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## CHICANA/LATINA SECONDARY ADMINISTRATORS: TRIUMPHS, OBSTACLES, AND DISCERNMENT ¡SI SE PUDO!

Erika Tejada

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CHICANA/LATINA SECONDARY ADMINISTRATORS: TRIUMPHS,  
OBSTACLES, AND DISCERNMENT – ¡SI SE PUDO!

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A Dissertation  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Leadership

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by  
Erika del Rosario Tejeda  
August 2022

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August 2022

Approved by:

Angela Louque, Committee Chair

Susan Jindra, Committee Member

Cherina Betters, Committee Member

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## ABSTRACT

The educational pipeline has historically been dismal in regards to Chicana/Latina high school completion and beyond. Navigating between two cultures, social and familial demands, and lack of social and political knowledge has been a challenge. According to the United States Census Bureau (2020) “The Hispanic or Latino population, which includes people of any race, was 62.1 million in 2020. The Hispanic or Latino population grew 23%, while the population that was not of Hispanic or Latino origin grew 4.3% since 2010.” With this being said, there has been an increase in the number of Latina/o’s graduating from high school and college-preparedness, but this continues to be at a much lower percentage than other races, and the level of equitable access to college preparation curriculum that is provided for them (State of Higher Education for Latinx in California, 2018). Moreover, there was an increase of 30 – 31 percentage points in the last 10 years between Latinx and white students attaining a bachelor's degree. Although there has been an increased number of Latina women obtaining graduate degrees in education, the number that holds administrative positions such as superintendent principal, or district office personnel is grim (Avalos and Salgado, 2016). There is a substantial underrepresentation of women in secondary leadership, especially when considering ethnicity and gender; in the case of minority women, there is mainly a lack of literature written on educational leadership through their lens and their voice. (Rivers Wrushen and Sherman, 2008). The difficulties that Latina/o

leaders face begin within the K-12 school pipeline and continue through their leadership preparation programs in which the facilitators of these are ill-equipped for leadership for equity (Peterson and Vergara, 2016). Furthermore, the constant obstacles are present through equitable practices of employment, hiring, retention, and support of school leaders of color (Peterson and Vergara, 2016).

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constant encouragement throughout this long road. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.



## DEDICATION

I would like to begin by acknowledging my ancestors, their hard work, dedication, blood, sweat, and tears. I carry your strength, struggles, and triumphs on my shoulders. These *Mujeres* who paved the way for me to be who I am today, I am forever grateful for your spirit and guidance, gracias.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Latino California Demographics .....	1
Latinos and Educational Attainment.....	1
Problem Statement .....	4
Purpose Statement .....	5
Research Questions .....	6
Rationale of the Study.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	7
Assumptions .....	8
Overview of the Study.....	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
Educational Pipeline .....	11
Familismo and Family Responsibilities .....	14
College Choice and Family Input .....	17
Chicanas/Latinas in Leadership .....	21
Theoretical Framework .....	25
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	30
Research Questions .....	30

Research Design and Rationale .....	31
Research Methodology .....	32
Research Setting/Recruitment of Participants.....	33
Data Analysis.....	34
Trustworthiness.....	35
Positionality of the Researcher.....	36
Data Collection.....	40
Summary .....	41
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS .....	43
Results of the Study.....	44
Themes .....	49
Essence of Chicana/Latina Secondary Administrators .....	80
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	82
Interpretation of the Findings .....	83
Summary of the Study .....	83
Next Steps in the Educational Pipeline for a Diversified Administration..	90
Limitations of the Study.....	92
Conclusion.....	93
APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	94
APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL.....	98
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	101
REFERENCES.....	103

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. <i>Main Themes</i> .....	48
Table 2. <i>Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 1:Challenging the Status-Quo and Past Practice</i> .....	50
Table 3. <i>Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 2: Using Their Educational Leadership Style to Impact the Lives of Those They Serve.</i> .....	55
Table 4. <i>Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 3: Overcoming Barriers</i> .....	61
Table 5. <i>Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 4: Familismo, and the Importance of Culture and Family</i> .....	70
Table 6. <i>Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 5: Finding Inspiration, Strength, and Motivation to Continue</i> .....	76

CHAPTER ONE:  
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Necesitamos teorías que reescriban la historia usando raza, clase, género, y etnicidad como categorías de análisis, teorías que cruzan fronteras, que borran los límites – nuevas formas de teorías con nuevos métodos de teorización.”

-Gloria Anzaldúa, Making face, making soul/hacienda carra

Latino California Demographics

Según el Informe del Estado de la Educación Superior para Latinxs en California (2018), Latinxs son el grupo racial/étnico más grande en California, siendo el hogar de más de 15 millones de personas, lo que representa casi el 40% de la población total. Entre 2010 y 2019, la población de los EE. UU. aumentó en 18.9 millones, y los hispanos representaron el 52% de ese crecimiento (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2020). California es uno de los estados más poblados, teniendo la quinta economía más grande del mundo. Para mantener este estatus, debe producir un mínimo de 1.65 millones de graduados universitarios para el año 2030 y este objetivo no se puede alcanzar sin el éxito educativo de Latinxs (Acevedo, 2018).

Latinxs and Educational Attainment

Más de la mitad (54%) de la matrícula en K-12 es Latinxs y casi la mitad (43%) están matriculados en instituciones de educación superior pública de California. Eso significa que aproximadamente 3.1 millones de estudiantes en California son Latinxs y más

1.3 million Latinx were enrolled in colleges across the state of California (The State of Higher Education for Latinx in California, 2018). Latinx adults have the lowest number of undergraduate degrees of any other ethnic/racial group at 18% although more are attending and finishing college (The State of Higher Education for Latinx in California, 2018). Gordon (2018), points out the disparities that exist at both the college and university level with Latino students, noting that although the graduation rates have increased, the gaps between Latinos and whites have actually widened. As stated in the Postsecondary National Policy Institute (2020), Latinos continue to be overrepresented in community colleges, meaning that Latinos are transferring at a higher rate to a community college than a four-year university. Furthermore, Gordon (2018) states that there is a need for increasing the numbers of Latino faculty and campus leaders so that students can see people who look like them, and in turn feel more supported and engaged. Moreover, if Latino faculty are represented, they can then participate in shared governance on the Faculty Senate Committee and other deciding-making policies at higher education institutions.

“In 2016, 86 percent of Latinx 19-year-olds had a high school diploma or equivalent; 39 percent of high school graduates had graduated from high school prepared for college” (The State of Higher Education for Latinx in California, 2018). Although these numbers seem like a bright light at the end of a very dark long tunnel, Gandara (2015) contends that Latinx graduate high school at much lower rates than any other major “subgroups”, and are least likely to complete a

college degree, with just 19 percent compared to nearly 44 percent of white women. Latinas make up more than 26 million of the U.S. population making them a critically important group today. Moreover, by the year 2060, projections are that they will form nearly a third of the female population in the nation (Gandara, 2015).

There are several factors that contribute to the stark data on Latinas and college degree attainment. For many Chicanas/Latinas, it is embedded in cultural aspirations and the navigations between two cultures, their home culture, and the mainstream American culture. Familismo plays an essential part in Chicana/Latina students seeking college and career opportunities. Balancing both their home obligations while focusing on the time commitment needed to obtain a degree often competes with each other as well and makes it difficult to focus on either responsibility fully (Espinoza, 2010). Espinoza (2010) uses the expression “double-edged sword” to compare the relationship Latinas have between their strong sense of familismo and the drive to be successful academically. The loyalty to family many times conflicts with the importance and stress factors that doing academically well brings.

Similarly, Latina parents have very high aspirations for their daughters to attend a university and embark on a better life than they themselves had. However, for many Latinas, a strong indicator of the achievement gap can be linked to poverty and social disadvantage (Ceja, 2004; Ceja 2006; Martinez 2012, and Gandara 2015). Additionally, Gandara et al. (2013) noted that



additional factors that lead to lacking a clear vision, appropriate socialization experiences, and feelings of belonging to the dominant culture.

### Problem Statement

Chicanas are seldom considered when thinking of Hispanic women as leaders. There are many obstacles, challenges, and barriers that Chicanas face in K-12 leadership. These barriers include balancing family, academic lives, and racial/ethnic stereotypes.

