent was a woman when Martina was initially employed as a teacher. Therefore, Martina's experience can serve as a voice to inform other Latinas how to triumph over the social and political hurdles of the high school principalship.

Scholar

The intent of LatCrit research is to study the social and legal conditions of Latinos to inform change agents and propel improvements in both society and law. Thus, Martina's life experiences are examples of legitimate knowledge, providing insight into the Latina experience. As stated in Chapter II of this study, LatCrit is considered a race-gendered epistemology, recognizing Students of Color as holders and creators of knowledge (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). Remarkably, Martina also created knowledge through her dissertation, a scholarly contribution to the field of educational leadership. In Martina's dissertation study, she outlined the dominant culture of the superintendency as a male dominated profession and analyzed the following: (a) factors contributing to the low rate of Hispanic female superintendents, (b) understand the extent to which Hispanic women are more likely to secure positions in small rural school districts, and (c) examine the discrimination issues women may have experienced. Thus, Martina's life work has informed the research literature realm and impacted Latina/o students in her community.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented Martina's life journey, the fifth of seven case study chapters of Texas high school Latina principals interviewed regarding life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

In the first section of this case study chapter, I provided the community context and school demographics. In the second section, I presented the interview analysis to address the research questions in this study. The results from the first research question revealed that Martina's leadership experiences were shaped by her (a) family background, (b) educational background, and (c) work ethic. In response to the second research question, Martina described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. These challenges were grouped into three prevalent themes: (a) interim principal experience, (b) leadership transitions, and (c) stereotypes. The results of the third research question address Martina's job path to the high school principal role. I outlined Martina's job path through her (a) job trajectory, (b) mentors, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals. Finally, through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Martina's interview: gender and creator of knowledge.

In the next chapter, I provide the interview responses with respect to the lived experiences of Luciana, the sixth of the seven Texas high school Latina principals. I also demonstrate how Luciana's interview responses align with the dimensionalities in LatCrit and provide insight on the Texas high school Latina experience in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

CHAPTER X

CASE STUDY 6: LATINA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL #6-LUCIANA

Introduction

This chapter is the sixth of seven case study chapters that provide insight into the lived experiences of Texas high school Latina principals in reference to their life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. Like the previous case study chapters in this study, this chapter contains three sections. In the first section of each case study, I provide the community context and school demographics per the most recent posting from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In the second section, I present the interview analysis through the principal's life journey to address the research questions in this study.

Research Questions

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?
2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?
3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

In the third section, I examine the interview responses through the Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens. Luciana is a pseudonym for the principal.

Community and School Demographics

Luciana resides in central Texas, specifically in the San Antonio metropolitan area, one of the nation's fastest growing cities with the seventh largest population in the U.S. (City of San Antonio, 2020). On July 1, 2019, San Antonio's population estimate was 1,547,253 with 64.2% Latino, 24.8% White, 6.9% Black or African American, and 2.8% Asian (U.S. Census, n.d.). Higher education institutions located within the San Antonio area include: Our Lady of the Lake, Saint Mary's University, Trinity University, University of Incarnate Word, University of Mexico in San Antonio (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), the University of Texas at San Antonio, and Alamo Community College System.

Particularly, San Antonio is known for its Hispanic heritage and culture. For example, *Fiesta* originated in 1891 as a single day parade and evolved into 10 days of multiple parades consisting of over 100 events promoting arts, history, and culture in the latter two weeks of the April month. Celebrations include honoring Texas independence heroes of the battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto and the breaking of *cascarones* (confetti filled eggshells) along the multiple parade routes. In 2017, over 2.5 million people from around the world attended *Fiesta*, contributing \$340.1 million in sales to the local economy (Fiesta San Antonio, n.d).

School District Context

Luciana is employed in a San Antonio area school district classified by TEA as Major Urban. Major Urban school district is defined as located in a county with a population of at least 985,000; its enrollment is the largest in the county or at least 70% of the largest district enrollment in the county and at least 35% of the enrolled students are economically disadvantaged (TEA, 2019). A student is reported as economically disadvantaged if he or she is eligible for free or reduced-priced meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program. This school district is also a Texas District of Innovation, indicating that the school district is exempt from certain sections of the Texas Education Code, such as district governance, curriculum, state assessment system, state accountability system, school finance, federal requirement, state or federal requirements applicable to open-enrollment charter schools (TEA, 2020b).

Campus Context

Luciana's campus is a technical high school focused on health and law professions. Luciana's campus earned an A (90-100) for exemplary performance by serving most students well, encouraging high academic achievement and/or appropriate academic growth for almost all students, and preparing most students for eventual success in college, a career, or the military. State accountability ratings are based on three domains: Student Achievement, School Progress, and Closing the Gaps. A distinction designation recognizes school districts and campuses for outstanding achievement based on the outcomes of several performance indicators. In 2018-2019, the high school earned seven of seven of the following distinction designations: (a)

Academic Achievement in English Language Arts/Reading, (b) Academic Achievement in Mathematics, (c) Academic Achievement in Science, (d) Academic Achievement in Social Studies, (e) Top 25% Comparative Academic Growth, (f) Top 25% in Comparative Closing the Gaps, and (g) Postsecondary Readiness.

Luciana's campus serves 371 students consisting of the following ethnicities: 93.3% Hispanic, 4.3% Black/African American, 1.9% White, and 0.3% Asian. Out of the 371 students, 79.2% are economically challenged and 6.5% are English language learners. Luciana described the monetary amount of student scholarship awards for the Class of 2020.

We're sending kids to college like crazy and we're earning [scholarships], I think this year, it's a little low, I think, mostly due to COVID. But I think my graduating class of 86 has earned over \$4.6 million in scholarships. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Consequently, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted students' college scholarship earnings; however, \$4.6 million in scholarship awards for students who are economically challenged is a remarkable endeavor.

Interview Analysis of Principal #6 Luciana

In this second section of the chapter, I provide the interview analysis of Luciana's lived experiences to address the three research questions in this study.

Research Question One: How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?

The descriptions of how Luciana's leadership experiences were shaped by her background are clustered into three themes: (a) family, (b) education, and (c) identity/beliefs.

Family

Luciana's parents are from Sandia, Texas, a small south Texas town with a population of 431 (Texas Escapes, n.d). Her parents are Mexican American and initially earned a living picking cotton. Luciana's parents and Lucian's two siblings eventually moved to San Antonio, TX and finally settled in Cuero, Texas, a central Texas town with a population of 8,248 (Cuero Development Corporation, 2020). Luciana described growing up in Cuero.

They moved to San Antonio; the big city is where my dad wanted to be. It just wasn't the place that my mom wanted to raise kids, so they ended up moving to Cuero. That's where I lived for 17 years of my life, in a small town. . . There were, Anglo-Saxons, African Americans and mostly Mexican Americans or Chicanos, people of Mexican descent that lived in Cuero. I grew up with other people that looked like me. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Indeed, Luciana was nurtured in a family centered home and attended a school with students from different races and cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, Luciana's mother worked for Child Protective Services (CPS) and earned a sociology degree from the University of Mary Hardin Baylor. At the age of 50, Luciana's mother chose to continue her education and pursue a master's degree in

counseling with aspirations to be a child play therapist. She successfully graduated with her master's degree, served as a child play therapist for non-profits, and practiced child play therapy as an independent consultant. Luciana's father is a Vietnam War veteran, and he completed an associate's degree at Coastal Bend College, formerly known as Bee County College) in Beeville, Texas. He worked as a probation officer and served as a church pastor in a southern Baptist church. Luciana commented on her church background.

I grew up under this really interesting Mexican American, Southern Baptist realm which is really contrary to my heritage, which is mostly Catholic. My dad's family was Catholic, but my mom's family was heavily Baptist, like fifth generation Baptist. And so, it was just really interesting. It was my world. It's all I knew. But definitely, they supported education and wanted us to go to college (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

As well, Luciana's parents cultivated an environment of spiritual guidance through their religious beliefs.

Currently, Luciana has been married to her husband for 21 years, and they recently adopted a daughter, a teenager who is expected to graduate from high school in 2021. Luciana noted that her husband has been an important part of her support system, and mentioned the strong bond between her family and her husband's family.

I've been married for going on 21[years], this summer, and my husband is my rock. We also have a great family, and my husband's family and my parents that we're really close to now that we get to see [each other]. My sister lives in

Austin. I get to see her. But you need to be grounded with your support.

(Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Throughout Luciana's life path, she continues to honor her family and lean on them for support.

Education

Moreover, Luciana's parents instilled the value of an education. Luciana described she was "raised by Mexican American parents who were really ingrained in education. They believed in education. Their parents believed in education. . .But definitely, they supported education and wanted [her and her siblings] to go to college" (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020). Hence, at the age of 17, Luciana moved out of her house to attend community college in Victoria, Texas. She moved on to pursue a bachelor's degree in communications and public relations at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Upon her senior year of university course work, Luciana married her husband. Luciana's husband worked in the trade industry and aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. Within a year of Luciana's graduation, she and her husband moved to the Arlington/Dallas area with the expectation of continuing both of their education journeys.

At the time, Luciana's husband was going to seminary, and he transferred to Dallas Baptist University. Luciana earned a scholarship to study a master's degree in bilingual education at Southern Methodist University.

We moved to Dallas on a whim, actually, just to pursue education. We didn't know anybody there. . .I ended up deciding to go back to school. I ended up

attending and getting a scholarship to get a master's degree pretty much paid for through Southern Methodist University, SMU, and I had an amazing experience at SMU. I loved my professors. I decided to go into education. I decided to get my degree, Master's in Education. And that was really the first look into this realm that I had [known] nothing about really, because my education wasn't in education. My bachelor's degree was in a totally different field, and I began to learn through my professors at SMU and my experiences and field experiences and, of course, my school. . .I just loved it. I loved having the impact on kids' lives to help them where I just knew I didn't have that type of support. I had that support in my family growing up, but not at school. . .I had some racial discriminatory situations when I was growing up and that's what got me into education. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Luciana's master's program entailed field-based experiences. Through these field-based experiences in combination with her life experiences, Luciana discovered a passion for educating students. She remained in the teaching profession and enhanced her professional development by obtaining her second master's degree. This second master's degree was in educational administration in preparation to become a principal.

Identity

Luciana's background experiences have shaped her identity and beliefs as a leader. She explained how her leadership has been challenged and recommended to stay grounded in one's identity.

You need to be really grounded in who you are as a person. What you believe in and why you believe in it because you will constantly be challenged. As a Latina, in [Name of School District], the experience was different than being in [name of school district] San Antonio where everybody's of Mexican descent (laughs) or Latino in some way. It's a different culture. As a matter of fact, it's way more competitive in San Antonio. I don't know if because everybody's the same, has the same or similar background. But, it is super competitive, a lot more cut throat here than it was in [name of school district]. I feel it differently here. It's just interesting. But, you need to be grounded. You need to know... you are because you're constantly going to be tested and challenged on those things. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Therefore, Luciana fostered her identity to guide her leadership experiences. She emphasized the importance of knowing oneself, as she has been challenged to justify her beliefs. Luciana has learned to rely on her support system for checkpoints and reminders regarding her self-identity and personal beliefs.

Whoever that support is, whether it's a spouse, kids, siblings, relatives, or just friends, you need to be grounded because you're tested so much in this job that sometimes you think you're crazy, and you start questioning (laughs) like-this? And when you get to those points where you're questioning your own beliefs, you need those people to go to, so that they can remind you that, yes, you do know this, you are grounded, you are educated, [and] you can do this because you're pushed and challenged in so many ways. You can't ever prepare for all of

them, because there's just so much every day. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

In a sense, Luciana uses her support system as a compass to maintain the course with respect to her self-identity and beliefs

Furthermore, Luciana's identity and beliefs have translated into action throughout her leadership. For instance, when she was hired to be the head principal, she exhibited a passion for serving students and set high expectations for herself and her campus.

We have a very innovative superintendent who I think definitely has vision, and I think he saw that, number one-I was pretty passionate about what I do. There's no minimum standard. There's a level of expertise and just a level of work I'm used to doing. And that I'm up for any challenge. . .I like to think that he saw my passion for education, the high level of expectation that I don't just have for myself, but I do have for my school. And, that I'm willing to go above and beyond and really be innovative in the classrooms and really push my teachers and challenge them to continuously grow. And, I think, I'm hoping that's what he saw in me. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

In turn, Luciana's identity, based on her beliefs, molded her leadership experiences and positively impacted her campus. She provided examples of academic achievements at her campus over the last three years.

We've seen such great growth. He [the superintendent] hired me with a very specific mission. He's like, "I need you to accomplish this, this and this." I've been able to meet those goals over the last three years and increased enrollment. We're maxing out space here because kids want to come here. We are academically one of the best in the district, and we're definitely supporting the district mission of meeting these high standards. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

With these achievements in mind, Luciana has remained committed to excellence for her campus.

Finally, Luciana's identity has influenced her leadership decision making. She gave examples of guidelines taken into consideration when making decisions for students.

At the end of the day, I believe I have an obligation to do what's right, before men, before the laws of our districts and our policies, the laws of the state of Texas, and then, to do what's right before God. And I think if I follow those guidelines in the work that I do every day, then I know I'll be taken care of because I'm making decisions for kids and that's what's important is always putting kids first. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Thus, Luciana's leadership experiences were shaped by her background. These leadership experiences are clustered into three themes: (a) family, (b) education, and (c) identity.

Research Question Two: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?

Luciana described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. I outlined Luciana's challenges into three prevalent themes: (a) work/personal life balance, (b) discrimination/stereotypes, and (c) high school duties.

Work/Personal Life Balance

Luciana shared insight into her work and personal life balance. She confirmed the work/personal life balance can be a challenge, and she stated, "The day somebody figures that out, please let me know" (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020). Recently, Luciana and her husband adopted a teenage girl. She shared challenges in balancing both her job and family.

I don't get breaks when I'm sitting here in my office, and I've got meetings back-to-back and then all of these crazy things are, you know, at the same time and we don't have that luxury. And so, the balance is really, really hard, it's hard, especially if you have a family. I have recently adopted a teenager, my husband and I, and we have been married for 20 years and the last two years, we've adopted a teenager. I don't know what we were thinking. ... and she's a challenge, right? (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Also, Luciana commented she was previously accustomed to the administrator schedule, where she did not have to be concerned about tending to children after work. Since the adoption, she experienced challenges in coordinating her schedule with her husband's work schedule in order to balance the mom to teenage daughter relationship.

She's a teenager. . .it's been hard to balance mom to a teenager, and she actually goes to my school as well. So, then that's another challenge, but then just to be a mom when I'm so used to a certain schedule as an administrator, you know, not having little ones to have to go home to everyday. And my husband is also a professional. He works a lot, and so we're both kind of workaholics. But it's been a big challenge. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Despite the challenges in balancing work and personal life, Luciana does not deter anyone from the principalship. In fact, she stated the principalship was highly rewarding.

I highly recommend that Latinas pursue the route of administration. But be ready for the challenge, because it is not easy. You will spend time sometimes crying and sometimes in despair, but as long as you have a support system and you have people that can pull you up and get you grounded, you're going to be okay. But it's highly rewarding. . . And, just think as long as we're always growing and learning, that's what counts, and that's what matters. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

In short, Luciana described some of the challenges to the work and personal life balance of the principalship from her perspective. She acknowledged the work is difficult but highly rewarding.

Stereotypes

On Luciana's journey to the principalship, she has encountered stereotypes related to nativity and language. Notably, she recalled early experiences of discrimination in her youth, and these marginalizing experiences motivated her to

become an educator. In particular, Luciana gave two examples of common misconceptions about Latinos: (a) all Latinos are immigrants and (b) all Latinos speak Spanish. First, Luciana provided insight to her family history of living in Texas before it became part of the U.S.

People just assume we're immigrants or people assume that we have migrated from other parts or other countries. My family's story has been in Texas before Texas was Texas. So, the history... goes to like this land when it was Mexico before the line was drawn, and it became Texas. And I think those are the stories that people don't see, right? (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Henceforth, the assumption of all Latinos as immigrants is an example of a misconception. The second stereotype Luciana combatted concerned her Spanish language proficiency.

When I moved to Dallas, everybody was like, "Well, why don't you, you know, speak Spanish perfectly?" And I'm like, "You know, not everybody down South speaks Spanish (laughs)." Whereas in... you have this, you know, stereotype where like everybody who's of Latin descent is an immigrant. They're from other countries. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

With respect to Spanish proficiency, Luciana shared the reason why she is not a native Spanish speaker. Her parents vowed not to teach her Spanish due to the discrimination and physical abuse they once suffered in their schooling.

My parents didn't teach us Spanish because when my parents spoke Spanish in schools, they were beaten, physically, beaten. And so... they made a vow to not teach us Spanish. But of course, I grew up... I learned it in high school. In college, it was one of my minors and so I could understand it well. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Thus, Luciana's parents promised not to teach Luciana and her siblings Spanish to protect them from future discriminatory experiences.

Moreover, Luciana identified a double standard that Latinas battle on their journey to the principalship. She affirmed Latinas in leadership cannot afford to make mistakes as they are judged more critically as leaders of color.

You have to smile, and you have to be nice. You know, we're not afforded those bad days. We're not afforded to not have it together. We're not afforded to wake up on the wrong side of the bed. Those aren't options for us, and I think especially as Latinas, even more so, because people are always looking to see us make a mistake. I think you have to be even that much more focused and in tune with what's happening. So, there's no reason for people to have a fault or something to look on. Not to say that we're not going to make mistakes, but that we're constantly focused on the work that's being done so that we can make good decisions in the process. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Therefore, Luciana addressed the double standard that Latina leaders encounter on the journey to the principalship in the form of being judged more harshly as women of color.

Definitively, Luciana emboldened aspiring Latina principals to pursue a leadership position in educational administration. She encourages Latinas to not allow racial barriers or people to oppress their path to leadership.

I think any Latinas that want to go into administration, don't let race oppress you. [Do not] let people tell you [that] you can't. Now, I'm a strong believer that we can't do everything. I can't decide tomorrow to go play, you know, WNBA; it's not going to happen. I'm not good at basketball. But, within our God given strengths and within our abilities, we can do a lot more than we think. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

In summary, Luciana depicted the examples mentioned above as experiences of discrimination and stereotypes throughout her path to the high school principal role.

Work demands

Luciana shared some of the work demands specific to her campus high school level. She gave an example of leading instruction and applying a data driven decision-making process.

The work is exorbitant because it's just nonstop. With education, things are always changing, and each cohort of kids that comes into my school is different than the prior cohort. And so, we have to do a really good job of identifying each level, each cohort of kids, and where they're at. And it takes time to do that. You have to test them, analyze the data, you have to teach and then you reteach and then we're looking at data. So, it's just constant; it's nonstop. We've structured our school where we have intervention twice in a week, every other day. We have to

be prepared for those groupings every other day. And that's just very often. We're super intentional about it, but it takes time to do all of that and everything else.

(Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

In addition to the instructional leadership aspect of the principalship, Luciana discussed the extra-curricular duties of the job and how these duties require a time commitment beyond the typical school day.

We don't have a football team, which I actually really enjoy, because I don't have to spend my time at all the games. But we do have other sports that we're responsible for. In addition to that, all of the extracurriculars and the fine arts and then because we're a health and law magnet, we have a huge partnership with the community. So, being engaged with businesses and judges and lawyers for our law magnet and then with the health side, hospitals. There's just a lot that's required of us. So even though I might have my AP [assistant principal] attend an event at night for sports or extracurricular, I'm still attending other meetings in the community at night. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Considering the extracurricular duties mentioned above, such as game duty and community partnerships, Luciana confirmed her workday is extended past the typical school day. Specifically, she provided an example of a typical work week that often entails a 12-hour workday.

It's nonstop. You don't have a week. I think, on average, I have about two events a night per week. And, that's on a light level. Most of the time, certain seasons,

like Christmas, it's every night. At the end of the year, it's every night. There's no start and stop time. I get to campus at 7:30 am. Sometimes I leave by 7:00 pm. I mean, it's a 12-hour day. And then, when you go home, you're still on your email, or you're still navigating text messages from teachers or phone calls. It's nonstop. It's a lot, and I don't know that people really understand the level of intensity that it is being an administrator. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Concisely, Luciana provided knowledge into the typical schedule of a high school principal. Luciana outlined challenges, sacrifices, or struggles throughout her journey to the high school principal role in three emergent themes: (a) work/personal life balance, (b) discrimination and stereotypes, and (c) work demands.

Research Question Three: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Luciana described her job path to the high school principal role. I presented Luciana's path into three prevalent themes: (a) job trajectory, (b) mentors, and (c) networking.

Job Trajectory

After graduating with her bachelor's in communications and public relations from University of Texas at San Antonio, Luciana experienced challenges in obtaining a job related to her field. Subsequently, she decided to substitute teach in the Arlington/Dallas area. Her driving commute consisted of an hour one-way from home to her assigned campus to serve as a substitute Spanish teacher. Meanwhile, Luciana was

studying a master's program for bilingual education. Shortly, she obtained her first teaching job in [name of school district]. In fact, she observed that she was a part of a small population of Latinos in the school district.

It was very interesting, because I kind of became the golden Latina, right? There was not a lot of Latinas in certain suburbs in the [Dallas/Arlington area], and so I would get placed in committees all the time because, you know, I think they needed to have my background. My master's was in bilingual education. I had a passion. I still do, for ESL students. That's kind of the journey that I started on in the classroom was in ESL. And so, my lens was very different when I was at the table. I was always looking and making decisions based on that population, that sub pop, and so I think that's why I was invited to the table a lot because I had that lens in mind. Those opportunities that [name of school district] gave me really lent themselves to determining what is my path and what's my journey. I really believed I could impact at a greater level. I had a lot to say and a lot to give. And, I could do that on a greater scale. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Thus, Luciana's bilingual education background was an asset to her position as she was invited to serve on many committees responsible for the decision making regarding English learners.

Furthermore, Luciana became an instructional coordinator for four years, followed by another four years as an assistant principal at a middle school, and one year as an assistant principal at the high school, where she initially started her teaching

career. At last, Luciana became the head principal of a middle school and stayed in this role for two years. Upon completion of 14 years in [name of school district], she and her husband decided to move to the San Antonio metropolitan area to care for a parent.

Luciana was concerned about obtaining a high school head principal position in the San Antonio area. Without an established network of educational leaders in the San Antonio area, Luciana was concerned about securing a leadership position. For her, head principal placement at the high school level was a non-negotiable.

I was a little concerned about getting a position in San Antonio because I didn't know anybody in San Antonio. I was well networked up north in a lot of other districts. If I wanted to move districts, I could've, but I loved my district so much, I didn't. But here, I didn't have those connections and I was really concerned about getting in. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Ultimately, Luciana was interviewed by a school district superintendent in the San Antonio metropolitan area.

In the interview with the superintendent, Luciana asserted her intent to be a high school head principal. In fact, she declared the high school principal position was a non-negotiable.

I think it was the grace of God that landed me here, at [name of campus]. I did an interview with the superintendent, and I just had some really good references and a good resume and he hired me and placed me here. . . I was like, "I will work for your district, but I need a high school. I have done my middle school duties, and I'm ready for high school. It's just my niche." And so, that was kind of like my

this is what I want. If you can't provide that, it's no big deal, I'll find something else. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Further, Luciana refused to consider any other alternatives. Other individuals in Luciana's circle of contacts suggested that she consider settling for an assistant principal position as she recently moved to a new city. However, Luciana insisted on securing a head principal position.

I had these expectations that I didn't want to back down from. I did have people tell me, though, that, "You know, you might need to settle for an assistant's principal position when you move, um, because if you don't know anybody, they might not, you know, hire you." And I actually had several people tell me that. "You know, you might have to go back to go forward." I think my stubbornness was like, "Oh man. If you tell me that I can't do it, it's just going to force me to like prove you wrong." And so, I just did. I just held this standard. I'm like, "This is what I need to get paid. This is what I need. This is where I want to be, and if I can't find a place for that in this district, that's okay. I will keep searching. That was kind of my non-negotiable, but here I am. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Currently, Luciana has completed her third year as the head principal at her high school campus.

Regarding Luciana's future goals, she initially considered the superintendency. However, after navigating the political currents of her district and community, she expressed that she is no longer interested in the superintendency.

What am I going to do next? I used to think, "Yes. I'm going to go onto that superintendency." And now, I really don't know. I think I would love to get a Ph.D. and teach at the collegiate level. I think that would be super powerful. But I don't have a desire to go into superintendency. I just don't. There's a lot of politics involved, and there is a balance of where you have to have politics in certain areas, and I fulfill those as I need to, but it's not my forte. It's certainly nothing that I'm passionate about. I don't know. You'll know when I know probably (laughs). (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

In brief, Luciana has pondered her future goals. Considering her background, knowledge and leadership experience, Luciana's possibilities are wide and vast.

Mentors

Luciana credited numerous educational leaders for inspiring her to pursue a career in educational leadership: (a) a female principal, (b) a male principal, and (c) other mentors in her previous school district. First, as an instructional coach, Luciana was mentored by a female principal who encouraged her to enroll in a university principal preparation program.

I had a mentor who was phenomenal, and her name was [name of mentor]. She was one of the first principals that I had as an instructional coach. I was in the classroom for three years, and then I moved up to an instructional coach, which I did for four years. That's where I met a lot of principals, and because my lens was a little bit different, my work was a little bit different. I got work with administration more closely in that realm as an instructional coach. It was in that

process that I met so many great principals, but she was the one who really encouraged me to go into leadership. I had started an ESL program at night for parents to learn English in the evening at my high school [name of high school]. I had done all these things to engage families, and she's like, "Luciana, you should really go into administration. You're doing all the work now." And I was like, "No way! Why would I want to work so many nights and work all summer?" And she's like, "Uh, I'm sorry to tell you, but you're already doing that now." I hadn't really put those two together-that I was really doing the work already without the title. And so, I did. I went back to school to get my master's.

(Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Through the mentorship from the female principal, Luciana gained knowledge about the principalship and program coordination. Ultimately, Luciana was encouraged to pursue a master's in educational administration.

Second, Luciana was mentored by a male principal and secured her first assistant principal role at a middle school campus. When she arrived at the campus as an instructional coordinator, the middle school campus was classified as a low performing campus. Within two years, the middle school campus improved to be the highest performing middle school in the school district under her mentor's leadership.

I started my first principalship as an assistant principal at a middle school. It was just a great experience. I was at the lowest performing school in the district in middle schools. So, I started off there for two years. I had a great mentor, my boss, [name of mentor], and then [the campus] improved to the highest

performing [middle] school in the district. I was there for two years, and my mentor was leaving to take on another position. His assistant was moving up, and they had a position [assistant principal] . . .I loved my experience there because I had already been there for four years, so I knew all the teachers. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Through the mentorship from the male principal, Luciana gained knowledge in school improvement and attained her first assistant principal position.

Other Mentors. Third, Luciana was supported by other mentors from her previous school district. These mentors helped her organize a five-year plan and collaborated in problem solving.

And then on the other hand, I had other mentors at my prior schools that literally said, "What's your five-year plan?" What is your next step? This is where we think you should be an administrator. Let's look at programs. Let's carve out some time. That really helped my hand in the process. Then they were also there when I became an administrator that I could call to say, "Okay, here's the situation. I need help. I don't even know how to solve this problem on my own.

(Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Hence, these mentors contributed to Luciana's professional growth and networking.

Networking in Latina/o Leadership

In addition to the mentoring experiences Luciana received in her previous school district. She described how networking with other Latino leaders in [name of school district] opened opportunities for collaboration.

But being a Latina in [name of school district] was great. I had a great experience. There were other Latinos that were in leadership, male and female. We all just kind of [stuck] together. Everybody was just professional. We were all very collaborative. [Name of school district] very collaborative. I just loved it. I ended up there for 14 years. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Particularly, Luciana explained that her collaboration sessions with her network of Latino leaders included sharing ideas and problem solving together

And so, in [name of school district], I had a very collaborative unit. The principals there, high school, middle school principals. We were a small group, and we were really close. We were really good about sharing ideas and calling each other up, “I have this parent (laughs) tell me how I can navigate this, or have you ever experienced this?” And so, we were really good about connecting with each other. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Hence, the networking of Latina/o leaders in her school district provided Luciana an opportunity for professional collaboration and professional growth in a space with colleagues with similar cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, when Luciana moved to the San Antonio area, she realized she lacked the established network of professional connections from her previous school district. She contemplated how to find the right people who could support her in her role of head principal.

When I got to San Antonio, it was more difficult because I didn't have that network. It's important to find the right people, and what I have tried to do is find the right people. Who can I get to know and then, through those people, not on my own accord but through those connections that I've made, they've introduced me to other people in this city that have influenced or are supportive of my campus? Those are the types of relationships that you want. You want to be able to utilize the people that are around you that support the work that you're doing so that you can create a network. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Consequently, Luciana understood that she would have to recreate a network of professional connections in her new school district. She further explained establishing new relationships was like a grass root movement.

I was kind of like grass rooting it when I first got here. And then having to like define yourself all over again because nobody knows you. They don't know what you're capable of doing. They don't know what kinds of programs you can develop. They don't know how you build relationships. And so, it was not about really reinventing. I was already invented; it was just reeducating people sharing with them the work that I could do. That's always hard when you feel like you have to start new again. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Thus, Luciana is determined to build up a network of leaders for collaboration and problem solving. She noted that leadership can be a lonely space if leaders allow themselves to be isolated.

And I think those are the people that you really need because one of the things we hear the most is the higher you go, the more lonely it gets, right? It's only that way if you create it to be that way. At the end of the day, we're not made to live in isolation, so we need to fall upon other leaders that have a shared philosophy or pedagogy and lean on each other. Education is not about reinventing the wheel. Like history, it repeats itself. There are things that have happened back 20, 30 years ago that we can learn from. But if we're not collaborating with each other, then that can become very challenging. (Principal 6, Luciana, personal communication, May 4, 2020)

Concisely, Luciana described her job path to the high school principal role. I outlined Luciana's path into three prevalent themes: (a) job trajectory, (b) mentors, and (c) networking.

Researcher's Reflection

My personal reflections are italicized to convey my perceptions about the interview data collected. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems.