In K-12 settings, leadership can be defined in many ways. As school administrators, there are certain criteria that California educators must meet in order to become a school administrators. School leaders can be anyone who takes a leadership role in a school, whether formal or informal, as an educator can be a school leader. For the purposes of this paper though, a school leader is defined as someone who has earned certification through the licensure of a state commission or governed by a department of education. This licensure allows school personnel such as principals to lead and manage schools in the state of California (Quezada, Kinsey, and Louque, 2016).

For this study, the focus is on secondary leadership and mainly secondary school administrators. Most of what is known about Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators comes in the form of dissertation studies. These dissertations explain the obstacles, challenges, and barriers that Chicana/Latina secondary administrators encounter within their roles, as well as paint a picture of the road that led up to their tenure. These studies also emphasize the

important role the family nucleus played in lives as well as the impact it has had on their leadership style. This dearth in the literature fails to provide an adequate narrative and true depiction of Chicana/Latina secondary administrators.

According to Mendez-Morse (2000), the stereotypes of what a Latina can contribute to are seldomly considered when thinking of Hispanic women as leaders. Gandara (2015), found that although Hispanic females were still outperforming Hispanic males, they were still earning much less than their brothers in the labor market. In 2011, it was noted that Latinas working-full time earned about 56 cents for every dollar earned by a white non-Hispanic male, highlighting Latinas with lower education attainment not only signaled lower earnings but fewer opportunities within the labor market (Gandara, 2015)..

### Purpose Statement

This study will begin by examining the lived experiences that have contributed to Chicana/Latina's roles as secondary administrators. The purpose of this qualitative study is multi-fold. First, it is to capture the lived experiences and narratives of Chicana/Latina secondary administrators in California. There is a plethora of information that can be learned through the accounts and experiences shared by these trailblazing women. Second, it is important to gain insight into the lessons and struggles they encountered throughout their pathway to their current administrative role. By providing a platform for them to have their voices heard and documented, this research can highlight the stories of their educational journeys and represent the cultural and educational wealth that

encompasses who they are. Third, it can contribute to a greater body of research for current and future researchers to consider contributing to the pipeline of educating Chicanas as role models.

### Research Questions

1. How do secondary Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators describe their professional and personal experiences in shaping their roles as an administrator?
2. What barriers do Chicana/Latina administrators experience as secondary school administrators?
3. What pathway did Chicana/Latinas use to reach their current position as a secondary school administrator?
4. What strategies do Chicana/Latinas use to overcome barriers and maintain their positions as school leaders?

### Rationale of the Study

The rationale for this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study is to contribute to and expand the current research on Chicana/Latina secondary administrators beyond the limited research. Though numerous studies have focused on Latinas as superintendents and higher education, this research is limited to secondary school administrators within this leadership role. Though a significant number of studies have been conducted to focus on women, women

of color in K-12, and women in higher education, few have centered around Chicana/Latina secondary administrators.

It is imperative that a platform be provided for Chicana/Latina secondary administrators in order for their voices and stories to be heard so that they can support as well as validate Chicana/Latinas embarking on the path of educational leadership. This qualitative transcendental phenomenological study provides a platform for their voices and narratives to be told through their eyes and experiences, providing a clear picture of determination, ganas, and hunger to not be a statistic but rather a role model for future Chicana/Latina secondary administrators.

#### Definition of Terms

**Chicano/a:** While there are various answers as to the origins of the term Chicano/a, this study will define the term as an American born of Mexican descent with an interest in politics. The usage of the term increased in prominence during the 1960's which coincided with the Civil Rights Movement. Before the 1960s, the term was used to "describe Mexican-Americans of lower social standing" (Planas, 2012).

**Familismo:** A cultural value integrated within the Latina psyche, emphasizing family loyalty, responsibility, and closeness, requiring Latina women to put the needs of their family before their individual self-actualization needs (Sy and Romero, 2008 ).

**Hispanic:** “Refers to people whose origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish-speaking Central or South American countries, or other Hispanic/Latino, regardless of race” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the researcher will use the terms Hispanic and Latina interchangeably.

**Intersectionality:** refers to the ways in which multiple identities (e.g., gender, race, class) intersect within the constructs of power systems (Crenshaw, 1991).

**Latina/o:** People who identify themselves as being Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or those that indicate another Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

**Leadership:** For the purposes of this study, leadership and leadership positions refer to secondary school administrators in Southern California schools.

### Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, there are a number of assumptions presented. First, based on the literature reviewed, there is a need for more Chicana/Latina secondary administrators to be represented that would correlate with the number of Latinas in the state of California and across the United States.

It is assumed that the participants in this study provide truthful, accurate, and give honest illustrations of their lived experiences both professionally and personally. Additionally, it is anticipated that the information and data is an accurate and true depiction of the participants' lived experiences.

## Overview of the Study

There is a significant increase in the number of Latinos in California, however, there is a disparity in the number of Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators. The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to explore both the personal and professional lived experiences of Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators.

Chapter two provides a comprehensive review that discusses the historical background of Chicana/Latinas in the United States. It will discuss the *familismo*, familial influences with college choice, and educational pathways, and examine the apparent barriers that Chicana/Latina's face throughout their educational and professional journey.

Chapter three explains the research methodology that was utilized in this study in support of the literature review, research questions, interview guidelines, and how the data was collected and analyzed.

Chapter four will present the results of the data collected from Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators. Summarized in this chapter will be their familial influences, personal and professional experiences, and their journey towards their tenure within their current position. Highlighted will be the key moments that have helped shape their leadership style and approach as well as how they will help mentor future Chicana/Latina educational leaders.

Lastly, chapter five will provide an overview of the study, including the implications of the study, the conclusion from the researcher, and the recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Educational Pipeline

The educational pipeline is a metaphor used to describe the educational progress students make beginning with Kinder through secondary, post-secondary, and graduate school. The purpose is to track students' educational journeys and convey the trends as well as student growth encompassing all students, regardless of their social or economic status. The pipeline for Latina/o students, however, does not work in this way (Perez Huber et al. 2006). In the 2006 Latina/o Education Report *Falling Through the Cracks: Critical Transitions in the Latina/o Educational Pipeline* it was noted that in the United States for every 100 Latina elementary school students, 54 would graduate from high school, 11 would graduate from college, and 4 will graduate from a professional school. Delving deeper in this study among the 100 Latina/o students, Chicanas/os/Salvadoranias had the lowest completion rates at every educational milestone in the pipeline (Perez Huber, et al., 2006). In 2015 (Perez Huber, et al.) revisited the 2006 report and found that the previously reported data had not changed. In the report titled *Still Falling Through the Cracks, Revisiting the Latina/o Education Pipeline* stated Latinas/os continued to fall through the crack noting that many of the recommendations and information provided in the previous report continued to be highly relevant. Although there was some increase amongst Latinas/os in the educational completion the amount of



Chicanas/os and Central Americans had the lowest educational attainment. Moreover, it is likely that the small gains in educational attainment for Latina/o students can be attributed to the population increase rather than a more equitable education (Perez Huber, et al., 2015). Perez Huber et al. (2014) referred to the difference between the equity line that represents the proportion of Latinas/os in the adult population and the level of educational attainment as the educational equity gap as illustrated in Figure 1. They provide a snapshot of the Latina/o degree attainment in 2000 in California, in which Latina/os make up 22 percent of the population. Their research showed there was inequity with regards to how many Latina/os earned a high school diploma, a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree were all negative when compared to the growth.

Perez Huber et al. (2014) used data from 2012 and applied the equity gap construct pertaining again, to the Latina/o growth in California. This growth represented 30 percent of the total population, however, academically speaking there was a noticeable decline in academic achievement increasing the educational equity gap. Figure 2 illustrates this gap as well as provides a visual representation of the continued educational inequities in Latina/os during this 10-year comparison. This visual representation demonstrates the alarming educational disparities for advanced or professional degrees. Latina/os continue to be underrepresented in the possession of advanced degrees in California.

Covarrubias (2011) used the critical race framework of intersectionality to reexamine the Chicana/o educational pipeline. Referencing the school system, Covarrubias (2011), makes a pointed statement ascribing the school setting as being traditionally responsible to have created and maintaining demarcations among people while establishing and sustaining their corresponding systems of relationships. Furthermore, Covarrubias (2011) states:

Schools are often the site of the adoption of such constructs by individuals and the site where those in power simultaneously ascribe these labels and their accompanying characteristics to students; both processes often have significant consequences for our educational opportunities and trajectories, as they will frequently impact the expectations and aspirations we have for ourselves and those that others have of use. Such belief systems can, and regularly do, lead to a distinction of resource availability for different groups that can significantly shape educational outcomes.