I experienced a moment in Luciana's interview that gave me chills. She shared that her parents were physically beaten for speaking Spanish in school. Consequently, Luciana was not taught Spanish at home. I learned that Luciana and I had something in common. Like Luciana's father, my father was also punished for speaking Spanish in school. He did not personally experience any physical pain, but his pain was psychological. In elementary school, my father recalled teachers shouting at him in the hallways, "Stop speaking that dirty language!" He told me that this experience never left him as Spanish was his native language. Additionally, the principal had a thick paddleboard and would pop students who refused to comply with the English only directive. My father commented that he was ridiculed for bringing tortillas and tacos for lunchtime. He remembered his Latino classmates crouching under the cafeteria tables eating their tacos to avoid humiliation from White classmates. My father also described how he and other English learners were isolated from the mainstream population, denying them the opportunity to interact and practice English with White classmates. In an ironic twist, my father taught Spanish for 23 years at the same school district where he once experienced discrimination as a child. As an adult educator, he confronted his elementary principal who initiated isolation of English learners from the mainstream student body. The elementary principal acknowledged his error and stated, "I know I shouldn't have done that."

Latino Critical Race Theory

Luciana's life journey was analyzed through Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). As previously mentioned in Chapter II of this study, LatCrit scholars study the intersectionalities of oppression that impact Latinos, such as race, gender, language, nativism, and class. Through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Luciana's interview: language and advocacy for English learners.

Language

In Luciana's interview, she explained why she did not learn Spanish at home. Specifically, she described the physical abuse her parents experienced for speaking Spanish in school. Issuing physical punishment to Latino students for speaking Spanish in school was a common discriminatory practice across U.S. classrooms in the early 21st century (Davis & Moore, 2014; Hurtado & Rodriguez, 2010; Olivas, 1982; Sanchez, 2002). These discriminatory experiences traumatized Luciana's parents to the point that they vowed to not teach their children Spanish in fear of their children experiencing a similar consequence. Unjustly, Luciana's parents were punished for speaking Spanish as students in school.

Conversely, Luciana moved to the Dallas/Arlington area and was questioned for not speaking Spanish perfectly as a Mexican-American from south Texas. This discrimination can be derived from stereotypes regarding the intersectionalities of nativity and language. However, Luciana had previously studied Spanish in high school, and she earned a minor in Spanish from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Additionally, U.S. English speakers expect Latinos to communicate in English, Spanish

monolinguals expect Latinos to speak perfect Spanish (Casielles-Suárez, 2017). As a result, Latinos who are unable to use the Spanish language to identify with other Latinos may experience intragroup rejection (Sanchez et al., 2011).

Advocacy for English Learners (ELs)

Luciana's early experiences with discrimination motivated her to become an educator. Her first educator role was a substitute Spanish teacher serving students from international backgrounds. Luciana credits this teaching experience inspiration to study a master's degree in bilingual education. She discovered her passion in working with English learners (ELs). For example, she taught ESL and coordinated a night school program for English learner parents. In her interview, she stated how she loved having the impact on kids' lives to help them where she did not have that type of support when she was a student in school.

Luciana also mentioned being invited to multiple committees where she had the opportunity to contribute in the decision making for English learners (ELs). She identified herself as the golden Latina, because she was one of the few Latina educators employed in her school district. Luciana brought a different lens to her committee meetings, taking pride offering insight into the Latino student population. In turn, she felt empowered to use her voice, impacting ELs on a greater scale. Therefore, Luciana's life work and advocacy for ELs is an example of a Latina leading for change and social justice.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented Luciana's life journey, the sixth of seven case study chapters of Texas high school Latina principals interviewed regarding life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

In the first section of this case study chapter, I provided the community context and school demographics. In the second section, I presented the interview analysis to address the research questions in this study. The results from the first research question revealed that Luciana's leadership experiences were shaped by her (a) family, (b) education, and (c) work ethic. In response to the second research question, Luciana described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. These challenges were grouped into three prevalent themes: (a) work and personal life balance, (b) discrimination/stereotypes, and (c) high school work demands. The results of the third research question address Luciana's job trajectory to the high school principal role. I outlined Luciana's trajectory through her (a) job path, (b) mentors, and (c) networking. Finally, through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Luciana's interview: language and advocacy for English learners (ELs)

In the next chapter, I provide the interview responses with respect to the lived experiences of Ximena, the seventh of the seven Texas high school Latina principals. I also demonstrate how Ximena's interview responses align with the dimensionalities in

LatCrit and provide insight on the Texas high school Latina experience in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

CHAPTER XI

CASE STUDY 7: LATINA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL #7-XIMENA

Introduction

This chapter is the seventh of seven case study chapters that provide insight into the lived experiences of Texas high school Latina principals in reference to their life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. Like the previous case study chapters in this study, this chapter contains three sections. In the first section of each case study, I provide the community context and school demographics per the most recent posting from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In the second section, I present the interview analysis through the principal's life journey to address the research questions in this study.

Research Questions

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?
2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?
3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

In the third section, I examine the interview responses through the Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens. Ximena is a pseudonym for the principal.

Community and School Demographics

Community

Ximena resides in the south Texas Rio Grande Valley, specifically in Hidalgo County. In 2019, the population of Hidalgo county was 868,707 with 92.5% Latino, 5.9% White, 0.9% Black or African American, and 1.0% Asian (U.S. Census, n.d.). Remarkably, Hidalgo County draws 10,000 to 20,000 visitors weekly to worship the Virgin Mary at the Virgen de San Juan Del Valle Shrine, also known as Our Lady of San Juan Shrine (Azpiazu, 2021). The Shrine is based on a miracle legend from Guadalajara, Mexico.

The origins of the devotion to Our Lady of San Juan del Valle are found in San Juan de los Lagos, Mexico, a town founded near Guadalajara after the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Spanish missionaries placed a small image of the Immaculate Conception in the church of San Juan de los Lagos. In 1623, an acrobat traveling with his wife and children stopped in San Juan de los Lagos to give a performance. While practicing their act, the youngest daughter lost her balance and was killed. An Indian woman, who was the caretaker of the church, begged the parents to place the image of the Virgin Mary over their daughter's body and prayed for the Virgin's intercession. The child was then brought back to life. As word spread of the miracle, the devotion to Our Lady, under the title of "La Virgen de San Juan", started to grow throughout Jalisco. Today, she is

recognized by many people throughout Mexico as well as the United States (Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle National Shrine, n.d.).

Originally built as a small wooden chapel in 1920, Our Lady of San Juan Del Valle Shrine has evolved into a multi-million-dollar basilica seating approximately 1,800 worshippers.

School District

As of 2020, Hidalgo County encompassed approximately 20 public school districts (TEA, 2020). Ximena is employed in one of these 20 school districts, and her school district is classified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as Other Central City. Other Central City is defined as a school district located in a county with a population of between 100,000 and 1,019,999, and its enrollment is the largest in the county or at least 75 percent of the largest district enrollment in the county (TEA, 2019). Additionally, Ximena's school district maintains multiple state and community partnerships to meet students' needs. One example of this partnership is a collaboration with South Texas College and Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance to offer an associate degree in nursing for high school students.

Early College Campus

Ximena's campus is located within 13 miles of the U.S./Mexico border and is considered an early college campus. An early college high school (ECHS) is an open-enrollment school providing students an opportunity to receive both a high school diploma and either an associate degree or at least 60 credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree (TEA, 2021d). Specifically, Ximena's campus maintains an early college

partnership with the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). Recently, Ximena's campus was also awarded a P-TECH grant (TEA, 2020e) providing students and an opportunity to work as apprentices in local businesses. All 96 students are of Latino ethnicity and considered economically challenged. Out of the 96 students, 32.3% are English Learners (ELs). In the 2018-2019 school year, the campus earned a B accountability rating across three domains: (a) Student Achievement, (b) School Progress, and (c) Closing the Gaps.

Remarkably, Ximena leads an early college campus specializing in education for teenage mothers and expectant teenage mothers. In particular, the campus contains an early head start program with a capacity to serve 32 babies. The campus early head start program includes an onsite clinic, a baby well care curriculum, and education with respect to breastfeeding and family planning. Ximena has partnered with local child daycare facilities to take care of the students' babies in the evenings, for her students to have an opportunity to attend night school and Saturday school.

Interview Analysis of Principal #7 Ximena

In this second section of the chapter, I provide the interview analysis of Ximena's lived experiences to address the three research questions in this study.

Research Question One: How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?

The descriptions of how Ximena's leadership experiences were shaped by her background are clustered into three themes: (a) family, (b) education, and (c) bilingualism.

Family

Ximena's parents were migrant field workers, and at the age of three, Ximena migrated to Ohio for the first time. She would continue to migrate to Ohio every year for 17 years. The migration calendar schedule would entail Ximena's family migrating to Ohio during the months of February/March, working in the fields for a duration of six months, and returning to Texas in the month of November. The earnings of a migrant worker were modest, but Ximena learned the value of giving from her father.

My father always believed in giving. Anybody who came to the house, he was fixing a meal. Anybody came to visit, fix some coffee and bread. I was like, and I would only say like, "Well, we don't have money. How do we have money for this?" But it was the concept about giving and not receiving. I get it. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

The value of giving would later manifest throughout Ximena's personal and professional career.

Moreover, Ximena has four siblings, an older brother, an older sister, a younger sister, and a baby sister. The older brother served as an educator in the Rio Grande Valley, and he is now retired. Ximena's older sister attended college and currently works in an office. The younger sister is a pediatrician. Ximena had a baby sister, who served in the medical field and tragically passed away from breast cancer.

Currently, Ximena is married to her husband, who is White. He earns a living by vocational trade, and he built the family home. Ximena and her husband have three daughters, one boy, and two girls, who were adopted after her youngest sister passed

away from cancer at the age of 40. Ximena's oldest daughter is a physician assistant, the second daughter has an associate's degree in biology, and she is completing her undergraduate degree with aspirations of becoming a teacher. The third daughter is studying in a nursing program, and her son just graduated from Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

Education

Ximena's father completed a fifth-grade education, and her mother completed an eighth-grade education. Ximena noted the rarity of Mexican-American migrants continuing their education, but her parents instilled the importance of an education at an early age. They would enroll Ximena in school, whether they were in Texas or Ohio. At times, Ximena would enroll in the spring and attend summer school.

It was very rare that, Mexican Americans would continue their education while they migrated. My parents were very astute about the fact that they wanted us to continue our education no matter where we went. So, when we went to Ohio, the first thing my mom did was we enrolled in school. Whether it be finishing summer school, because at the time, we usually left around February, March, so we only had maybe like a couple of months left over, but my mom and dad would be like, "Nope, you're going to school." So, we went to summer school [and], like November, we'd head back. We did that for 17 years. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Throughout 17 years of migrant field work, Ximena's parents insisted on Ximena continuing her schooling.

Moreover, Ximena benefited from a migrant education program held at the migrant camp. Her parents encouraged her to participate in the education program. Ximena remembered complaining about the field and her surroundings, and her mother's response to the complaints. Ximena's mother advised her that if she did not receive an education, she would end up working in the fields. Ximena reconsidered participating in the migrant education program.

My mom and my dad always felt that if there was an opportunity to learn, then that was an opportunity we had to take. And whenever we complained that we didn't like the field, that we didn't like this, we didn't like that, my mom would say, "Well, if you don't get an education, this is where you're going to end up." So, I would always tell myself, I am not going to be working in the fields. And if anything, I will be the owner of a ranch and hiring people, because I didn't feel that was my place, you know, I always felt like I knew I had better and bigger things to do. . .we decided to stay and not go back to the fields. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

After Ximena's mother explained the lack of possibilities without an education, Ximena chose to continue her education.

In fact, Ximena moved on to study at Pan American University while working full-time and attending college. At this time her father was unemployed, and Ximena and her brother worked full-time to support the family. She recalled struggling to manage a full-time job and attend classes. The family had one vehicle, and she would either have her father drive her or hitch rides. She juggled work and school for at least three years.

There was a time when my dad was out of work, because they would not hire him. He had a fifth-grade education. He only did labor jobs, cutting yards, whatever. And my mom tells me and my brother, you need to work because your dad is not paying the bills. So, I remember, when I enrolled right before I got married, I was enrolled at Pan Am. And, I remember that I said, "How am I going to make this work? Work a full-time job? Go to school?" (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

In turn, Ximena would attend class from 6:45 am to 9:00 am, work from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm, and attend night classes.

I remember taking, at those times, they had those early classes, like 6:45am till 9:00 am. Then I would go to work from 9:30 am, until 6:00 pm at night then I'd take the night classes. And mind you, I didn't have a car. I had to hitch rides, (laughs), I had to have my dad drive me, because we didn't have money to buy another vehicle. I remember doing that for about two, three years, because my parents weren't making it. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

After three years of working and taking courses at Pan American University, Ximena married her husband and moved to Ohio to finish college. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Science Education from Bowling Green University.

Bilingualism

Ximena and her siblings can read and write in Spanish. As a child, Ximena's mother would help Ximena write letters to her grandmother. She described how learning phonetics helped her bilingual proficiency.

So, my mom would always be like okay, "*Escribe la carta a tu abuela. Y le vas a ponerle aquí Abuelita estamos todos bien.*" [Write the letter to your grandmother. And, you will write "Grandma, we are fine."] And I would not understand how my mom could read Spanish better than she could read English. But, my mom says, [she] can't spell it. Like, well, mom it is very phonetic, very phonetic. So, I think that was one of the things that I think also helped me be a good bilingual. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Ximena would also carry a dictionary with her when translating for her parents. As she used the dictionary to translate, she would learn more vocabulary. Ximena gave an example of translating a job application for her father.

I remember going to do out job applications for my dad, and my dad would be like, "*Llename esto mijita,*" [fill this out for me, daughter], and I would be like, okay, let me see, how do I translate this? I always carried a dictionary with me, because I didn't know how to tell him that "*domicilio*" was [the translation for the word] address. So, I would say, dad, I need your, and I look it up, "*domicilio.*" So, I started learning. So, that taught me a lot as well. Even when I wasn't learning [at school], I was learning from my parents. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Subsequently, all of Ximena's children are bilingual, except the oldest child. The oldest child was not enrolled in any bilingual programs. Ximena clarified that the eldest does speak Spanish, but she does not speak as much as the other daughters. Thus, Ximena's family, education, and bilingualism have contributed to her leadership experiences. These leadership experiences have shaped her role as a Latina female principal.

Research Question Two: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?

Ximena described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. I outlined Ximena's challenges into three prevalent themes: (a) sacrificing family time, (b) students' extenuating circumstances, and (c) cancer

Sacrificing Family Time

When Ximena was studying for her bachelor's degree, she was married without children. However, when she studied for her master's degree, she acknowledged that she sacrificed family time. Ximena mentioned that her children did not have an interest in an educational career, as they witnessed how much Ximena worked as an educator.

When I got my master's and had kids, I know that I sacrificed for my girls. But I wanted my girls and my boy to know that mom can be just as successful as any other parent, but there was a sacrifice of time. And there was a sacrifice of me being with them, and them enjoying me as a mom. None of them took the career of education, because they're like, mom, we're not going to work as hard as you.
(Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Ximena wanted to model success for her children by completing her master's degree. In turn, she learned that a master's degree had cost her some family time.

With respect to pursuing a doctoral degree, Ximena has pondered the possibility but expressed reservations. She is currently a grandmother, and she does not think about missing precious moments with her grandchildren.

As a matter of fact, there's a big wave of doctorate students. Women that are going to get their doctorates. And they'll tell me, it's never too late. I love to be working on a doctorate, and I think it's just going to give me a title. I know it's going to take time, but I just became a grandma about two years ago. And any little opportunity that I can be with my grandkids, I would. I would not even think about a doctorate. And I know that those [doctorate programs] take you away from family functions (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Additionally, Ximena does not have the desire to be a superintendent. She prefers to be in direct contact with students. She has found her niche as a high school principal.

And I still think I have a few more years left, but I don't think that my goal is, "Oh, I want to be superintendent one day." I see the headaches. I don't think I'm ready for that. I think that my goal is to help these kids, and I have kids reach out to me almost on a daily basis. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Indeed, Ximena has learned from her experiences of sacrificing family time. Instead of enrolling in another graduate program, she prioritized family.

Students' Extenuating Circumstances

As previously stated in the first section of this chapter, Ximena's campus is unique, as students must be female and pregnant or have a child to remain enrolled at her school. Considering these specific requirements, Ximena has encountered students with extenuating circumstances that some adults may never experience in their lifetime. Circumstances such as, homelessness and abuse, are examples of obstacles in students' paths to graduation. Ximena has established a relationship with her students, and her students' challenges have become her challenges as well. She has been personally involved in helping her students overcome their life hurdles.

I will tell you that I don't get all the students from the high schools that are pregnant. I get the select ones. The ones who don't come to school, or the ones who don't have that motivation to finish. I get the 100% at risk students that will come to my door and say, "Miss, I'm not going to finish high school." And I'm like, "Yes, you are. We're going to help you finish."

Thus, Ximena's passion is working with young expectant or young mothers who have given up on themselves.

Further, Ximena has personally been involved when a student is in financial need or finds themselves in a dangerous situation. She noted that these students often arrive at her campus with a low self-esteem and feelings of rejection. She accepts them without judgement.

I think their self-esteem is very low when they come to my campus. I do get students that have been battered by their significant others, mistreated by the in-laws because they don't want another mouth to feed, and then you have another baby, and they don't want them to be there. So, I do have those situations. I've had students who have been homeless, who have lived from apartments to apartments. It's not a job that I think people can say it's a glorified opportunity to be here. I do think it takes a special person, and it takes a special staff. Not that I'm that special person, because anybody can do my job, but you really got to have the heart to help these kids. I always believe, and my parents have always taught me that it's better to give than to receive. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Therefore, Ximena's family background, and the values taught by her parents have shaped how she leads and addresses challenges in her principal role. Ximena has personally paid students' utility bills in order to keep them focused on graduation.

I do not hesitate if there's a student that will tell me, "Miss, I don't have money for my light bill. They turned off my light. I've been living now with, you know." I will go and get the money for them and say, "Look, I'm giving this to you in a good, in a good way. It's up to you. If you're lying to me. If you're not being honest with me, you're going to have to live with that. Not me." But a lot of these students come back and say, you know what, miss, I don't have the money you lend me, but here's ten bucks. Good. I'll put that toward, for somebody else.

Because you know, we all fall on hard times. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Hence, Ximena's challenges in engaging at-risk students with extenuating circumstances are examples of struggles in her position as a principal.

Cancer

Ximena lost her youngest sister to breast cancer. Suddenly, she found herself battling the same fight as her sister. Ximena eventually beat cancer while working in her principal role. She described the details of her radiation treatment, and how she never stopped working. Ximena endured radiation treatment for six weeks.

I've gone through breast cancer. After my sister passed, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I went through radiation. Thank God I didn't go through chemo. That was a really tough couple of years that I had, and I never stopped going to work. I did my radiation in San Antonio. I would go to work at 6:00 am in the morning. I would leave around 11:00 am to make it to San Antonio by 4:00 p.m. to do my treatment, then stay overnight, do a treatment at 7:00 a.m. in the morning, then head back to school to be at work before lunch. I did that for six weeks. But, I did it because I wanted to show my girls that anything can happen in your life, but it doesn't happen to stop who you are. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Considering Ximena's radiation experiences, she modeled strength and resilience for her teachers and high school students. A reality check set in, and Ximena asked herself what was most important in life.

I think that was another reality check for me, and this happened about maybe a year after my sister passed and it was a reality check for me. It was like, what's more important in your life? Is it you, your health, your job, your family? I loved what I did. And I knew I could balance it as much as I could, but I think I had the support of my husband. He's always been a very supportive person, and he's Anglo. So I laugh because I think that as a Latina person, woman, if I would have married a Latino husband, I think my path would have been a little different. But I think we complement each other very well. And then after that year, he [husband] was diagnosed with bladder cancer. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Unfortunately, Ximena's challenges as a principal would continue as a new obstacle had presented itself in her personal life. This personal obstacle was in the form of her husband being diagnosed with cancer. Therefore, Ximena described the challenges, sacrifices, and struggles to the high school principal role through (a) sacrificing family time, (b) students' extenuating circumstances, and (c) cancer.

Research Question Three: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Ximena described her job trajectory to the high school principal role. I outlined Ximena's trajectory into three emergent themes: (a) job path (b) mentorship, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals.

Job Path

Before graduating from Bowling Green University, Ximena secured a teaching position as a first-grade teacher in Fremont, Ohio. Initially, Ximena was told that she would experience difficulties in finding a teaching job in Ohio, but her bilingual skills were in high demand. Ximena described her interview experience.

They kept telling me I was going to struggle to find a job because Ohio was very conservative at the time. I think what got me my first job, even before I graduated was when I went in for an interview, and the lady asked me, "Are you fluent in Spanish?" And I said, "I'm very fluent." And she says, "Well, you got the job." She says, "We need somebody. We have kids that are Mexican-American. We sometimes have a problem conversing with parents and having meetings." So, I think that's the reason I was hired, so I worked one year in Fremont, Ohio. I was a first-grade teacher. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Ximena taught for one year. However, the Ohio winters were so harsh that Ximena reconsidered moving back to south Texas, specifically the Rio Grande Valley. She applied for a bilingual teaching position in a school district within the Rio Grande Valley, and she was hired immediately to work with kindergarten students. Ximena was employed as a bilingual teacher for 12 years serving students in pre-kinder, kindergarten, and first grade placements. Next, Ximena worked as an instructional facilitator for five years, and she finally became head principal of an elementary school. Ximena led as principal at the elementary level for 10 years. She moved on to be the head principal of

the campus where she is currently employed, an early college high school for pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers.

Moreover, Ximena oversees both the early child program and the high school program. She gave an example of a typical day at the early college high school for pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers.

I'm about being where the students are. I don't like to be behind a desk. As a matter of fact, I only use my office if I have to meet with a parent or a teacher. And it's very rare. I like for my assistant principal and myself to be out there. With the early child program, my AP [assistant principal] is mostly in the baby education area. I tend to run the high school. And sometimes we switch just to get a variety, but I like to be in the classrooms. I'm at work by 6:30 am every morning, 6:30 am to 8:00 pm. I do a lot of my emails. I'm on campus from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. After 4:00 pm, I start my other work, like my emails, and I do things that I have to turn in. But a lot of my work is in the classrooms. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Ximena feels that she has found the right fit at the high school campus. She plans to stay in her principal role for another five years before retirement. Ximena reflected on her job path and leadership experiences at the elementary and high school campus.

I really do feel that God has placed us in this position, and I tell my husband we can talk about retirement in a couple of years. My kids are grown up now, and I just have my younger niece that will finish college. And I tell my husband, I thought we were going to work until the kids finished college. And he's like,

"Well, let's go another five more years." Okay. Then I'll stay hopefully here another five more years. But even if I were to move, I think my heart will always have a special place for [name of campus]. I love my elementary years; that goes without saying. But, high school, I think, is really where you really leave a mark. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Ximena concluded that of her leadership experiences from both the elementary and the high school, the high school is where she made the largest impact.

Mentorship

As an educator at the elementary level, Ximena was inspired by her Latina principal to pursue a career in educational leadership. This principal's family had been involved with *La Raza Unida*, a political party established in the 1970s, advocating for economic, social and political issues for Mexican-Americans in south Texas (Acosta, 2021). Additionally, Ximena admired her mentor's work ethic and determination.

Ximena shared examples of her work ethic.

And I love the way she worked. She got there at 6:30 in the morning, and she would be the last one to leave. And I just admired her work ethic. And I think I learned a lot from her. She actually shaped who I am, and I've always told her that. . .She inspired me, as a woman because all her sisters were either: one was a doctor, one was a principal, and she was a principal. So, all her sisters were very highly educated Latina women (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Ximena further mentioned that she admired the determination her mentor exhibited. She commented how she identified with her mentor's determination mindset.

One of the things I admired about her is that she never took no for an answer, you know? So, I think that's kind of like me too. I don't like to hear the word no. I don't like to hear the words, "You can't do this." Because that will just make me more determined to do things that I normally would think can't be done; they can be done. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Through the mentorship from the Latina female principal, Ximena gained insight into the principalship.

In addition to receiving mentoring, Ximena believes in sharing her knowledge and experiences by mentoring others on her campus. Some of her mentees have been promoted to leadership positions. Ximena pointed out that the stigma towards Latinas in leadership positions has changed. By helping others find their niche, she does her part to promote Latinas in leadership.

Wonderful teachers must leave me to positions like science director, AP positions. And I tell them, "you're out there representing me, so please do a good job." And if you ever feel that that's not the place for you, you tell your supervisor, I'm ready to move on. Because I don't think we should be in a position where we feel stuck and we just don't know where else to go. And I really think that as Latina women, we're very fortunate that the stigma of us being in high positions has really changed. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Advice for Aspiring Latina Principals

Considering Ximena's personal and professional journey, she shared some knowledge for aspiring Latina principals regarding passion, commitment, and empowerment. First, she noted that one should have passion to serve students.

I think you have to enjoy what you're doing. I've had many experiences. But I've seen people that have hidden agendas, who really don't care except being at the top. I've had staff members who will say, you're not like any other principal. Principals would not even open the door to us. . . And with me, I have a very open-door policy. I believe in transparency. I do believe in having an open-door policy with my staff. I do tell my staff; I don't want you to be afraid of ever disagreeing with me. I have to learn as well. And I'm not perfect. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Hence, Ximena noted that she is not perfect, models transparency, and encourages staff to not fear disagreeing with her, as she is continuously learning as well. Second, Ximena exhibited a commitment to her job, despite a pandemic. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were mandated to close for a certain time period until further notice from the state government.

When the pandemic was happening, that was my biggest regret that I was getting paid, and I wasn't seeing my students. It was the biggest hurdle for me to get over. . . I did sneak into my school. My supervisor kept telling me, I know you're at school, and I'd be like, "No, I'm not." And she'd be like, "Yes, you are, because you called me from the school phone." And I go, "Darn it!" And she's like,

busted. But I just couldn't shake that. I couldn't, I felt an obligation, and I think that's one of my biggest strengths is that I'm a very reliable, dependable, and committed person. I think I've given [school district] PSJA my, my greatest years. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

Thus, Ximena struggled with not being able to see her students, and she felt an obligation to continue her work. Third, Ximena created leadership capacity among her staff through delegating, guiding, and modeling.

And I think one of the qualities of this position was that I needed to be a delegator. That was hard for me because I've always been always in the middle of everything, but I've allowed my staff. I built a lot of capacity with them to become the ones who run the show, and I sit back and I watch and I guide and I model, and I take the recommendations very seriously. And I think that's been one of the reasons we're very successful. (Principal 7 Ximena, personal communication, June 22, 2020)

In summary, Ximena empowered others by building leadership capacity on her campus. As outlined above, Ximena described her job trajectory to the high school principal role through three emergent themes: (a) job path, (b) mentorship, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina principals.

Researcher's Reflection

My personal reflections are italicized to convey my perceptions about the interview data collected. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems.

Throughout Ximena's interview, I noted examples of resilience and overcoming hardships. I would write informal scratch notes to help me remember the main points of the interview. However, when Ximena divulged about receiving radiation therapy for cancer and showing up on time for cafeteria duty, I stopped writing and just listened. No need to jot down notes. I was not going to forget this part of the interview. Out of the seven principal cases, Ximena was the only principal who spoke about her close encounter with death. She further elaborated on her husband's cancer diagnosis.

Moreover, Ximena described her childhood experiences of translating for her parents. As the daughter of a Mexican immigrant, I personally connected with this experience. As a five-year-old, I recalled translating for a bank teller, doctor's orders, and grocery store cashiers. I had not yet discovered words such as deposit and withdraw. I only knew how to write my name. My mother was depending on me to stretch my vocabulary in both English and Spanish in everyday life while my father was at work. I recall telling the bank teller, "My mom says she needs some money right now (withdraw)." I remember the nurse staring at me nervously as I explained to my mom how to take her medicine in Spanish. One mistake in translating prescription medication could have serious consequences. After conducting research about children who translate for parents, I learned that I was acting as a language broker.

Latino Critical Race Theory

Ximena's life journey was analyzed through Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). As previously mentioned in Chapter II of this study, LatCrit scholars study the intersectionalities of oppression that impact Latinos, such as race, gender, language, nativism, and class. Through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Ximena's interview: migrant experiences and language brokering.

Migrant Experiences

Ximena described her family background as a child of migrant workers. At the age of three, she started migrating to Ohio with her parents and would continue to migrate to Ohio every year for 17 years. Carlson (1976) studied the Mexican-American migrant labor and the agricultural geography of northwestern Ohio after World War II. At the time Ohio specialized in the cultivation of the following crops: sugar beets, tomatoes, cucumbers, and pickles. Carlson (1976) stated Mexican-American families recruited from south Texas counties such as Hidalgo, Cameron, Webb, and Bexar migrated to Ohio in the spring and early summer to help growers in planting sugar beets and transplanting tomatoes.

However, Mexican-American migrant workers were a disenfranchised group. Segalman (1968) argued migrant seasonal workers were marginalized despite established government aid programs due to their mobility and social distance from other populations and communities. Migrant workers were considered "America's forgotten people and their children as the most educationally deprived group of children in our nation" (Haney, 1963, p. 1). Haney (1963) further elaborated that migrant children

entered school late, progressed slowly in academics, dropped out of school prematurely, and resulted in high illiteracy. Howell et al. (1971) reported 52% of 257 of children were not academically on track or lacked progress within one grade level normally expected for their age. Howell et al. (1971) noted factors such as, migrant families moving from state to state, frequent changes in schools, and emphasis on working in the fields during some parts of the year as challenges for students to remain focused on academics.

Further, Barger and Reza (1983) concurred Mexican-American migrant workers were one of the most disadvantaged groups as they experienced inadequate housing, education, and health conditions. Regarding health conditions, the migrant workers reported not seeing a doctor in 26.3 months. With respect to education and income, the 38 male migrant workers interviewed in Barger and Reza's (1983) study averaged 6.8 years of education experience and earned an average income of \$6,447 per year, below poverty standards. Although most young children were spared field work, Barger and Reza (1983) estimated 3,000 children working in the tomato crops.

In Ximena's case, she recalled receiving some childhood education at the migrant camp as an option to child labor in the fields. During this time period, Ohio had approximately nine Migrant Head Start offices serving preschoolers and several small-scale programs for school-age children (Morrisey, 1999). Morrisey (1999) explained that migrant educational programs were intended for older children to catch up on lost school time, and teenagers would attend educational programs the evenings after working in the fields all day. He noted these educational programs were relatively limited in scope.

Hence, Mexican-American migrant children were underserved by the U.S. education system.

Language Brokering

Ximena and her siblings are bilingual. As a child, she recalled helping her mother write letters to her grandmother in Spanish by applying her phonetic skills. Ximena also recounted helping her father with job applications. Specifically, she carried a dictionary with her when translating for her parents. As she would use the dictionary to translate, she would learn more Spanish and English vocabulary. Ximena shared these English and Spanish translation experiences bolstered her bilingual proficiency.