Through his study, Covarrubias (2011) concluded that by using an alternative way of personal storytelling, helps uncover the specifics as well as the intersectional effect that the multiple constructs assist with the shaping of one's reality, not to mention the educational experiences and outcomes across the educational pipelines focusing on Chicanas and Chicanos.

Rodriguez and Oseguera (2015), looked through a different lens as it relates to the Latina/o educational pipeline by denouncing the stereotypical

reasons these students are not successful. Denouncing the blaming and “othering” that is often associated with students who continue to struggle for their rights to an education in the United States, denouncing the deficit perspective that characterizes the existence facing Latina/o at the K-12 and higher education systems, denouncing No Child Left Behind era as it relates to the stress caused by test preparation associated with this, denouncing ahistorical remnants of the US culture proposing that children from low socioeconomic, children of color, English learners, and others are predisposed to fail rather than succeed due to their circumstances, lastly, denounce omnipresent “failing” public school system that has misled many to believe that is bad and failing (Rodriguez and Oseguera 2015). Without purposeful and key research, policy, and pragmatic implications expressed in the article Rodriguez and Oseguera (2015) maintain Latina/o students will continue to wrestle through the educational pipeline. Alatorre Alva and Padilla (1995) referred to the low educational status of Mexican American students as alarmingly low, acknowledging that the severity of the low academic underachievements has been identified by policymakers and educators alike, but very little has been explored to understand the factors that influence and mediate this problem.

#### Familismo and Family Responsibilities

Although the Chicano movement of the 1960s was a time when Chicanas and Chicanos fought for educational equality and accessibility for the Mexican American community, migrants, and bilingual education, the role of women was

never equal; even though they marched and protested alongside their brown brothers. Urrieta (2004) “Concepts like la familia, carnalismo, the “role” of mujeres are often stereotyped and prescribed the role of men and women, their social relations, and their sexuality.

Sy (2006) conducted a study in which 117 Latina college students participated. This study focused on the effects of family obligations and part-time work as well as the stresses that these can have on academic achievement when transitioning to college. Although Latino parents hold education in a high regard for their children, there is also an expectation that their daughters will continue as the family caretaker and fulfilling the familial obligations that come with this. “In turn, the additional time and stress associated with fulfilling family obligations could make the transition to college more challenging” (Sy, 2006).

Espinoza (2010) found that although many scholars had focused their research studies on Latinas successfully navigating the educational pipeline, little research has been conducted on the personal experiences of Latinas balancing their family responsibilities and their school responsibilities. Part of this balancing act focuses on familismo which includes the strong identification and attachment to the family, both nuclear and extended, and requires members to prioritize family over individual interests Espinoza (2010). Espinoza goes on to refer to familismo as a double-edged sword for Latinas pursuing higher education when they face their connections with their families and the competition with their schooling whereas both require attention and care.

The commonality between the integrators and separators is the need to be the “good daughter” meaning that they need to be loyal to their families by way of familismo while maintaining fidelity to the graduate program. “Each approach reflects two variations of their distinct cultural and ethnic identity location along with the Latino and American cultural continuums” Espinoza (2010). Gilroy (2011) notes that Latinas become bicultural, reshaping their behaviors so that they may move fluidly within the new and old culture. Additionally, Latinas are encountering new paths to empowerment, by doing so they are also creating laying down the foundation for their siblings by being the first in their families to find a new pathway.

Although many Latino families encouraged their daughters to attend college, they did not understand the intricacies of balancing the demands and responsibilities that attending college placed on their daughters as first-generation college students (Espinoza, 2010). Embracing going to college as a conduit to improve not only their lives but the lives of their families, many Latinas attend college by taking evening classes. This allows them to take care of their familial obligations and take care of their children (Menchaca et al, 2017).

Gándara makes a very interesting argument when referring to the underwhelming research related to Chicanas moving forward in the educational pipeline as well as higher education. According to Pew Research Center, 2009,

One important reason for our failure to better understand the dynamics of educational attainment within the Chicano community is our overreliance

on research that focuses on underachievers. This research has yielded a litany of reasons for educational failure but as produced few insights into the process of educational successes.

Through her interviews of 17 Chicana women, Gándara (1982) found that there were two crucial elements in the successes of these women. The first one was emotional support, these women had to navigate through the trenches of higher education without the knowledge from their parents, however, the emotional support they received from their families was key and insurmountable. The second element was their mother. Their mothers were pivotal in the drive these women had at achieving higher educational goals. It is time to look differently at the stereotypes embedded in the Mexican American/Chicana culture and the roles mothers play. Chicana mothers are the matriarch of the family and they provided a powerful impact on these women.

Of the 17 women interviewed by Gándara (1982), they shared many similarities with one another. These women came from large, traditional families that they felt a sense of responsibility towards. These women also felt conflicted when it came to their family responsibilities and their school responsibilities. Ortiz (1995) points out that schooling, work, and family are so highly intertwined among Mexican American women, that any fluctuation within one immediately affects the other two.

College Choice and Family Input.

Ceja (2006) qualitative study of 20 Chicana senior students and the participation of their parents and siblings during the college choice process. In his study, Ceja explores two main issues, 1. Parental familiarity with the college choice process and the parents' ability to assist their daughters, 2. The importance of having older siblings who have gone to college and the positive influence this may have. Ceja found that although the parents were very supportive of their daughters furthering their education, their role was greatly limited due to their own lack of experience or knowledge. For many first-generation Chicana college students, having access to college information, resources, and opportunities is crucial. "The capacity of parents to act as protective agents capable of transmitting valuable college information was made difficult by their lack of ties to social networks (i.e., schools) capable of informing them about this experience." However, this is not to say that parents were completely disenfranchised with their daughters' college choice but rather supported their daughters in other ways such as paying for exams, application fees, and providing important emotional and moral support. When parents were not able to assist their daughters with college choice, older siblings stepped up and provided the knowledge, support, and guidance needed, replacing the parents in this case. Ceja found that with a college-going tradition within the family household as well as encompassing extended family members, Chicanas were able to tap into the resources and found additional opportunities. In a shift of roles, with Chicanas becoming the protective agents, Chicanas felt obliged to

familiarize their parents with the different facets of the college choice process. Additionally, Chicanas took on a role of double-duty by informing and educating themselves while doing the same for their parents. Moreover, Perez and McDonough (2008) interviewed 106 junior and senior high school Latina/os from the larger Los Angeles area and found these students relied heavily on siblings, relatives, as well high school contacts to assist with the planning and college choice considerations.

Perez and McDonough (2008), further emphasize that extended familial relationships that Latina students seek when investigating college information is crucial. These relationships are crucial and critical to guide and support Latina students when college choice becomes a reality. Kimura-Walsh (2009) studied sixteen high school Latinas from Southern California and found that although their parents did not have the vast knowledge or capacity to guide or provide college information, these students relied heavily on familial support as a source of motivation and encouragement in shaping their college aspirations.

Ceja (2004) used the qualitative method and interviewed Chicana senior high school students to better gauge their perception pertaining to the manner in which their parents influenced and shaped their educational goals and aspirations. There were two forms of parental influence that were examined in the study - direct and indirect parental influences. Although the parents were not well versed in the college choice process and could not guide them, this did not stop them from influencing their daughters to attend college. Through his



investigation Ceja found that parents communicated their desire for their daughters to attend college as a vehicle to change the landscape of their current situations, wanting something better for them. The common thread from all parents was wanting their daughters to have a better life than the one that was afforded to them. The Chicana students felt the need to be loyal to their families and felt they needed to do well as they knew their parents wanted them to attend college and obtain a better education because in the end, that is what their parents wanted for them.

Although there is a plethora of research regarding family input with regards to Latinas and college choice, little research explores the outside influences that these students have. Martinez (2012) found that Mexican American students drew upon their social capital in navigating the college choice process. In her study, Martinez found that the students had guidance from neighbors, church members, and school personnel amongst others to help in the decision-making process.