Like other children of migrant parents, Ximena served as a cultural and a language broker, assisting her parents with the family's interpreting needs. Researchers (Harris & Sherwood, 1978; Salinas et al., 2008; Sim et al., 2018; & Tse, 1995) concurred the phenomenon of bilingual children serving as cultural and language brokers for their immigrant parents. Examples of this phenomenon include bilingual children completing adult tasks, such as governmental forms, bank statements, and business correspondence. Morales and Hanson (2005) conducted a literature review on the phenomenon of language brokering and discovered that research on this phenomenon was scarce as the first journal articles on this topic did not emerge until the mid-1990s. Morales and Hanson concluded the following findings: (a) the majority of immigrant children perform language brokering, (b) children may start language brokering as young as 8 years of age, (c) children practice brokering in a variety of settings, such as school, home, and community, and (d) typical documents translated by children language

brokers include notes and letters from school, bank/credit card statements, immigration forms, and job applications. Hence, Ximena's recollection of carrying around a bilingual dictionary and helping her father with job applications is an example of a Latina language broker.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented Ximena's life journey, the seventh of seven case study chapters of Texas high school Latina principals interviewed regarding life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

In the first section of this case study chapter, I provided the community context and school demographics. In the second section, I presented the interview analysis to address the research questions in this study. The results from the first research question revealed that Ximena's leadership experiences were shaped by her (a) family, (b) education, and (c) bilingualism. In response to the second research question, Ximena described challenges throughout her journey to the high school principal role. These challenges were grouped into three prevalent themes: (a) sacrifice of family time, (b) students' extenuating circumstances and (c) cancer. The results of the third research question address Ximena's job trajectory to the high school principal role. I outlined Ximena's trajectory through her (a) job path, (b) mentorship, and (c) advice for aspiring Latina

principals. Finally, through the application of the LatCrit lens, two themes emerged in Ximena's interview: migrant experiences and language brokering.

In the next chapter, I provide a cross case analysis with respect to the lived experiences of the seven Texas high school Latina principals. I also demonstrate how the seven Texas high school Latina principals' interview responses align with the dimensionalities in LatCrit and provide insight on the Texas high school Latina experience in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

CHAPTER XII

CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

Introduction

In this chapter, I incorporate both research phases of this study to conduct a cross-case analysis, a thematic analysis across the cases (Creswell, 1998; Schwandt, 2007). In the first phase of the study 16 Texas Latina high school principals completed the online open-ended questionnaire, and in the second phase of the study, seven principals participated in virtual, individual semi-structured interviews. I presented the cross-case analysis in two parts. In the first part, I presented the cross-case analysis with respect to the principals' life experiences. In the second part, I outlined a cross-case analysis through the Latino Critical Race Theory lens.

Part I: Cross-Case Analysis Across Principals' Life Experiences

Through the analysis of the online questionnaire responses and the virtual semi-structured interviews, I found similar themes connecting the seven high school Latina principals' experiences across cases: dual credit campuses, Spanish proficiency, challenges to the high school principal role, and support of principal mentors.

Dual Credit Campuses

All seven Texas high school Latina principals lead campuses in partnership with an institution of higher education. These partnerships provide students opportunities to earn both a high school diploma and college credits concurrently. For instance, five of the seven Latina high school principals lead a Texas Educational Agency (TEA) designated Early College High School (ECHS). Sofia, Isabella, Valentina, Emma, and

Ximena are head principals of ECHS campuses, and these campuses are in population areas ranging from growing metropolitan to major urban areas across Texas.

Furthermore, ECHS campuses aim to serve high school students who are at risk of dropping out of school and who might not otherwise go to college (TEA, 2020d). Upon high school graduation, students could earn an associate degree or up to 60 college credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. Student populations include first generation prospective college students, economically challenged students, English learners, teenage mothers, and students with disabilities. Specifically, Ximena's campus serves expectant mothers and teenage mothers exclusively. Per TEA (2020d), all ECHS admissions processes employ either an open-access lottery system, considering applications regardless of background or academic performance, or a weighted lottery, prioritizing preference to at-risk students.

Additionally, Luciana and Martina lead campuses engaged in partnerships with institutions of higher education and technology industries to equip their students for medical and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. For example, Luciana's campus partnered with the local city hospital and university system to offer students workplace skills, nurse assistant and medical assistant certifications, and an associate of science degree, leading to a career as a registered nurse. Luciana's school district facilitates a lottery application system, signifying that students can apply regardless of their academic abilities or where they reside within the county. Also, Martina's campus partnered with Project Lead the Way, Inc., a national pre-engineering program where students choose among several engineering pathways: electronics,

manufacturing, aerospace, and civil & architecture engineering. Martina's students are accepted on a first-come, first served basis. Hence, all seven Texas high school Latina principals lead dual credit campuses serving Latino/a students who are at risk of dropping out of school and face barriers to attending college.

Spanish Proficiency

All Texas high school Latina principals are bilingual with varying Spanish speaking proficiencies. For instance, Sofia was born in the U.S. but initiated her schooling in Mexico. Sofia moved back to the U.S. upon completion of the third grade. Isabella was born in Mexico and moved to the U.S. at the age of 10. Thus, English is a second language for both Sofia and Isabella. Valentina shared that her Spanish is not perfect and earned a college minor in Spanish. Both Emma and Martina are bilingual and use their Spanish speaking skills to build relationships with immigrant families. Luciana expressed that she did not speak perfect Spanish and earned a master's degree in bilingual education. Ximena is highly proficient in speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish. Since childhood, she would write letters to her grandmother in Spanish translate English to Spanish for her parents.

Challenges to the High School Principal Role

Each Latina high school principal encountered a challenge or struggle in their path to the high school principal role. Sofia experienced challenges balancing her assistant principal and high school extracurricular duties. She also encountered gender and cultural stereotypes in the workplace. Isabella described how the high school principal role impacted her marriage. She faced false notions about how her job transfer

to the principalship. Emma navigated the politics in her district and described sacrificing family time to complete her high school principal duties. Martina operated within two leadership roles of assistant principal and interim principal on her journey to the high school principalship. Luciana confronted challenges in balancing her principal role and the recent adoption of her teenage daughter. Ximena contended with sacrificing family time when she studied for her master's degree in educational administration. Ximena also combated cancer in her head principal role.

Support of Principal Mentors

Each Latina high school principal was inspired by a mentor principal to pursue a career in leadership and navigate the role of the principalship. For example, Sofia's female teacher peer was selected to be a principal and encouraged Sofia to apply for a math coordinator position, launching Sofia into a leadership role. Isabella was inspired to be an educational leader by two Latino principals, one male and one female. At times she consults with a male Latino superintendent from her previous school district regarding her leadership decisions. Valentina's mentor was an African American male principal who was also her high school principal when she was a high school student. She was also mentored by an African American female academic dean. Both mentors helped her navigate her first leadership role in a predominantly White workplace. Emma's Latino head principal taught her the importance of visibility and leading by modeling for others. Martina's Latino male principal unveiled Martina's leadership potential and her school district's Latina female superintendent served as a role model. Luciana credited a female principal and a male principal for inspiring her to pursue a

career in educational leadership. Luciana also engaged in a network of Latino leaders to guide her through her role as a principal. Ximena was inspired to by her Latina head principal to pursue a career in educational leadership. She admired her mentor's work ethic and advocacy of economic, social, and political issues impacting Mexican-Americans in south Texas during the 1970s. Thus, I found similar themes connecting the seven Texas high school Latina principals across the online questionnaire responses and the virtual semi-structured interviews. Each Latina principal had the following themes in common: dual credit campuses, Spanish proficiency, challenges to the high school principal role, and support of principal mentors.

Part II: Latino Critical Race Theory Cross-Case Analysis

As previously mentioned in Chapter II of this study, LatCrit scholars study the intersectionalities of oppression that impact Latinos, such as race, gender, language, nativism, and class. In consideration of the seven Texas high school Latina principals across cases, I found two themes through the application of the Latino Critical Race Theory lens: disenfranchised educational experiences and gender and cultural expectations.

Disenfranchised Educational Experiences

Five of the seven Latina high school principals (Sofia, Isabella, Valentina, Luciana, and Ximena) narrated marginalized educational experiences related to their Latino culture and language. For instance, Sofia stated that bilingual education programs were non-existent when she transferred to the U.S. after completing first, second, and third grade in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Consequently, she repeated first, second, and third

grade because the principal wanted her to learn English. Sofia overcame this educational adversity and graduated high school as a junior. She was the first in her family to move away from her south Texas hometown to attend a four-year university in a major urban city.

Throughout high school, Isabella was ostracized and ridiculed for her Spanish accent as an English learner. Consequently, Isabella chose not to teach Spanish to her children to prevent her children from enduring a painful educational experience. Later, Isabella expressed regret in not teaching her children to speak Spanish fluently. As a result, Isabella's children do speak some Spanish but experience a language communication gap with Isabella's father. Thus, the accent stereotyping and Latinos choosing to deny their children an opportunity to learn Spanish out of fear of them going through the same trauma is an example of an oppressive phenomenon impacting the Latino culture.

In addition, Valentina graduated top ten percent of her class but was excluded from National Honor Society and denied advocacy to a four-year educational institution. In retrospect, Valentina learned that she could have attended Texas A&M University with financial aid as a top ten percent graduate. Instead, Valentina paid full tuition and fees to attend the local community college before transferring to Texas A&M University. Granted, Valentina's parents were Texas high school graduates and Valentina's mother was an educator, Valentina was deprived of school guidance in maximizing her access to higher educational opportunities.

Luciana described the physical abuse her parents suffered for speaking Spanish in school. Luciana's parents were traumatized by their discriminatory experiences that they vowed not to teach their Spanish in fear of their children experiencing the same trauma. Conversely, Luciana, a native Texan, described how others assumed she was an immigrant and questioned her for not speaking perfect Spanish. In turn, Luciana dedicated her career to be an advocate of English learners (ELs) and immigrant families. Luciana noted she felt a personal satisfaction in supporting these students and families as she did not have this type of support when she was a student in school.

Ximena began migrating to Ohio at the age of three and migrated for 17 years. Scholars (Haney, 1963; Howell et al., 1971) considered Mexican-American migrant workers and their children part of a disenfranchised group. In Ximena's case, she recalled receiving some childhood education at the migrant camp as an option to child labor in the fields. However, historians (Seagalman, 1968; Morrissey, 1999) noted these programs were limited in scope, declaring Mexican-American migrant children were underserved by the U.S. education system.

Gender and Cultural Expectations

Three of the seven Latina high school principals (Sofia, Isabella, and Emma) defied Latino cultural expectations with respect to the dichotomy of *marianismo/machismo*. As previously stated in Chapter II of this study, the term *marianismo* was introduced by Evelyn Stevens (1973) to describe women's subordinate position in Latin American society and to bring attention to the glorified gender role expectations of women (Castillo, et al., 2010; Ertl et al., 2019; Komsmiki, 2017;

Mendieta, 2016). The ideology of *machismo* is related to the hypermasculinity in the form of stereotypical behavior aimed at suppressing women, such as perpetuating cultural bias towards women across national boundaries (Arrizón, 2020; Cowan, 2017; Kawabe, 2020).

For example, Sofia encountered experiences of resistance in the workplace, and she revealed this resistance came from older Latino men. As previously mentioned, Sofia recounted an incident where a Latino male custodial worker was insubordinate to her directive and replied that he would follow through with her directive at his discretion. Sofia responded with an administrative formal reprimand. This interaction was an example of a power struggle where Sofia navigated the expectations of both her principal leadership role and *marianismo*, her cultural gender role. As the male Latino custodian asserted his *machismo*, Sofia flexed her title and authority as a principal to affirm her place in educational leadership.

Additionally, Isabella confronted her cultural role expectations in the relationship with her father and her husband. Isabella described her family dynamic as her father being the breadwinner of the family. She clashed with her father's expectations for her to depend on a man. When Isabella was promoted as a principal to the high school, she earned over \$100,000 and exceeded her husband's salary. Consequently, Isabella being the breadwinner disrupted the gender role dynamic in her marriage. In turn, this disruption became one of the contributing factors in Isabella's divorce.

Finally, Emma's family dynamic is a contrast to the *marianismo* and *machismo* dichotomy. Emma's husband is a stay-at-home dad, and Emma is the breadwinner of the

family. Thus, Emma breaks the gender role expectations of Latina women by exceeding her husband's earnings. Accordingly, Emma's husband breaks the gender role expectations of Latino men by supporting Emma in her career advancement. Hence, Emma's gender role is non-traditional within the expectations of the Latino culture, but she and her husband function in a dynamic that works for their family. In summary, LatCrit scholars analyze the dimensionalities of oppression that impact Latinos, such as race, gender, language, nativism, and class. With respect to the seven Texas high school Latina principals across cases, I found two themes through the application of the Latino critical race theory lens: disenfranchised educational experiences and cultural expectations.

Researcher's Reflection

My personal reflections are italicized to convey my perceptions about the interview data collected. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems.

In conducting a cross-case analysis, I observed the principals' responses aligned with my literature critique. Topics such as identity, gender stereotypes, marianismo/machismo, and support from mentors surfaced as themes throughout the interviews. In fact, some of the gender stereotypes that these principals combatted were some of the same stereotypes I confronted in my experience as a high school assistant principal. I have also experienced resistance from males in my leadership role.

Discussion

In this phenomenological case study, I analyzed the lived experiences and perspectives of seven Texas high school Latina principals. I observed common characteristics among the seven principals. All seven principals identified as Mexican American and stated that they spoke both English and Spanish. Five of the seven principals reside in south Texas, one is in central Texas, and one is in east Texas. Five of the seven principals varied from 40 to 49 years in age and two of the seven principals ranged from 50-59 years in age.

In addition, I observed common school characteristics among the seven campuses. All seven campuses were comprised of 70% or more Latino students, and all seven campuses served at least 40% or more economically challenged students. All seven high school Latinas served on campuses that maintained partnerships with institutions of higher learning, providing at-risk students an opportunity to earn both

high school credit and college credit. Luciana's campus engaged in partnerships with both institutions of higher learning and technology industries to equip their students for medical and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Martina's campus partnered with Project Lead the Way, Inc., a national pre-engineering program where students choose among several engineering pathways: electronics, manufacturing, aerospace, and civil & architecture engineering.

Moreover, I expected to find common patterns among the seven Texas high school Latina principals with respect to campus size, years of principal experience, and job trajectory to the principalship. In my analysis, I did not observe any common trends across the seven cases. For instance, the seven campuses ranged in student population counts from 96 (Ximena's campus) to 1,411 (Isabella's campus). The seven principals' years of teaching experience fluctuated from 3 to 22 years, and the years of principal experience stretched from 1 to 20 years. Finally, each of the principals' career paths to the principalship was unique with respect to time frame and school placement (elementary, middle/jr. high, high school).

Summary

In this chapter, I combined both research phases of this study to conduct a cross-case analysis, a thematic analysis across the cases (Creswell, 1998; Schwandt, 2007). In the first phase of the study, 16 Texas Latina high school principals completed the online open-ended questionnaire, and the research findings of the open-ended questionnaire were stated in Chapter IV. In the second phase of the study, seven principals participated in virtual, individual semi-structured interviews. Chapters V-XI represented the seven

Texas Latina high school principal interview findings with each principal case constituting a respective chapter. Finally, this chapter entailed a cross-case analysis of the findings from both the online questionnaire and the virtual semi-structured interviews of the lived experiences of Texas Latina high school principals. I outlined the cross-case analysis in two parts. In the first part, I demonstrated a cross-case analysis with respect to the principals' life experiences. In the second part, I presented a cross-case analysis through the Latino Critical Race Theory lens.

In the next chapter, I provide a summary of the study and summary of the findings. I discuss implications for Texas high school Latina principals, offer recommendations for further research and impart concluding thoughts.

CHAPTER XIII

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Introduction

In this phenomenological case study, I analyzed the leadership perspectives of 16 Texas Latina high school principals as the first phase of this project. In the second phase, I used a phenomenological approach to examine the life experiences of seven Texas Latina high school principals in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. I applied Latino/a critical race theory (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Irizarry, 2012; Yosso, 2006) to obtain insight into the Latina experience. In this chapter, I summarize my study, discuss the findings, present implications, make recommendations for further research, and impart concluding thoughts.

Summary of the Study

In Chapter I, I reviewed the historical context surrounding the struggle for women's equality. Historical milestones such as, the Nineteenth Amendment confirming women the right to vote, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the formation of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission from Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, have unveiled lack of female representation in leadership across U.S. workforce sectors. I further exhibited labor force demographics from the 2017-2018 National Teacher and Principal

Survey and indicated U.S. women have traditionally dominated the elementary school principal role, while men dominated the secondary school and high school role.

Additionally, I utilized Texas Education Agency (TEA) principal gender counts to confirm Texas female principals were disproportionately concentrated at the elementary school level while men surpassed women in the role of Texas high school principal.

Finally, I revealed the disparity of Texas high school Latina principal counts in comparison to the state total Latino student population.

Moreover, I presented the purpose, problem and significance of this phenomenological case study. I analyzed the personal leadership perspectives of 16 Texas Latina high school principals as the first phase of this project. In the second phase, I utilized a phenomenological approach to examine the life experiences seven Texas Latina high school principals in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences.

Knowledge of the Latina perspective is obtained through Latino/a critical race theory (LatCrit) (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Irizarry, 2012; Yosso, 2006). The application of the Latino/a critical race theory (LatCrit) lens served to obtain insight into a specific, marginalized population. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?

2. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?
3. How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Only Texas public high school Latina (self-identified) principals who volunteered were included in this study. These high school Latina principals were employed across rural and urban geographical areas across Texas. The data gathered from the participant questionnaires and interviews provided cultural and professional insight with respect to the Latina experience. My positionality as a former Latina high school administrator guided me to accurately interpret the perceptions of the participants in this study. I incorporated Latino critical race theory to further provide insight and understanding of the Latina experience.

In Chapter II, I conducted a meta-synthesis literature critique in relation to the experiences of Latina principals with respect to identity, barriers throughout their professional journeys, and mentorship. The purpose of the meta-synthesis literature critique is to interpret integrated findings with depth rather than interpreting the findings from individual studies (Bondas & Hall, 2007; Walsh & Downe, 2005). I synthesized the common findings and themes across the studies included in the scope of the literature critique. Within these studies, Latinas faced three common challenges in obtaining leadership positions: (a) balancing their identity, (b) dealing with typecasting and stereotypes, and (c) lack of mentorship programs. I further explained how the application of the Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) lens to contextualized the experiences of

Texas high school Latina principals and to propel these principals to act for social change in the field of educational leadership.

In Chapter III, I described my research methods approach as a phenomenological case study. The purpose of phenomenology is to discover the essence of the participants' lived experience and how they see the world. Through a case study approach, I began my search for Texas high school Latina principals with a wide scope across the state then moved towards specific geographical locations. This phenomenological case study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, I analyzed the perspectives of 16 Texas Latina high school principals through an open-ended questionnaire validated by 22 junior high Latina principals. In the second phase of the study, I examined the lived experiences of seven Texas high school Latina principals through semi-structured virtual interviews.

Furthermore, I employed van Manen's (1990) data analysis approach to unveil meaning from text. I examined the open-ended questionnaires and virtual semi-structured interview responses and grouped emerging descriptions into themes. My data analysis also included a reflective component to keep record of my evolving analysis and methods. I also stated the techniques I utilized to ensure researcher trustworthiness and reliability, such as member checking, or confirming the accuracy of the interview data with the interview participants.

Summary of the Findings

The findings in this study were presented across Chapters IV through XII. The findings for the first phase of this study were discussed in Chapter IV. The first phase

consisted of an open-ended questionnaire sent to 114 Texas Latina high school principals through the Qualtrics online survey platform. The questionnaire consists of two sections: (a) open-ended questions regarding the leadership perspectives of Texas high school Latina principals and (b) demographic and background survey questions. An open-ended questionnaire was sent to 84 Texas Latina high school principals, and I received 16 questionnaire responses ranging from the time period of November 10, 2019 to March 6, 2020.

Second, the virtual semi-structured interview findings were addressed in Chapters V-XI, with each chapter representing a respective case study. The second phase of this study entails the virtual interview responses from seven Texas high school Latina principals. My selection criteria for a purposeful sample for the seven principals was the following: (a) one from each geographic location as noted in Chapter III (Figure 5) and (b) three years of principal leadership experience. In the event no principals volunteered to participate in the interviews in a specific geographic region, I moved to the adjacent region to determine a participant. As a result of the selection criteria process, seven Texas high school Latina principals volunteered to be interviewed virtually. Individual virtual semi-structured interviews were conducted from May 1, 2020 through June 22, 2020.

Third, the cross-case analysis was demonstrated in Chapter XII. I incorporated both research phases of this study to conduct a cross-case analysis, a thematic analysis across the cases (Creswell, 1998; Schwandt, 2007). In the first phase of the study 16 Texas Latina high school principals completed the online open-ended questionnaire, and in the

second phase of the study, seven principals participated in virtual, individual semi-structured interviews. I presented the cross-case analysis in two parts. In the first part, I presented the cross-case analysis with respect to the principals' life experiences. In the second part, I outlined a cross-case analysis through the Latino Critical Race Theory lens (LatCrit).

Summary of Open-Ended Online Questionnaire Findings

Chapter IV, I examined the leadership perspectives of 16 Texas high school Latina principals through an open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire is made up of two sections: (a) open-ended questions regarding the leadership perspectives of Texas high school Latina principals and (b) demographic and background survey questions. Of the 16 Texas high school Latina principals who participated in the open-ended questionnaire, 14 identified as Mexican-American and listed the United States as their country of origin and two listed Mexico as their country of origin. All 16 principals spoke both English and Spanish, and over half were within the age range of 50-59 years. Holistically, the principals averaged approximately nine years of teacher experience, and they averaged eight years of principal experience.

In addition to the principals' demographic make-up, the 16 Texas high school Latina principals provided insight into their leadership perspectives. First, they described how their Latina identity had shaped their leadership experience through their understanding of the Latino culture and community and their work ethic instilled by their background experiences. One principal made a noteworthy response in stating she had never thought about how her leadership experience was shaped by her Latina identity.

Second, these Latina principals provided examples such as, children and marital circumstances, as challenges in balancing their professional and personal lives. As the principals mentioned above described their marital status and children. One principal voiced that she is a doctoral student and revealed how being a student and a principal can be a challenge. Third, the Latina principals verbalized their perceptions on why they thought they were chosen to lead their respective high school campuses. They accredited their record of proven leadership and professional experiences as factors in the selection of their principal roles. Alternatively, three of the 16 Latina principals perceived they were chosen to lead their campus because they demonstrated a passion for working with students. Fourth, the Latina principals articulated personal and professional challenges on their journey to the high school principal role. Remarkably, one principal shared that she did not encounter any professional or personal challenges on her journey to the principalship, but acknowledged a challenge in the state accountability system. She elaborated that the state accountability system was a great disservice to students and teaching staff. Fifth, the Latina principals identified mentor principals/administrators and family members as individuals who impacted their decision to become a high school principal. On the other hand, one principal expressed her path to leadership was illuminated by great teachers and a greater purpose. Sixth, the Latina principals described the individuals who served as professional mentors. They identified mentor principals and superintendents who helped them achieve their professional goals. Alternatively, two principals testified that their family helped them achieve their professional goals. Seventh, the Latina principals shared their future goals. Examples

included principals' plans to remain on campus and achieve campus-based goals and other principals focused on securing central office positions, such as the superintendency. Two noteworthy aspirations were to pursue a Ph.D. degree and work as a professor. Finally, the principals advised aspiring principals to be centered in their leadership identity and learn as many aspects of the principalship as possible.

Summary of Virtual Semi-structured Interview Findings

Chapters V-XI encompassed the case studies of seven Texas high school Latina principals who provided insight into their life experiences in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. Each chapter contained three sections. In the first section, I provided the community context and school demographics. In the second section, I presented the interview analysis through the Latina principal's life journey to address the research questions in the study. In the third section, I examined the interview responses through the Latino/a Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens.

In Chapter V, I presented the interview analysis of Sofia, a south Texas high school Latina principal. Sofia's leadership experiences were shaped by her educational experiences, family, and work ethic. Sofia described challenges on her path to the principalship such as, work and personal life balance, stereotypes, and she shared advice for aspiring Latina principals. She outlined her professional trajectory by detailing her teacher experiences, leadership placements, and mentorship experiences. Through the

application of the LatCrit lens, language and identity were themes that provided knowledge into the Latina experience.

In Chapter VI, I analyzed the interview responses of Isabella, a south Texas high school Latina principal. Isabella's leadership experiences were molded by her background experiences with language adversity, education, and family cultural expectations. Isabella elaborated on the challenges to the principalship through examples of work and personal life balance, stereotypes, and advice for aspiring Latina principals. She detailed her job trajectory to the high school principal role by incorporating teacher, principal, and mentorship experiences. I employed the LatCrit perspective to gain insight into the language and identity themes relevant to the Latina experience.

In Chapter VII, I studied the interview responses of Valentina, an east Texas high school Latina principal. Valentina's leadership experiences were formed by her family background, educational experiences, and work ethic. Valentina encountered challenges to the high school principal role through a description of her leadership experiences, struggles with balancing work and personal life, and stereotypes. She explained her job path with milestones in her career trajectory, mentorship experiences, and imparted advice for aspiring Latina principals. Through the application of the LatCrit lens, Valentina's educational experiences and encounters with stereotypes were analyzed to provide knowledge into her life journey as a Latina high school principal.

In Chapter VIII, I presented the interview analysis of Emma, a south Texas high school Latina principal. Emma's leadership experiences were shaped by her background, bilingual/bicultural identity, and work ethic. Emma confronted challenges on her journey

to the high school principal role. Examples of these challenges included politics, work and personal life balance, and high school job duties. She outlined her job path by her job trajectory, mentorship experiences, and shared advice for aspiring Latina principals. Through the LatCrit lens, I was able to look further into Emma's Latina identity and understand her experiences in helping her students navigate immigration issues along the U.S./Mexico border.

In Chapter IX, I provided an interview analysis of Martina, a south Texas high school Latina principal. Martina perceived her family and educational background and work ethic as experiences shaping her leadership. Martina explained the challenges to the high school principal role with examples of experiences as interim head principal, leadership transitions, and stereotypical encounters. She described her job trajectory, mentors who supported her professional growth, and offered advice for aspiring Latina principals. The application of the LatCrit perspective uncovered Martina's experiences as a female Latina principal and her published work as a scholar.

In Chapter X, I analyzed the interview responses of Luciana, a central Texas high school Latina principal. Luciana's leadership experiences were molded by her family and educational background and personal beliefs. Luciana expressed how balancing work and personal life, combatting stereotypes, and the work demands of a high school campus were struggles to the high school principal position. She outlined her job trajectory and discussed mentoring and networking experiences across her various leadership roles. Luciana's interview was studied with the LatCrit perspective, and her

experiences with the Spanish language and her advocacy for English learners provided insight into the Latina experience.

Finally, Chapter XI was the seventh of seven case study chapters illuminating the lived experiences of Ximena, a south Texas high school Latina principal. Ximena's leadership perspective is rooted in family, education, and bilingualism. She divulged struggles on the journey to the high school principal role by providing details about sacrificing family time, supporting students with extenuating circumstances, and her personal health battle with cancer. Ximena described her job path, mentorship experiences, and shared advice for aspiring Latina principals. I employed the LatCrit lens to further analyze Ximena's experiences as a migrant child and a language broker.

Summary of Cross-Case Analysis

In chapter XII, I incorporate both research phases of this study to conduct a cross-case analysis, a thematic analysis across the cases (Creswell, 1998; Schwandt, 2007). In the first phase of the study 16 Texas Latina high school principals completed the online open-ended questionnaire, and in the second phase of the study, seven principals participated in virtual, individual semi-structured interviews. I presented the cross-case analysis in two parts. In the first part, I presented the cross-case analysis with respect to the principals' life experiences. In the second part, I outlined a cross-case analysis through the Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens.

Through the analysis of the online questionnaire responses and the virtual semi-structured interviews, I found four similar themes connecting the seven high school Latina principals' life experiences across cases: (a) dual credit campuses, (b) Spanish

proficiency, (c) challenges to the high school principal role, and (d) support from principal mentors. First, all seven Texas high school Latina principals lead campuses in partnership with an institution of higher education, providing students an opportunity to earn both a high school diploma and college credit. Second, all Texas high school Latina principals indicated they were bilingual with varying Spanish speaking proficiencies. Third, each Latina high school principal encountered a challenge or struggle on their path to the high school principal role. Last, each Latina high school principal was inspired by a mentor principal to pursue a career in educational leadership.

Summary of Cross-Case Analysis Through Latino Critical Race Theory (Lat Crit)

With respect to examining all seven case studies under the LatCrit lens, the majority of the high school Latina principals endured injustices within the U.S. educational system. For instance, five of the seven Texas high school Latina principals narrated marginalized educational experiences related to their Latino culture and Spanish language. Further, three of the seven Texas high school Latina principals defied Latino cultural expectations regarding the dichotomy of *marianismo/machismo*. For example, Sofia found herself in a power struggle navigating the expectations of her principal role and cultural gender role of respecting elders. Isabella confronted her cultural role expectations in her relationship with her father and ex-husband concerning a woman depending on a man for financial stability. Emma described her role as the breadwinner and her husband as a stay-at-home dad, a contrast to the *marianismo and machismo* dichotomy.

Discussion

In this phenomenological study, I evaluated the perspectives of Texas high school Latina principals in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. The first phase of the research consisted of 16 Texas high school Latina principals responding through an online open-ended questionnaire. The second phase of the study consisted of seven virtual semi-structured interviews, with each interview response corresponding to the respective case study. The following discussion is a holistic view of the study outlined through the research questions and aligned with the Chapter II literature critique.

Research Question One: How do Texas high school Latina principals perceive the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal?

The descriptions of how principals perceived the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal were similar in the north central, central, and east regions of Texas. These principals perceived that their Latina identity influenced their role as a leader. One north central principal shared, “I feel that as a Latina woman I have had to work three times as hard to prove that I am a capable leader. I feel that the strong connection to my culture has given me a strong work ethic and inspires me to excel every day.” A central Texas principal stated, “My being Latina gives me a perspective of the many challenges that Latino students, specifically girls, deal with.” An east Texas principal replied, “In some ways, being a Latina administrator has provided me with

broader work opportunities. In my district, we have a high Hispanic population. My ability to communicate with the community and [understand] the culture has helped in creating networks of peers and community members as well.” In summary, the Latina principals from north central, central, and east regions of Texas attributed their Latina identity in being able to address issues and problems specific to the Latinos because they understood the Latino culture.