Vela et. al (2017) conducted a study that focused specifically on understanding how character strength and family importance shaped the life satisfaction of Mexican American students in postsecondary education. Gonzalez et al. (2003) studied two different groups of Latina high school students to examine their primary and secondary school experiences. The two groups were similar in that they came from working-class home environments and attended public schools considered low to middle socioeconomic status. The first group of

Latina students completed their K-12 schooling with the opportunity to attend two of the more prestigious universities in the nation, whereas, the second group began their postsecondary education by means of a California Community College. The findings of their study found the parental influence were positive and influential as were their siblings. Emotional support was a pivotal factor in the success of these Latina students during their postsecondary journey.

Kimura-Walsh et. al (2009) described the numerous barriers Latina/o students are challenged with when moving towards college choice and college entry. When focusing on the external elements that affect Latinas, the lack of college guidance and counseling from high schools failed in preparing Latina/os for college preparation and accessibility. The student to counselor ratio, high caseloads, lack of adequate college counseling, coupled with perceived financial or legitimate financial constraints were also noted obstacles for college pathways (Kimura-Walsh et. al 2009).

#### Chicanas/Latinas in Leadership

“Although generally there are some markers of demographic changes in the educational administrative ranks, such as an increased number of women elementary school principals, females as high school principals are a rarity“ (Mendez-Morse et al, 2015). Mendez-Morse et al, surveyed Latina/o principals and assistant principals through the National Latina/o Leadership project, focusing on the women participants. Mendez-Morse et al, made the following observation:

Perhaps with more opportunities for reflection, Latinas in principal and assistant principal positions may provide richer descriptions of their rationale for fighting discriminatory hiring practices, glass ceiling perceptions and attitudes among stakeholders, and even disregard from the same communities these females serve. Their commitment to the improvement of students, nonetheless, was apparent, as their sense of urgency to improve the conditions of children was voiced and evidenced by the successful schools they were leading.

Historically universities have led and provided an incomplete preparation model for principal programs that did not identify or include a full scope of competencies and the skills needed to lead current and future diverse K-12 schools (Rodriguez et al. 2016). Martinez et. al (2016) utilized a testimonio framework to bring to light the narratives of four Latina school leaders from the southern region of the US. This study unearthed the triumphs, obstacles, experiences, and career trajectories as leaders. Members of the Latina/o community anxiously await the arrival of a Latina administrator, bringing a sense of relief that someone who looks like them, understands the culture, and can relate to the lived experiences and struggles endured is in a position of leadership. Furthermore, Latina leaders are able to transform the snags and challenges that lead to their leadership journeys into opportunities that frame their character and who they have become (Martinez et. al 2016).

Similarly, Rodriguez (1999) posits how Latina leaders struggle daily to maintain their identity in American society while this same society discriminates both implicitly and explicitly. Latinas are constantly challenged to define their roles, assets, liabilities, and themselves within their leadership roles. Furthermore, Latina leaders are constantly challenging the dominant culture's existence by deciphering the lived experiences through *flor y canto* flowers and song, a Nahuatl philosophy meaning to be more intuitive and heart-directed (Rodriguez, 1999). By applying *flor y canto* Latina leaders use this mestizo consciousness as an asset within their leadership roles by challenging the stereotypical paradigms. Moreover, Rodriguez (1999) addresses how Latina leaders are multifaceted by digging into their personal spirituality to navigate their leadership styles within their families, communities, and society.

Hernandez and Murakami (2016) featuring a Latina school leader within the National Latina/o Leadership Study; delineating her experiences developing both a professional and racial identity with the contexts of an urban school. In their study, Hernandez and Murakami (2016) utilized both Critical Race Theory and LatCrit theory to assist with the findings pertaining to the professional and racial identity amidst the challenges within the profession. Furthermore, Hernandez and Murakami (2016) acknowledge that there has been an increase of visibility of research based on K-12 Latina/o school leaders, however, it fails to highlight the many contributions that these leaders have made. Moreover, these

challenges are related to the historically marginalized insignia of identity that is often evident in the school leadership research and practice.

Correspondingly, Fernandez et. al (2014) conducted a qualitative study in which five selected Latina/o secondary principals discussed their career experiences while working in suburban districts. The study found that Latina/o principals contributed to educational leadership by expressing their career experiences and sharing both the internal and external drivers and barriers to their success. These internal drivers were their passion for educational leadership and drive and determination, meaning they all had a desire to impact those they served as well as influence the school setting. The external drives the participants stated were family support, mentorship, gender discrimination and district resistance to recruiting for diversity, all of these contributing to the drive to be successful within their roles.

Murakami et. al (2018) studied the experiences of 226 Latina/o school administrators in Texas. The purpose of the study was to consider the intersectionality between professional identity and race/ethnicity within Latina/o school leaders. Data gathered revealed the work the school administrators described was greatly influenced by their personal schooling experience, impacting the evolution of their professional identities and was directly related to the intersectionality of race and class. Moreover, the participants of the study divulged they had although they had experienced a form of racism,

discrimination, and hardships they opted for a career in education in an effort to improve the experiences of Latina/os in school (Murakami et. al 2018).

Venegas-García (2013) conducted an empirical study in which seven Chicana/Latina educational leaders engaged in activism and agents of change. The participants told rich detailed stories that were immersed in courage and perseverance despite the constant struggles that formed the leaders they are today. All of the participants described their early experiences with systematic marginalization as students within the United States and how this led to them becoming agents of change. The findings of this study demonstrated how the Chicana/Latina activists identity and leadership evolved from their individual development shaped by circumstances to their heightened awareness revolving around life's experiences. Venegas-García (2013) found that the women who participated in the study manifested their leadership by emphasizing the empowerment of others instead of achieving personal power. Within their professional roles, these Chicana/Latina leaders understood the social circumstances of marginalized groups and worked as agents of change.

### Theoretical Framework

Dr. Ladson-Billings (1998) explains that Critical Race Theory or CRT is the legal perspective that racism is normal and not abnormal in the United States. She goes on to explain that stories or counter stories in explaining the operations of racism are useful to help others gain a better understanding of CRT. Along with stories being told, there are narratives or counternarratives that are equally

as useful. Additionally, Delgado and Stefancic (2002) cite the challenge of racial oppression and the status quo can take the form of storytelling in that the story is told from the narrative of the oppressor rather than the oppressed. However, the narrative can change once the story is written and people begin to speak again, telling their story in an attempt to contribute to a better, impartial world. Aleman (2009) conducted a rhetorical and discourse analysis study focused on Latina/o educational and political leaders. Through his study, Aleman (2009) found that those who were advocating closing the achievement gap of Latina/o and Chicana/o students found their political discourse to be shaped by “niceness,” “respect,” and “decorum” which silences and hinders the student’s experiences within their communities. Furthermore, Aleman (2009) contends CRT frameworks of practice and scholarship are vital in achieving policies that are socially just within the educational policies with prepared educational leaders.

Lynn and Parker (2006) state CRT scholars have researched both the theoretical and methodological importance of CRT and both its role and relation to educational theory and practice. Furthermore, Lynn and Parker (2006) state:

...not only have CRT and education researchers explored CRT’s connections to education, but they have also used CRT to explore significant specific issues in education such as: qualitative research methods, pedagogy and practice, the schooling experiences of marginalized students of color, and the efficacy of race-conscience education policy.

CRT's origins of socio-political as a legal discourse are important to acknowledge, however, it is just as important to endorse the multifaceted roots of CRT in analyzing the racial, intellectual, and scholarly discourses in U.S. history pertaining to racism (Lynn, Adams, 2002). Moreover, Parker and Villalpando (2007) contend that through a critical lens one can examine and understand the administrative procedures and policies within the educational institutions in which CRT provides a pathway for action within the area of racial justice.

CRT challenges the dominant ideology with the traditional claims in the educational system as well as the claims these institutions make towards, equal opportunity, color-blindness, race neutrality, objectivity, and meritocracy, (Solorzano and Yosso, 2001). An offspring per se of Critical Race Theory is LatCrit, which was born during a symposium in 1995 on Latinas/os and CRT. LatCrit focal points are the concerns and voices in legal discourse and social policy encompassing Latinas/os. Valdes (2005) notes from the onset, LatCrit theory has been devoted to maintaining the tenets of CRT while exploring techniques in a self-critical manner. LatCrit theory has developed a self-identity of consciousness and critical self-conception similar but not identical to Critical Race Theory. Solorzano and Yosso (2001) created the following definition of LatCrit in education:

LatCrit theory in education is a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact the educational structures, processes, and discourses that affect



People of Color generally and Latinas/os specifically. Utilizing the experiences of Latinas/os, a LatCrit Theory in education also theorizes and examines that place where racism intersects with other forms of subordination such as sexism and classism. LatCrit scholars in education acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways with their potential to oppress and marginalize co-existing with their potential to emancipate and empower. LatCrit theory in education is conceived as a social justice project that attempts to link theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community. LatCrit theory in education is transdisciplinary and draws on many other schools of progressive scholarship.