Moreover, the descriptions of how principals perceived the influence of their background in their role as a Latina female principal varied within the southern geographical region of Texas. Within the south Texas region, some principals perceived that their Latina identity provided them the opportunity to relate with issues impacting Latino students and build relationships with the Latino community that they served. Another principal commented, “Because of the area I serve, being Latina has allowed me to identify with my students and their families. My Hispanic roots have given me the experience to deal with some situations our students currently face.” One principal reflected, “As a Latina principal, I have found that I can relate to the school community that I serve. I feel that I have been able to build positive relationships with parents, teachers, and students because I can understand their issues.” In short, the Latina principals in south Texas attributed their Latina identity in being able to address issues and problems specific to the Latino culture because they understood the Latino experience.

Other principals within the same south Texas region did not perceive that their Latina identity shaped their leadership experiences. One principal explained, “The fact

that I am a Latina and a principal is really not a defining attribute for me. I was raised by hard working parents, and we were migrants that worked in the fields for many years. My parents' lack of education is what I feel they instilled in us to make sure the same did not happen to us." Another principal indicated, "I don't believe it has played much of a role. I believe most would say what defines me as a leader is my work ethic and my relationship with those I serve. I believe I am accepted and valued as a team member because I am trustworthy, transparent, and a team player. My words and actions go hand in hand, and I believe that's what shaped my leadership." One principal shared, "I have never thought about this before, and it may be because I work at a campus where 100% of my students and their parents are Hispanic. My community is also predominantly Hispanic, too. I have not had the opportunity to reflect on my being Latina and a high school principal." On the surface, most of the Latina principals identified with the Mexican-American culture, but they were not a homogenous group with respect to their perceptions on how their background experiences influenced their role as a Latina principal.

Thus, I found that the Latina background experiences across the geographical regions of Texas were diverse. The background experiences of these Latina principals also varied within the geographical region of south Texas. My research affirms Hernandez's (2005) concluding thoughts on the Latino experience. Hernandez stated, "Clearly, no single Latino experience defines the Latino condition in the United States. The strength in the Latino community is in its diversity in racial identity experiences and in its language" (Hernandez, 2005, p. 429). Considering my findings, the Texas high

school Latina identity cannot be pinpointed to an exact definition. The Texas high school Latina experience is as assorted as the Texas topography of mountains, hills, valleys, and plains.

Research Question Two: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their challenges, sacrifices, or struggles to the high school principal role?

In this study, Latina principals faced a challenge, sacrifice, or struggle in their path to the high school principal role. Collectively, these principals experienced challenges in balancing their professional and personal life across the vast regions of Texas: north central, central, east, and south. Wrushen and Sherman (2008) studied female principals from different ethnic backgrounds and investigated their family dynamics. Their findings revealed struggles to balance family and work. One north central Texas principal stated, "I work extremely hard to make sure all my students are taken care of, so much so that I have forgotten to do things for my own children. There have been times I have felt like a poor mom as I try to be a good leader." A central Texas principal shared, "I don't get breaks when I'm sitting here in my office, and I've got meetings back-to-back and then all of these crazy things are, you know, at the same time and we don't have that luxury. And so, the balance is really, really hard, it's hard, especially if you have a family." An east Texas principal commented, " This is the hardest. Trying to be a wife, mom, daughter, sister, aunt, and leader. . .Some days I run very low on fuel. Maybe with only a few hours of sleep." A south Texas principal revealed, " It is difficult in balancing our lives due to being mothers of children and then being mothers at work as well." Therefore, the findings in this study extend beyond the

geographic regions of Texas and bolster Morales's (2014) research confirming how Latina principals perceive their job as a difficult balance between being mothers, wives, and a principal.

Moreover, three of the principals in this study experienced an imbalance in their professional and personal lives that resulted in divorce. A common factor among these three principals was that they resided in south Texas. Ramalho et al. (2009) and Reyes (2015) found that Latina principals expressed conflict in dealing with their roles as females at home and their roles as a principal. The first south Texas principal endured stress in her marriage that resulted in a divorce. She recalled, "My ex-husband is also Hispanic and had a hard time with the demands of my job. I was not allowed to talk [about] work at home which I understood but at the same time I needed. For many reasons, my marriage ended and I am divorced ... I do believe my commitment to my job was a part of the problem." The second south Texas principal stated, "The amount of time dedicated to my work has taken its toll on my personal life. I am now divorced, but happier." The third south Texas principal indicated, "I'll be honest with you, though, the job did take a toll on my marriage. The time I spent at work, and not being home did take a toll on my marriage." Thus, the experiences of these three principals aligned with Santiago's (2009) research with respect to the Latino family relationships overlapping into the personal and professional realms of Latina principals.

Out of all the participants in my study, only one east Texas principal stated the exception to a disruption in her work and personal life balance. She explained, "I made a decision early on in my career to make the balance a priority and have not put myself in

a position or taken a position that would absorb all of my time." Hence, this east Texas principal is the only participant in my study who has not felt an imbalance with respect to her personal and professional life. Wrushen and Sherman (2008) asserted females lack role models who have proven successful in maintaining both realms of work and home. Considering the results of this study, the struggle of balancing the two realms has remained a challenge for Texas high school Latina principals to overcome.

Research Question Three: How do Texas high school Latina principals describe their job trajectory to the high school principalship?

Each Latina high school principal described the individual(s) who impacted their decision to become a high school principal. Chisholm-Burnes et al., (2017) stated lack of mentors as a possible barrier to women's advancement into leadership roles. In this study, three of the 16 principals responded that family members had inspired them to become a principal. Two of these principals were from south Texas and one principal was from central Texas. The first south Texas principal commented, "My father was a principal and later became a superintendent of a district. I feel that his work ethic and diligence had a positive impact on my life." The second south Texas principal shared, "My entire family works in education. My mother taught almost 50 years, my oldest sister is a principal, my other sister works in central office, and my brother is a teacher/coach. My dad was the director supervisor for transportation." Finally, the central Texas principal responded, "My aunt who was the first to go to college in the 1970's. She was a teacher, became a counselor, a school administrator, and then an assistant superintendent." These principal responses are in accord with Méndez-Morse's

(2004) inquiry of how Texas Latina principals obtained their principal positions in the absence of formal mentors. Mendez Morse (2004) stated that the Latina principals in her study did not experience formal mentoring programs, and they "constructed a mentor that met their needs and thus were able to pursue their personal and professional goal of becoming a principal" (p. 587). Therefore, the principals described family as sources of inspiration to enter the field of educational administration.

Moreover, seven of the 16 principals stated their mentor principal/administrator had helped them achieve their professional goals. In this study, the Latina principals were informally mentored on the job by their principal supervisors. The majority of the south Texas Latina principals in this study were mentored by either Latino male administrators or Latina female administrators. Falk (2011) found aspiring Latina leaders look for a Latino/a role model or mentor to help them navigate through the journey of obtaining and maintaining the principalship. In order for Latinas to experience interaction with principals of their own ethnicity, Latina leaders must be present in positions of leadership.

One east Texas principal attributed her ability to navigate a predominately White work environment to the mentoring of an African American male and an African American female principal. She explains, "I think they had a lot of understanding, because they had a lot of experience in how things work and why. It really gave me a lot of guidance and how to get through things and not take things personally and work through things, even if there are barriers. And both had a lot of experience with that. I know that they were a huge, positive influence on me and my career, giving me some of

those skills to work through things." Since mentoring programs traditionally have benefited White males in leadership positions (Méndez-Morse, 2004), females of all races and cultural backgrounds would be able to benefit from someone who can connect, teach, and support their career advancement. The mentors in my study were mostly Latino and Latina principal supervisors; however, some mentors were from various ethnicities who supported the career advancement of Latinas.

Researcher's Reflection

My personal reflections are italicized to convey my perceptions about the interview data collected. I reflected on my feelings, ideas, impressions, and problems.

As a former Latina principal, I expected to find similarities among the principals with respect to cultural backgrounds and leadership experiences. I observed some similarities such the ability to speak Spanish, challenges to the principal role, and support of mentors. I also found diversity within their respective Latina identities. Two of the principal cases entailed educational experiences in Mexico. Two principal cases revealed a history of Latino parents as migrant workers. Thus, each Latina identity influenced her leadership practice.

Overall, my intent as a researcher was to serve as a medium for my research participants. My goal was to capture the essence of their life experiences to contribute to the body of knowledge on educational leadership. Through the voices in this study, I aspire to provide insight into the Latina experience. During my research process, I reflected about my own leadership perspectives as a former Latina principal. I thought about the leadership decisions made based on my background experiences. I pondered about the relationships I established with students, parents, and my community. But most importantly, I gained knowledge about my culture. This research is simply the first step in my journey of research inquiry about Latinas in leadership.

Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

In my study, I utilized the LatCrit lens to frame the experiences of Texas high school Latina principals and to boost social change in the field of educational leadership. LatCrit extends beyond the intersectionalities of race to include other variables: class, gender, identity, language, bilingual education, and immigration status (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, 2012; Huber, 2010; Irizarry, 2012; Solórzano & Delgado, 2001; Yosso, 2006). For example, studying the cultural identity of Texas high school Latina principals through the LatCrit lens provided knowledge on how Latina principals function as leaders in the workplace while struggling to maintain their cultural identity (Carrillo, 2008; Chavez, 2012; Hernandez et al., 2014; Méndez-Morse 2000; Falk, 2011; Trujillo-Ball, 2003, Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). For instance, three of the seven Texas high school Latina principals interviewed challenged Latino cultural expectations regarding the dichotomy of *marianismo/machismo*. For example, Sofia found herself in a power struggle directing the expectations of her principal role and cultural gender role of respecting elders. Isabella combatted her cultural role expectations in her relationship with her father and ex-husband concerning a woman depending on a man for financial stability. Emma described her role as the breadwinner and her husband as a stay-at-home dad, a contradiction to the *marianismo and machismo* dichotomy.

Furthermore, Chavez (2012) discussed cultural upbringing as a complex factor in balancing work and family duties as traditional culture holds Latinas responsible for house domestics, child rearing, and taking care of elderly parents. One principal contributed the following response in the online questionnaire, “the Hispanic culture is

definitely tight knit, so there are always family functions every weekend that we participate in.” She further explained how she and her husband always wanted to give their children the experiences they did not have growing up. Hence, they involved their children with multiple after school activities. She concluded, “having both served as both an elementary and high school, the challenges arise when you have extracurricular duties or after school meetings, which is a balancing act between [husband’s schedule] and my schedule, but we make it work.” Thus, this principal described her effort to balance work and her family duties.

In addition, I employed LatCrit to study the educational and professional experiences of Texas high school Latina principals. Researchers (i.e., L. Fernandez, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Valenzuela, 2004; Villapando, 2003; Yosso, 2006) suggest the lack of representation of Latinos/as in higher education needs to be examined by studying the school context at the elementary and secondary levels. With respect to examining all seven case studies under the LatCrit lens, the majority of the high school Latina principals endured injustices as students within the U.S. educational system. For instance, five of the seven Texas high school Latina principals narrated marginalized educational experiences related to their Latino culture and Spanish language.

Moreover, LatCrit researchers acknowledge that educational institutions can operate in contradictory ways: with the potential to oppress and the potential to empower (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Considering the capacity to empower, one principal expressed her ability to embolden Latino students, “My being Latina gives me a perspective of the many challenges that Latino students, specifically girls, deal with.”

Another principal stated, “As a Latina principal, I have found that I can relate to the school community that I serve. I feel that I have been able to build positive relationships with parents, teachers, and students because I can understand their issues.” Therefore, these Latina high school principals break up deficit notions and stereotypes of Latino students. Conversely, they empower their Latino students through advocacy and cultural competence in their leadership practice. In summary, the application of the LatCrit lens guided my study of the life experiences of the Latina high school principals. Their perceptions provided legitimate research insight into the Latina leadership experience.

Implications for Latina High School Principals

This study provides insight into the life experiences of Latina high school principals who have navigated elementary, secondary, and higher education contexts to thrive as leaders of high school campuses. The results from this study offer several implications: (a) preparing leaders to campuses with English learners (ELs), (b) mentoring cohorts in principal preparation programs, and (c) school district support for targeted mentoring and networking opportunities.

Preparing Leaders to Lead Campuses with English Learners (ELs)

Educators are often equipped with nationally accepted best-practice guidelines and strategies that are assumed to work with all types of families and in all contexts. Olivos (2009) challenged the norm and questioned "What happens, however, when these guidelines don't produce the expected results or when the families with whom teachers are working come from a different cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic background that of the teacher? (Olivos, 2009, p. 110). Too often, educators assume that once they have

exhausted these guidelines, the parents are non-participatory or do not care about their child's education.

Consequently, students are mislabeled into special education programs for their deficit English speaking ability, particularly in economically challenged schools. Factors, such as segregated schools, inequities in school finance, lack of bilingual education programs, and tracking into vocational and special education classes correlate to the academic failure of Latino students (Fernandez, 2002, p. 47). Behnke, Gonzalez, and Cox (2010) stated some ESL (English as a Second Language) programs function separately from the general school operations, giving students a segregated perception of school. The impact of an ESL program causes students to develop self-fulfilling prophecies and alienate themselves from school (Irizarry, 2012). These subtractive policies focus on *one-size fits all* and end up subtly manifesting privileges to benefit the dominant culture, provoking student resistance. In summary, “school officials, educators, and policy makers make decisions about the capabilities of students and then shape policy and practice around their perceptions, which are often rooted in deficit notions of Latinos/as” (Irizarry, 2012, p. 300). Educators have a responsibility to uproot these deficit notions of Latinos/as by conducting additional research on their experiences, perceptions, and studying their outcomes in order to ensure their success.

The responsibility in eliminating the deficit notions of Latinos begins with principal preparation programs. The principals in this study demonstrated a passion for serving their students and community and advocated for their educational needs. One principal stated, "I believe I was chosen to lead my campus because of my passion to

serve our students and community." Another principal commented, "The principal also has to be an instructional leader and be able to build a positive culture to keep the school moving forward. I believe that I was able to convey these qualities. I have always felt fortunate and grateful for the opportunity to serve as the principal of this campus. A principal shared, " I am passionate about the work I do every day; I feel it is very evident when I advocate for students and their education." Therefore, principal preparation programs must guide aspiring principals in internalizing new knowledge from other cultural perspectives in order to self-reflect on their respective leadership styles and communication behaviors, thus becoming advocates of English learners.

Mentoring Cohorts in Principal Preparation Programs

As the principals in this study were informally inspired to become principals by principal/administrator supervisors and family, formal mentoring experiences lacked in solidifying the construction of a leadership pipeline between a principal preparation program and the prospective school district where a principal candidate aspires to obtain a leadership position. Roberts and Hernandez (2012) reviewed methods applied in principal preparation programs from 42 Texas colleges and universities using the criteria from the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA). The criteria consisted of program hours, course content, principal certification requirements, internship, and use of cohorts. Sperandio and LaPier (2009) found that an all-female principal preparation cohort can function as a support and suggested female students require safe spaces to have difficult conversations with other female students who were aware of gendered/ethnic stereotypes of leadership. The cohort setting can foster an

environment of self-reflection while having critical conversations about stereotypes and social justice issues in a safe forum, free from workplace politics.