Additionally, Solorzano and Bernal (2001) further expound that LatCrit theory exemplifies the multidimensional identities of Latina/os and can address the “intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression.” Solorzano and Bernal (2007) draw the commonality between CRT and LatCrit in the centrality of experiential knowledge. These frameworks acknowledge that personal counter storytelling and oral history are genuinely appropriate and legitimate methodologies to interpret the educational experiences of People of Color. Furthermore, Solorzano and Yosso (2001) regard CRT and LatCrit along with methodology as the affirmation and fusion of the following: theoretical, empirical, and experiential knowledge. Yosso et al. (2001) further describe

LatCrit as “a natural outgrowth of critical race theory, but we do not see them as mutually exclusive.”

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study is to explore the lives and experiences of Chicana/Latina (used interchangeably in this study) secondary school administrators during their tenure. Both their professional as well as their personal lives will be explored to determine if their current role has been influenced or impacted by their lived experiences. Their narratives will provide insight as to how their lived experiences shaped who they are within their current role. In this study, secondary administrators are those individuals who serve as school administrators in a high school setting. This study examined familiso, college choice, and how the role of family support played an inherent part in their educational trajectory and leadership pathway. It examined from the lens of a Chicana/Latina, the obstacles, barriers, and motivation they encountered during their secondary administrative or principal role.

### Research Questions

1. How do secondary Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators describe their professional and personal experiences in shaping their roles as an administrator?
2. What barriers do Chicana/Latina administrators experience as secondary school administrators?

3. What pathway did Chicana/Latinas use to reach their current position as a secondary school administrator?
4. What strategies do Chicana/Latinas use to overcome barriers and maintain their positions as school leaders?

### Research Design and Rationale

In this chapter, the purposes of using transcendental phenomenology as the research design will be explained. For this purpose, the research setting, selection of participants, data collection, and interview protocol will be discussed. Lastly, there will be a description of the data analysis process as well as the trustworthiness of the data, followed by a summary of the relevant points to the chapter.

There is little research specifically relating to Chicana educational leaders, so I adjusted the research to include Latinas/Hispanics in order to fulfill my study. According to Vera (2005), Chicanas are aware of their political, social, and cultural backgrounds and how these shape their existence as well as their perseverance. Living in a dual-culture finding a place can be taxing especially in the professional world and the world of educational leadership (Vera, 2005). Chicana feminists point out that a necessary survival skill when living between two cultures is learning how to maintain our ethnic or cultural identity while learning to adapt to the dominant culture.

## Research Methodology

Choosing the research method that best fits the study is imperative to the fidelity of the participants and the telling of their individual experiences in their voices. The research design used to conduct the research will be qualitative. Creswell (2009) refers to this “research as a means for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”. This design is crucial because the data will be collected through interviews. A phenomenological research approach was employed in order to focus on the research questions in this study pertaining to Chicana/Latina women as secondary school administrators. Moustakas (1994) describes the empirical phenomenological approach as one that provides a comprehensive description, hence giving the foundation of a reflective analysis that portrays the essence and experiences of the participants. This is because the relationship and experiences between the researcher and the participant was lessened. Creswell (2009) goes on to explain the process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of data. Moustakas explained the method of reflection that occurs throughout the phenomenological approach provides a logical, systematic, and coherent resource for carrying out the analysis and synthesis needed to arrive at essential descriptions of experience. Furthermore,

Moustakas states that phenomenological research allows for the exploration of shared experiences among a group of people.

The procedures, illustrated by Moustakas (1994), consist of identifying a phenomenon to study, bracketing out one's experiences, and collecting data from several persons who have experienced the phenomenon. In choosing transcendental phenomenology, I wanted to focus on the lived experiences of the Chicana educational leaders. The phenomenon being studied were the experiences of Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators experienced during their tenure. The intent of the study is to understand the lived experiences as they describe their experiences, obstacles, microaggressions encountered, family/career balance, family support, and adolescent experiences. Lastly, as the researcher, I used my ethnicity, race, and gender, as well as my experience as a high school principal to establish a connection with the participants, earn their trust, which in turn, created comradery between us.

#### Research Setting/Recruitment of Participants

Taking into account the limited number of Chicana/Latina secondary administrators in Southern California, a small group of participants were purposefully selected for the study. The use of deliberate and purposeful sampling is valuable as the study focuses on the personal and professional lived experiences of Chicana/Latina secondary administrators to understand not only their background and foundational values, but their trajectory towards their current role. The research participants needed to meet the following criteria:

1. Self-identified as Chicana/Latina Origin (regardless of race)
2. Female
3. Serving currently or have served as a secondary school administrator or has held this position recently in California

### Data Analysis

Each interview will be recorded and transcribed to ensure validity and consistency within the methodology. Once the transcriptions are completed for each participant, the transcriptions will be shared with the participants to ensure they are in agreement with the transcription. This will also promote accuracy of the data collection (Patter, 2012). The transcription was coded using a professional transcription company and the emerging themes will be explored. Creswell (2013) states that transcendental phenomenological data are analyzed in a precise manner, contrary to other approaches associated with qualitative research designs. Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological data can be challenging to analyze because of the amount of data collected through extensive interviews as well as the need for the researcher to bracket the data. Moustakas emphasizes that it is imperative, if not crucial, for the researcher to remove any bias in the phenomenological research study, and in turn delineate a review for several phenomenological analytical methods. The data was organized using bracketing while journaling any notes I made during my interview process. A reflection journal will be kept throughout the study in order to capture information

such as body language, participants' demeanor, or emotions that cannot be captured via a recording device.

### Trustworthiness

Creswell (2009) considers “validation” in qualitative research to be an attempt to assess the “accuracy” of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants. Creswell presents a third transformative format. In this format “a section for a theoretical lens (e.g., feminist, racial, ethnic) that informs the study in the literature review, trustworthiness in place of what I have been calling validation, section for being reflexive through personal biography, and both in the ethical and political considerations for the author. In order to ensure I will employ various strategies such as member checking, peer review, and provide a thick description. In member checking, I will discuss my findings with my participants to guarantee I am in fact representing who they are and their position. I will make any necessary changes that the participants request. Peer review will be utilized to examine both the data as well as the results of my study making sure my findings and the data collected match or overlap. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) noted that the validity checks made in phenomenological research are: 1) did the interviewer influence the participants’ experience; 2) is the transcription of the interview accurate; 3) during transcription analysis, were conclusions possible; 4) can structural description be traced back to the original examples of the experience; 5) is the structural description specific or general.



Lastly, providing a thick description by being specific and concrete on how I describe the lived experiences of Chicana educational leaders will be crucial and critical to my study. Creswell (2009) goes on to say that participants in a phenomenological study should be carefully chosen, being individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon in question and in turn the researcher can forge a common understanding. Glesne (2011) states that “part of demonstrating the trustworthiness of data is to realize the limitations of the study”.

### Positionality of the Researcher

Glesne (2011) referred to positionality in the following way:

Researchers cannot control Positionality in that it is determined in relations with others, but they can make certain choices that affect those relationships. For example, entering into research with a mindset of openness, curiosity, and desire and willingness to interact in collaborative ways is likely the result in a different Positionality than one in which the researcher maintains a mindset of entitlement, self-centeredness, and control (Glesne, 2011). Creswell (2009) added that the manner in which the researcher writes is a direct reflection of their own interpretation based on cultural, social, gender, class, and personal politics that the researcher brings to the research, furthermore stating that all writing is “positioned” and within a stance.

My interest in Chicana studies began long before I knew that “people like me” belonged in a university or that I would ever be associated with the title of Researcher. Growing up I was never considered “American” so I was always

referred to as that Mexican girl and in Mexico when we visited family ,I was never Mexican enough so I was called a Gringa or a Pocha. I quickly learned to code switch in order to blend in and never quite had a sense of who I was. The summer before my sophomore year in high school, I was chosen to participate in a program called JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) for the summer. This program was aimed to keep at-risk high school kids “off of the streets” and learn a trade. I was placed as a receptionist in the Planning Department for the City of Perris. One day I had the opportunity to speak with the Planning Director who took notice of this nervous brown girl. She looked like me, beautiful brown eyes, brown skin, and spoke Spanish. She asked me about myself and what I wanted to do in the future, no one had ever asked me that question before. I stumbled to find the right words and was finally able to muster up something about getting a good job. Small talk began and before I knew it we were speaking more and more. I learned that she identified herself as a Chicana and I slowly began to identify with her. She took me to a Chicana Leadership Conference at the University of California Riverside. At this conference I found my identity, was inspired, and felt passionate about who I was as a female and as a Chicana. A person who identifies as Chicana/o is of Mexican descent, raised in the United States, keeping the traditions of Mexico but lives in the United States. Being a Chicana is significant to me and my identity because I am very proud of my Mexican heritage, follow the traditions of my ancestors, and live everyday in an American society that frowns upon duality of cultures. Chicana feminists point

out that a necessary survival skill when living between two cultures is learning how to maintain our ethnic or cultural identity while learning to adapt to the dominant culture. González (1995) puts into perspective the dilemma of dual culturalism:

For Chicana, one dilemma in self-identification set in not because we do not know who we are or are misguided in applying labels, but because, like many other terms, Chicana has always been problematized as an identity in waiting, as an incomplete act.

Philosophically, spiritually, or politically, Chicanas do not all look at the world in the same way, or even in ways Euro-Americans might understand. It is not true that we are not who we are. If anything, we should suffer the accusation that we know too much who are, have too much identity.

Following this experience, I became highly involved in my high school, becoming an advocate for student change. I became president of our school's MEChA club and started sharing my new acquired knowledge about Chicana's, activism, the movement, and equity. MEChA stands for Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan, and began in the 1960's as a vessel of student empowerment.

I struggled to find my place during junior college, and once I transferred to a four-year university, I had a professor tell me that people like me did not belong in a university setting. I felt that I did not belong; self-doubt began to set-in and

as I became more “educated” the microaggressions intensified. I noticed that more and more of my female counterparts identified as Hispanic or Latinas and saw the identity of Chicana as being associated with a negative connotation. My self-identity began to change once again as I identified with Mexican-American. As a high school classroom teacher, I would take every opportunity to teach my students about the Chicano Movement, and the political implications that drove the movement as well as the amazing contributions made by Chicana’s.

As a mother of three beautiful children, I make sure to share my knowledge and passion of the Chicana movement, the struggles, the obstacles and the impositions that are placed on Chicana’s and women of color in the academic world. It is my obligation to empower my children who are resilient beings on how far we have come and on how to navigate through the world with their cultural duality.

As a school administrator I have experienced an insurmountable amount of microaggressions throughout my tenure. As a Chicana in a leadership role, I find it challenging and gratifying to tell my story and represent my people in a positive light. However, it was until I entered the doctoral program and began taking courses that I felt completely reinvigorated and passionate about my identity once again.

Being a first-generation college student, I lacked the drive to attend college, not because my parents did not believe in me or support me in my endeavors, but rather because I did not know anyone who had ever attended and

graduated from college. With the lack of role models and high school guidance, I believe that my role as a researcher is to be passionate as well as knowledgeable about my area of study, and to have a clear understanding of what it is to be a Chicana. I think that my personal experience is not an anomaly, and I am very interested in my experience as a vessel to further highlight and bring attention to the professional experiences of other Chicana leaders in educational leadership roles. Furthermore, I believe through advocacy and research the stories of Chicana leaders will inspire others to share their stories and in turn continue to inspire others. Lastly, as a Chicana researcher, it is my responsibility to educate those who use microaggressions or discriminate against Chicanas due to erroneous preconceived notions or assumptions.

### Data Collection

There are several steps that took place during the data collection process. A homogeneous sampling was used to conduct the study. The reason a homogenous sampling was chosen was because of the interest of the researcher in the lived experiences of a specific group of women. All participants were interviewed individually and the interviews were done by a virtual platform, by telephone, or in person, when possible, at the location of their choice. Where were the interviews completed? The researcher employed a semi-structured interview approach. This approach allowed me to first ask the already established questions. Next, clarifying questions were asked to broaden the opportunity for more elaborate responses. Lastly, new questions were asked

based on the previous responses. then ask clarifying questions to allow for elaborations on responses, and ask new questions based on the answers received. The following are questions that were asked of each participant:

1. To what extent has your ethnic identity shaped your educational leadership?
  - a. Policies
  - b. Practices
  - c. Leadership styles
2. What inspires you as an educational leader?
3. What obstacles and barriers have you experienced in your role as an educational leader?
4. What has been your defining moment in your educational leadership career?
5. How did your family influence you in becoming an educational leader?
6. What motivates you to continue being an educational leader?
7. How did college choice and your family influence you?

### Summary

Chapter Three discussed elements of a qualitative study, employing transcendental phenomenological methodology to examine the lived experiences of Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators in Southern California. The

next chapters will illuminate the relationship between the research questions and the findings as well as recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this transcendental phenomenological study conducted on secondary school administrators who self-identify as Chicana/Latina in order to explore their lived experiences as they worked through their tenure towards an administrative position. By delving into each individual's story and learning about their journey, the use of phenomenology as a methodology was able to capture the participants' experiences as secondary administrators (Husserl, 1912, 2012; Moustakas, 1994).

Although the research study did not seek to generalize the experiences of Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators, it did provide a better understanding of how these women navigated through their barriers, obstacles, and triumphs in order to achieve their current roles.

Chapter Four interprets and highlights the profiles of the participants as well as the results of this study. The narratives of seven Chicana/Latina administrative leaders in secondary education will be interpreted by way of the following four research questions:

1. How do secondary Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators describe their professional and personal experiences in shaping their roles as an administrator?



2. What barriers do Chicana/Latina administrators experience as secondary school administrators?
3. What pathway did Chicana/Latinas use to reach their current position as a secondary school administrator?
4. What strategies do Chicana/Latinas use to overcome barriers and maintain their positions as school leaders?

### Results of the Study

Seven secondary administrators were selected and interviewed for this study. In order to fully describe the lived experiences of the study participants specific criteria for this transcendental phenomenological study were necessary.

The criteria for this study were as follows:

- a. Participants had to identify as either Chicana/Latina (regardless of race).
- b. Identify as female.
- c. The participants had to have served in a secondary administrative role.

There were a total of six secondary participants who met the criteria were interviewed for this study. The secondary administrators had an average of 12 years of total educational experience, with the most veteran participant having 32 years of experience in education. All of the participants of this study were from Southern California. Two participants self-identified as Chicana, three self-identified as Mexican-American, one self-identified as Hispanic, and one self-

identified as Latina. However, during the interviews, two of the women said they also identified as Chicana. All seven participants used the self-identification of Latina interchangeably when describing themselves or their lived experiences as women of color. All seven participants serve or have served in a secondary administrative position at the school site level, while two participants currently serve at the district level.

All data collected was done by creating an interview guide under the advice of current practitioners who possess a doctoral degree and assisted me with my research study. All participants were emailed an invitation to participate in the research study, an informed consent form delineating the process, and the interview guide. Once the informed consent forms were received, interviews were scheduled with each participant. All interviews were conducted via Zoom at the availability of each participant's time schedule. Every interview began by the participants introducing themselves and sharing any information not previously requested that they deemed important to the study. Any questions or concerns the participants had were answered in accordance with the California State University, San Bernardino's Institutional Review Board (IRB) policy. If necessary and for clarification, additional questions were asked of the participants in accordance with the phenomenological study design in order to accurately understand the lived experiences of the participants.

At the completion of the Zoom recorded interviews, I reviewed the recordings and transcribed each of them. Upon the completion of transcribed

individual interviews, I emailed them to each respective participant for their review. Each participant was told that their interview would not have any identifiable information and pseudonyms would be given when referring to their interview. Once participants approved and confirmed their transcripts for accuracy, I utilized the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of phenomenological analysis as described by Moustakas (1994) in order to analyze the data:

Epoche: My analysis began by making sure I was setting aside my own prejudgements, biases, and personal experiences, so that I could focus solely on the participants within this study (Moustakas, 1994). This process is also referred to as bracketing.