Furthermore, principal preparation cohorts could further be enhanced with the addition of a mentoring and coaching component. Mendieta (2016) researched Latina/o principals' mentorship experiences in both formal and informal platforms. The principals described their respective Latina/o principal mentors offering *consejos*, which is a Spanish translation for the advice. Considering the placement of competent and culturally responsive mentors, a mentoring and coaching program infused into a principal preparation program could achieve the following: (a) assist the principal candidates in connecting theory from the university classroom into applied practice in the field, (b) introduce and include the principal candidates to a network of practicing principals via the mentor's guidance, (c) advise principal candidates in topics from gender, race, and politics, and (d) orient the principal candidate through the school district job application process. Examples of Texas principal preparation programs that incorporate a mentoring and coaching component within an internship/practicum residency are Accelerated Preparation of Leaders for Underserved Schools (APLUS) and Preparing Academic Leaders (PAL) at Texas A&M University (Center for Dual Language and Literacy Acquisition, n.d). Both principal preparation programs have trained over 100 school leaders to receive a M.Ed. in Educational Administration and Texas principal certification and bilingual/ESL certification prepared to lead campuses and influence policy in districts that serve diverse learners, particularly English learners and economically challenged students. Hence, a layer of mentorship embedded within a

principal preparation program would ensure Latina principal candidates access to an experienced mentor to help them navigate the principal application process.

School District Support for Targeted Mentoring and Networking Opportunities

The principals in this study recalled a mentor who informally helped them achieve their professional goals. These mentors occupied the roles of former supervisors and work colleagues. One south Texas principal responded, "I have learned from each supervisor I have had. I don't really have one person that I would say has helped me achieve my goals, but they have all provided me with opportunities to lead and make decisions. It is through those experiences and reflections with supervisors that I became well rounded, learned instructional practices, and how to build a community with my staff." Another principal described, "I was a little concerned about getting a position in San Antonio because I didn't know anybody in San Antonio. I was well networked up north in a lot of other districts. . . But here, I didn't have those connections and I was really concerned about getting in. Fernandez (2013) indicated that opportunities for social events should be part of the mentor responsibilities, and they need to be intentionally promoted. For instance, networking opportunities can be established through organizations such as Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP) and National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

As previously stated in Chapter I of this study, the 1991 Federal Glass Ceiling Commission reported the need for formal mentoring programs to provide women with access to resources, ensuring progress at a rate like their male counterparts. Remarkably, only one participant in this study described a formal mentoring experience. She noted

that her principal mentor principal had sponsored her participation in the Thompson Executive Leadership Institute, a Texas principal academy. She elaborated, "He enrolled me in the Thompson Principal Leadership Academy, so that I can learn from other principals across the state." As of March 2021, the tuition rate for the Thompson Executive Leadership Institute was \$5,800 (Thompson Executive Leadership Institute, n.d <https://schoolleadership.net/>). In order to qualify for this formal mentoring program, one had to have already completed two successful years of experience as a principal, and assistant principals nor aspiring principals were not eligible. Thus, the results of this study can inform school districts of the importance of establishing strategic mentoring programs and networking opportunities targeted for aspiring Latina principals.

Recommendations for Further Research

My study focused on the life experiences of seven Texas high school Latina principals through the Latina/o Critical Race Theory lens (LatCrit). For instance, the seven Latina principals in this study were of Mexican-American heritage, and the scope of the study was limited to Texas. Accordingly, the results of this study were relative to LatCrit intersectionalities within the Mexican-American culture. With respect to replication of findings, this study may be replicated and analyzed with the LatCrit perspective with respect to other Latino identities, such as Afro-Latina principals and Asian-Latina principals. The scope of this study can also be expanded geographically, to encompass Latina principal populations across the globe.

Conclusion and Final Reflection

In this phenomenological case study, all seven Texas high school Latina principals have established reputations of proven leadership due to a robust work ethic shaped by their life experiences. From their early educational experiences to navigating androcentric educational leadership spaces, these Latinas had to build their own metaphorical bridge as they crossed it to reach their professional destination. In turn, each of these Latina principals lead dual credit campuses, providing Latino students opportunities to earn both a high school diploma and college credits concurrently. In a retrospect, these Latina principals became the metaphorical bridge, connecting disenfranchised Latino students from high school to higher learning.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY IRB PERMISSION

DIVISION OF RESEARCH



EXEMPTION DETERMINATION
(Common Rule –Effective January, 2018)

June 25, 2019

Type of Review:	Submission Response for Initial Review Submission Form
Title:	The Experiences of Texas High School Latina Principals: A Phenomenological Case Study
Investigator:	Beverly Irby
IRB ID:	IRB2019-0333
Reference Number:	090581
Funding:	Internal
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB Application (Human Research) - (Version 1.2) • Texas High School Latinas Questionnaire Consent (English) - (Version 1.3) • Week Four Follow Up Email Script - (Version 1.0) • Week Four Follow Up Phone Call Script - (Version 1.0) • Week Three Financial Incentive Email Script - (Version 1.0) • Week Two Reminder Email Script - (Version 1.0) • Week Two Reminder Phone Call Script - (Version 1.0) • Email Script - (Version 1.1) • Phone Script - (Version 1.1) • Phase Two Instrument-Interview Question Protocol - (Version 1.0) • Phase One Instrument-Questionnaire - (Version 1.0)
Review Category	Category 2: Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) and the following criteria is met: iii. The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by .111(a)(7).

Dear Beverly Irby:

The HRPP determined on 06/25/2019 that this research meets the criteria for Exemption in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b).

This determination applies only to the activities described in this IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made you must immediately contact the IRB. You may be required to submit a new request to the IRB.

Your exemption is good for three (3) years from the Approval Start Date. Thirty days prior to that time, you will be sent an Administrative Check-In Notice to provide an update on the status of your study.

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701
1186 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1186

Tel. 979.458.1467 Fax. 979.862.3176
<http://rcb.tamu.edu>

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

IRB NUMBER: IRB2019-0333M IRB APPROVAL DATE: 06/25/2019

Project Title: The Experiences of Texas High School Latina Principals: A Phenomenological Study

Investigator: Elsa Villarreal

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you have been identified as a Texas high school Latina principal per the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

What Should I Know About a Research Study?

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Elsa Villarreal for her dissertation under the direction of Beverly Irby, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to analyze the disparity of Texas Latina principals at the high school level. Men have traditionally filled the high school principal role, and female principals were not placed consistently across Texas public school types. I will study the personal leadership perspectives of 114 Texas Latina high school principals as the first phase of this project. In the second phase, I will examine the life experiences six Texas Latina high school principals in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. The application of the Latino/a critical race theory lens will serve as a vehicle to obtain insight into the Texas high school Latina principal experience. Educational leaders can use the results of this study to reevaluate their leadership mentoring programs and increase recruitment of Latinas for high school principal positions.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

Per TEA (2018), there are 114 Texas high school Latina principals. All 114 principals will be invited to participate in this study.

What Are The Alternatives To Being In This Study?

The alternative to being in this study is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to reflect on your experiences and perspectives as a Texas high school Latina principal. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire (20 questions), and at the end of the questionnaire, you will indicate whether you would like to volunteer for a 45 minute to 60-minute interview.

Are There Any Risks to Me?

The risk associated with participation in this study may be associated with a breach of privacy or confidentiality.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from providing 30 minutes of time to complete the questionnaire, there are no monetary costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be entered into a drawing with a chance to win a fifteen-dollar (\$15.00) Amazon.com gift cards. Below are the payment details:

1. Upon completion of the questionnaire, you will be entered in a drawing for a fifteen-dollar (\$15.00) Amazon.com gift card. Six winners will be selected. The winners will be notified through email, and the Amazon.com gift card will be sent to you in email format.
2. If you choose to participate in the online interview and are selected to participate, you will be financially compensated twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for completing the interview. The monetary compensation will be delivered to you in the form of an Amazon.com email gift card. According to the Amazon.com website, Amazon.com gift cards have no fees, and they never expire. For more information on the Amazon.com gift card may be applied, please visit the Amazon.com website.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Confidential?

The records of this study will be kept confidential. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort or report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Elsa Villarreal, Beverly Irby, and TAMU Human Research Protection Program will have access to the records. Information about you will be stored in a locked file cabinet at Texas A&M University Harrington Education Center Office Tower, 540 Ross Street, College Station, TX 77840 in Beverly Irby's office room number 802D, and computer files will be protected with a password. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator, research study personnel, and the TAMU Human Research Protection Program. Information about you and information related to this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

Who May I Contact For More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Beverly Irby, to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-845-5311 or

beverly.irby@tamu.edu. You may also contact the researcher, Elsa Villarreal at 281-773-8446 or elsitavillarreal.ev@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, to provide input regarding research, or if you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office by phone at 1-979-458-4067, toll free 1-855-795-8636, or by email at irb@tamu.edu.

What If I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your relationship with Texas A&M University.

If you want a copy of this consent form for your records, you can print it from the screen.

. If you wish to participate, please click the **“I Agree”** button and will be taken to the survey.

. If you do not wish to participate in this study, please select **“I Disagree”** or **select X in the corner of your browser.**

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

IRB NUMBER: IRB2019-0333M IRB APPROVAL DATE: 06/25/2019

Project Title: The Experiences of Texas High School Latina Principals: A Phenomenological Study

Investigator: Elsa Villarreal

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you have been identified as a Texas high school Latina principal per the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

What Should I Know About a Research Study?

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Elsa Villarreal for her dissertation under the direction of Beverly Irby, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be emailed a copy of the information sheet and be asked to give verbal consent prior to recording the interview. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to analyze the disparity of Texas Latina principals at the high school level. Men have traditionally filled the high school principal role, and female principals were not placed consistently across Texas public school types. I will study the personal leadership perspectives of 114 Texas Latina high school principals as the first phase of this project. In the second phase, I will examine the life experiences six Texas Latina high school principals in educational leadership contexts by focusing on the challenges Latinas encounter on their journey to the principalship, including: (a) the context of the dominant culture, (b) cultural stereotypes in the workplace, (c) balancing the Latina identity in the workplace and home, and (d) mentorship experiences. The application of the Latino/a critical race theory lens will serve as a vehicle to obtain insight into the Texas high school Latina principal experience. Educational leaders can use the results of this study to reevaluate their leadership mentoring programs and increase recruitment of Latinas for high school principal positions.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

Per TEA (2018), there are 114 Texas high school Latina principals. All 114 principals will be invited to participate in this study.

What Are The Alternatives To Being In This Study?

The alternative to being in this study is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to reflect on your experiences and perspectives as a Texas high school Latina principal through an interview. The interview will last about 45-60 minutes. During this interview, I will interview you virtually, through a video conferencing platform (GoToMeeting). The interview questions will stem from the questionnaire that you previously completed. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be emailed a copy of the information sheet and be asked to give verbal consent prior to recording the interview. Once the interview is transcribed, you will be given a copy and asked to verify that your responses are accurate.

Are There Any Risks to Me?

The risk associated with participation in this study may be associated with a breach of privacy or confidentiality.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from providing 45-60 minutes of time to complete the interview and 60 minutes to verify the accuracy of the transcription, there are no monetary costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

If you agree to take part in this research study, we will pay you \$25.00 for your time and effort. Below are the payment details:

1. If you choose to participate in the online interview and are selected to participate, you will be financially compensated twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for completing the interview. The monetary compensation will be delivered to you in the form of an Amazon.com email gift card. According to the Amazon.com website, Amazon.com gift cards have no fees, and they never expire. For more information on the Amazon.com gift card may be applied, please visit the Amazon.com website.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Confidential?

The records of this study will be kept confidential. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort or report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Elsa Villarreal, Beverly Irby, and TAMU Human Research Protection Program will have access to the records. Information about you will be stored in a locked file cabinet at Texas A&M University Harrington Education Center Office Tower, 540 Ross Street, College Station, TX 77840 in Beverly Irby's office room number 802D, and computer files will be protected with a password. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator, research study personnel, and the TAMU Human Research Program. Information about you and information related to this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

Who May I Contact For More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Beverly Irby, to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-845-5311 or beverly.irby@tamu.edu. You may also contact the researcher, Elsa Villarreal at 281-773-8446 or elsitavillarreal.ev@tamu.edu. For questions about your rights as a research participant, to provide input regarding research, or if you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office by phone at 1-979-458-4067, toll free 1-855-795-8636, or by email at irb@tamu.edu.

What If I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your relationship with Texas A&M University.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available, and the researcher will inform me if must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me, and I will provide verbal consent prior to recording the interview.

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter Date

Printed Name of Presenter Date

APPENDIX D

PHASE I INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE

Phase I Instrument: Questionnaire

Texas High School Latina Principal Open-Ended Questionnaire

Experiences and Perceptions

1. How has being a Latina principal shaped your leadership practice?
 2. Describe some challenges in balancing your job and home life.
 3. Why do you think you were chosen to lead your campus? Did gender or ethnicity play a factor in this hiring decision?
 4. What challenges have you encountered on your journey to the high school principalship? Were these challenges due to your gender or ethnicity?
 5. Who impacted your decision to become a high school principal? Why?
 6. Who has served a mentorship role in your professional career, and how did they help you achieve your goals?
 7. What are your future personal and professional goals?
 8. What advice do you have for aspiring Latina high school principals who currently occupy positions as teachers or assistant principals?
 9. Would you be open to a follow up interview (audio recorded)?
-

Demographics and Background

1. Name _____
 2. Email address _____
 3. ESC region number _____
 4. Country of origin _____
 5. Cultural identity (Example: Mexican-American, Central American) _____
 6. What language(s) do you speak? _____
 7. Indicate your age year range. ___ 20-29 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50-59 ___ 60 and over
 8. How many years did you teach at each of the following school placements?
_____ Elementary _____ Middle _____ High School
 9. How many years were you a principal at each of the following school placements?
_____ Elementary _____ Middle _____ High School
-



IRB NUMBER: IRB2019-0333M
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 06/25/2019

APPENDIX E

PHASE II INSTRUMENT: SEMI--STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Instrument 2: Phase Two- Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Interview Questions with Probing Examples

1. Tell me about your educational background. (Probe for first language or language learning experiences, family cultural background, and family expectations about education)
 2. How has being a Latina principal shaped you as a leader? (Probe for family influences, work relationships, education and work experiences)
 3. How do you balance work and home? (Probe for home and work dynamics, support systems, and work/home conflicts)
 4. How long have you been a principal? What were your previous positions? (Probe for work experiences, reason for change in work experience, issues of gender, cultural bias, power and/or politics)
 5. Why do you think you were hired for your current position? Was gender or ethnicity a factor? (Probe for issues of gender, cultural bias power and/or politics)
 6. What challenges have you encountered on your journey to the high school principalship? Were these challenges due to your gender or ethnicity? (Probe for issues of gender, cultural bias power and/or politics)
 7. Who impacted your decision to become a high school principal? (Probe for influences, mentors, and support systems)
 8. Who has served a mentorship role in your professional career, and how did they help you achieve your goals? (Probe for formal or informal mentor support systems, work and home influences)
 9. What are your future personal and professional goals? (Probe for inspiration for goals and plans to achieve these goals)
 10. What advice do you have for aspiring Latina high school principals who currently occupy positions as teachers or assistant principals? (Probe for knowledge, perspective on culture and navigating school norms)
 11. Do you know of any other Latinas who pursued the high school principal position or other administrative positions? How did it work out for them? (Probe for knowledge of others experiences)
 12. Is there anything else you would like to say that I might have overlooked? (Probe for reflections on life experiences, regrets, what would you have done differently?)
-



IRB NUMBER: IRB2019-0333M
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 06/25/2019

APPENDIX F

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Instructor name	Elsa Villarreal	Expected presentation date	2021-05-03

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