Horizontalization: During each interview, I made sure to follow my interview guide and asked clarifying questions when needed. I focused on limiting my talking to ensure the data collected was solely that of the participants. I made sure that I was constantly taking notes and was aware of my personal biases during the interview process. Each transcript was reviewed carefully, line by line and several times in order to assign key themes, terms, and/or assign value to each of these. I color coded and highlighted any and all symbolic and important statements within the transcripts where the participants defined the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

1. Significant statements: All sentences, phrases, or block quotations that emulated how the study participants described their lived experience through their tenure were highlighted.

2. Textual description: This process necessitated the merging of what the participants experienced in this study while synthesizing the meaning and accurate examples from the participant interviews. Once the themes had formulated and clustered, the statements were reanalyzed to ensure accuracy and exact matching within the themes. I created a table for each theme with the meaningful statements delineating the correlation. To complete the breakdown of the analysis process, tables were added to demonstrate each theme.
3. Structural description: Both the meaning and the essence of the lived experiences of the participants is described within the phenomenon in order to describe the how in which this phenomenon took place within their experiences as Chicana/Latina secondary administrators.
4. Composite description: Lastly, this final step of the analysis described in the Steve-Colaizzi-Keen method of phenomenological analysis as described by Moustakas (1994) permits the researcher to describe the essence of the experience depicted by the participants of this study. This process requires the researcher to incorporate the structural and the textual descriptions, being the pinnable paragraph of this phenomenological research study. This section incorporates the what and how the research study

participants experienced throughout their navigation as

Chicana/Latina secondary administrators (Moustakas, 1994.)

The research questions as well as the interview questions helped with the creation of each theme and by aligning the two.

Table 1. *Main Themes*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>	<b>Theme</b>
How do secondary Chicana/Latina secondary administrators describe their professional and personal experiences in shaping their roles as an administrator?	3, 4, 5, 7	Challenging the status quo and past practice.  Finding inspiration, strength, and motivation to continue as secondary administrators and beyond.
What barriers do Chicana/Latina administrators experience as secondary administrators?	1, 3	Discrimination and Bias
What pathway did Chicana/Latina's use to reach their current position as a secondary administrator?	1, 2, 4, 6	Using their educational leadership style to impact the lives of those they serve.
What strategies do Chicana/Latina's use to overcome barriers and maintain their positions as secondary administrators?	1, 4, 5	<i>Familismo</i> and the importance of culture to continue to drive the work that needs to be done.

## Themes

While completing the horizontalization method, several themes and codes emerged. Five themes surfaced after additional analysis, review, and synthesizing of the participants' important statements and constructed meanings:

1. Challenging the status quo and past practice.
2. Using their educational leadership style to impact the lives of those they serve.
3. Discrimination and Bias.
4. Familismo and the importance of culture to continue to drive the work that needs to be done.
5. Finding inspiration, strength, and motivation to continue as secondary administrators and beyond.

**Theme 1: Challenging the Status Quo and Past Practice.** A thorough examination of the interviews as well as the analysis of the constructed meanings resulted in the emanation of the first theme, challenging the status quo. This was an overarching theme that derived from the seven Chicana/Latina secondary administrators while creating a sense of belonging in the school setting. Table 2 represents the findings for Theme 1. The following is structured by the formulated meanings that arose from the participants' interviews. The participants are identified by pseudonyms and their significant statements supported the identified formulated meanings as well as described how they described their experiences.

Table 2. *Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 1: Challenging the Status-Quo and Past Practice.*

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Formulated Meaning</b>
<p>If I see that there are policies in place that are acting as barriers for my parents, or my students, or my staff, and we have to talk about it, and we have to address that (Veronica, 2021)</p>	<p>Enacting change for the success of all stakeholders</p>
<p>Like I mentioned there was a sense of looking at everyone from just one perspective. So what I started to do, I really started to look at my subgroups, and what needs do each subgroup, require what services versus the whole, because every subgroup needs something different. But it was really difficult to have those conversations initially because not everyone was on board. (Carlotta, 2021)</p>	<p>Intentionally helping all students based on their need, not a catchall perspective</p>
<p>I think I gravitate to equity a lot. When PBIS came out, it was really important to, kind of demystify and make it more focused on not making assumptions about kids, not making assumptions about their families, I think I really took it to heart. Understanding that school, it's so value-based for a lot of teachers, and they use their values to judge and that was a lot of where my policies came back like, really focusing on building those practices that were empathetic and didn't build off of assumptions or preconceptions. (Aurora, 2021)</p>	<p>Demystifying the needs of students</p>

**Enacting change for the success of all stakeholders.** This was a recurring theme throughout the interviews with the seven Chicana/Latina secondary administrators. Veronica (2021) stated:

...because I try to do everything that I do I try to ensure that I'm being considerate of others, you know, that I'm gathering the information, I'm collecting feedback from my stakeholders. I'm being collaborative in the process, again, very family-oriented, wanting to show that everyone has a voice, you know, or when they're helping me, they're informing the decision-making that's occurring. And if they can't because of the circumstance, or because that particular decision, or the timeline, whatever, I'm not able to go through that process, then I think just the way that I go about communicating that information out to my staff very much aligns to my own ethnic identity and my cultural upbringing as well.

Rosandra shared:

I think because I along the way, I did see some social injustice, I think, or, um, some things that, you know, in terms of whether with others and within my own family and my own situation that, um, that I didn't see as, as right, is part of my practice and my philosophy and things that I do. There's always that sense of respect and the sense to fight. For me coming into administration, um, being in education, I think my practice is developing in terms of what I see just with our, um, Latino families. Um, and to be in such a time right now, or, um, we're in this movement, or we can, we're



promoting, you know, culture and diversity as opposed to seeing it as a negative thing. And so my practice is to be that voice, um, in every area of my education or my career, every area of how I impact my families, whether students or my families.

The participants of the study reflected on their own prior experiences and how they were treated as Chicana/Latinas within the educational realm.

Rosandrea stated:

So when I would have to translate in Spanish, I did not like it at the time because um, I was in the mindset of mom, like we're in, like we're in California, you have to learn at some point to speak English and I can't be doing this forever and I get, um, a sense of frustration. However, I know that when I started going into the classroom, there are certain topics or discussions because being a Chicana, um, that I went through that, unless you go and you can empathize with other, um, Latino families or whatever, you know, whatever, they identify. There's a sense of that respect because I could see some of their struggles as students. And I can see some of the things that they enjoyed, um, you know, in being, and having a particular ethnicity.

**Intentionally helping all students based on their need and not as a catchall perspective.** One participant clearly indicated that she recognized the need to help students on the individual basis and not a one size fits all approach.

Carlotta (2021) explains:

...just building the relationships with my staff and my students and my families and watching how they started and where they ended and not everyone finished strong because that can happen. Um, but I think just knowing that we had created meaningful opportunities for these students meant a lot. She also shared “but it was also at that moment that I realized that I could, um, help change perceptions about not just this type of kid, but Hispanic kids, African-American kids, um, Asian kids, and to start having conversations about ethnicity, because I was always afraid to not share that because I didn't know what everyone around me would say or how they would feel about it. Um, but, but it was at that moment that I realized, you know, what, we, we could make some good positive change here, um, district-wide you know, so that was my defining moment..

Carmen indicated that at her site:

...new comers have had this negative connotation and I don't think it's appropriate. So we've really shifted how we address our ELD one through four students as our international students. Um, we have a Dream Center and that's where our intervention coordinator and our Title III coach that works with our EI population. It's a classroom, it's the Dream Center. I just finished budget and you know, our students with IEP, they're not graduating at the same rate as our general ed students. So we're blessed with tons of funding. And so I'm funding an additional academic counselor, focus with our students with IEP, similar to our, um, our other, our other

counselor with ELs, but with students with IEP and really challenging the counseling team then to shift their practice.... So then now how can they frame action plans and goals around our African-American students?

Long-term English learners are still with the regular academic counselors so that they can provide differentiated support and interventions to those kids.

For these secondary administrators addressing the specific needs of their students and not using a one size fits all approach to education has been the key to their success and something they are very proud of.

**Demystifying the needs of students.** While sharing her experiences as a secondary administrator, Miriam recalled a time when felt compelled to change and demystify the needs of her students based on the preconceived opinions of her staff:

There's a reason I was put into this place at this time. Um, so it was even within the school. And they thought that they really thought that. They really thought that they were, um, appreciating, you know, the kids. And they thought that they were, you know, um, making the kids feel comfortable and in touch with their culture. And I, you know, obviously I did a huge overhaul, but it's hard though, because as the principal, you know, you're ultimately responsible for everything, every single thing that goes on on your campus. And so one of my biggest tasks was mindsets. You know was mindset and was like how they thought and what they

thought, and, you know, those embedded beliefs they had about the, the kids and the families and the community that we were working in. (2021)

For Miriam, the need to address and demystify the student population based on location was a priority. She also shared, “I guess, taken, you know, aback by the, that I had to drastically work with that... kind of that culture and it was like already embedded in how everybody just thought at the school.”

Theme 2: Using their educational leadership style to impact the lives of those they serve. A thorough examination of the interviews as well as the analysis of the constructed meanings resulted in the emanation of the second theme, where the participants used their educational leadership to impact the lives of those they serve.

Table 3. *Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 2: Using Their Educational Leadership Style to Impact the Lives of Those They Serve.*

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Formulated Meaning</b>
<p>I'm very inclusive. And I think a lot of that has to do... just to, like I said, it's really hard to separate who I am from my ethnicity and my gender. Um, but yeah, I, I think, uh, I definitely feel that a lot of who I am as a leader wasn't necessarily what I learned in books, or in a doctoral program, or, or in a master's program that leads and informs my work, but a lot of my style of leadership really</p>	<p>Knowing who you are</p>

<p>came from my upbringing, which is connected very much so with my, with my race and, and gender. (Ximena, 2021)</p>	
<p>You know, my ethnic background, my cultural upbringing has been very much focused on, you know, you can achieve anything, you just gotta put the work in. And yeah, as a Latina, that means that you gotta put a little bit more work, and you just got to know that going in. So, either are you gonna do whatever it takes to get through that wall or not, right? Don't let the wall stop you. It's there. If anything, that should help to empower you and give you, you know, the additional <i>ganas</i> that you need to break through it. You know, just know that it might be a little harder for you, because it's been harder for, you know, like me, for my dad, for my mom, you know, with all these things. And, you know, we just, I don't know. I feel like culturally and just, you know, aligned with my ethnic background, we just do what we gotta do to get the job done. Right? And so, my leadership style is I'ma do what I gotta do to get the job done. (Veronica, 2021)</p>	<p>Grit and putting in the work</p>
<p>So my leadership, equity, respect. Um I did through my doctorate learn about different leadership styles, and I'm definitely that of a transformational leader that we work together to create that culture, that sense of respect, that together we can move forward and not in isolation. And so I definitely, um, I see people for the values that they can bring to the table as opposed to their occupation or their title, um, because that's not what defines us, it's part of us, but I value people and I think having my respect for my own culture, my own people and the upbringing that I've had, um, it's helped me value people. And I think that's</p>	<p>Leadership style identification</p>

allowed me to be successful in my leadership abilities. (Rosandrea, 2021)	
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**Knowing who you are.** Each participant showed great pride in their educational leadership abilities and how these were the guiding principles for their decision-making process. Aurora described how although she had never been asked a question regarding her ethnicity and the correlation to her leadership style, she still knew the answer. Aurora shared:

...think it's more um, it's more personal. I really draw on um... I don't know, I've never made the connection with the two and I've never questioned like you're asking me now, I don't think anyone has ever asked me that question, but yet I know the answer. Yeah, and my answer is um, it's like my dad you know, who grew up... I grew up in um, constant awareness of the inequities you know, just constantly, and his came more um, from an angry perspective because he was such a victim of it, of the inequity. But I, you know, his whole thing was education, and education breaks the cycle, and education... And so, I think for me, when- especially when I would talk to um, you know, counsel the younger kids um, that voice was always in me, and you know, that you can overcome anything even family you can. I know you have no control over family, but in elementary family really is um, they create a lot of you know, they create a lot of uh, some other traumas

that they're going through, they create some of the apathy that they're going through. But um, but I saw and witnessed you know, a family that overcame that. So, um I don't think it translates other than that's a part of me and when I talk to kids, and the reason I see things differently is because of what I saw as I was growing up.

Aurora found a deep connection knowing who she was as a leader and the impact this has on those she serves. She was able to draw on past experiences and create her own identity within her leadership style that is the foundation of what is within her.

**Grit and putting in the work.** According to Merriman Webster (2021) Grit is defined as: firmness of mind or spirit : unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger. All seven participants expressed their grit as well as the need to put in the work to get the job done. Rosandrea (2021) said:

...the equity piece and, and being a voice. Um, as a coordinator, part of my job is to work with the, our, our, like, um, our Latino community and partner with them to help promote, um, you know, different aspects of literacy and diversity and culture and empower them. Um, and so I think because I've been treated myself in the last especially, in the last few years of who I am and what I represent. Um, it's provided opportunities for me to be who I am. And so trying to explain, but who I am and, and who I am as a person and who I am in terms of my ethnicity, um, has been evident, I guess. And it has landed myself to this opportunity.

Veronica adds:

My title does not mean that I do not, you know, work alongside my custodial staff, or my food services staff, or my ground staff. No, I'm gonna do whatever I need to do to get the job done. I want to work alongside you. So, if I gotta roll up my sleeves, let's do it, you know? And I just felt like that's very much aligned to, again, my ethnic, identity, as well as my culture. We just, we're just pretty much a hardworking people. I take great pride in that. And so, I have to, I feel like that's something that I need to hold true to, and I have to continue to honor because that's a part of, reminding myself to remain humble, because I've been granted such wonderful opportunities and blessings and, um, I have to just remember to humble myself sometimes. Right? And what does that mean? That means that, you know, I've got to do whatever it takes to make sure that this organization, that this school can continue to run to a level of excellence. So, when I had a skeletal crew here for distance learning, you know, when people were able to work remotely? We do what we gotta do, you know, so it's all hands-on deck.

The grit that the participants embody is a true testament to the passion and dedication they have to their craft as educational leaders. Their willingness to always push forward to do what is right for their students, staff and school community symbolizes their commitment to position.

**Leadership Style Identification.** Carlotta (2021) went on:



Well, I will tell you that growing up, like I mentioned, we, I, I had that negative perception. I wanted to make sure that people saw me. I wanted to make sure that, um, they saw more than just Carlotta. Um, you know, and so, um, I wanted them to know who I was, where I came from, what my passion was. And so, um, but I also wanted them to know that it wasn't just a stereotype, you know, who, who I am and how I represent myself, because I'm not, um, in, in your face kind of person. And I think there's, there's this, um, perception that if you're an in-your-face kind of person, you're, you're aggressive, you're, you're bitchy. Right? And so I, I, I, that, that's not who I am. I'm, I'm calm. Um, I like to have conversations, um, for me it's about learning, um, and, and growing. And so I think that there was, there was that struggle because I think people felt, "Well, she's calm and she's quiet, and she's not an in your face." Because that's how Latinas are they're, they're subservient. Right?

And, and it was just who I was. That was just my, my personality. Um, so I guess just being comfortable in being who I am, um, and not allowing other people's perceptions, um, want to change who I am. And for me, just to continue to operate in a way that's comfortable for me, that will show people that this is, this is how I operate, and I'm not going to allow some of these other, um, perceptions to make me change.

Ximena (2021) also explained,

I think Latino women, um, are all different. You know, we're all different. Uh, my mother, uh, I think, in, in many ways, I don't want to say a stereotypical Latina woman in that. We are very, um, passionate, and we're very, uh, nurturing. My mother's very nurturing. And, I make sure to show, um, everyone around me how much, how grateful I am for their work. I show them that I care about them as people. I think, um, and they're very responsive to that. Um, so I think my leadership style was very collaborative.

**Theme 3: Discrimination and Bias.** A thorough examination of the interviews as well as the analysis of the constructed meanings resulted in the emanation of the second theme, where the participants used their educational leadership to impact the lives of those they serve. Table 4 represents the findings for Theme 3. The following is structured by the formulated meanings that arose from the participants' interviews. Significant statements supported formulated meanings as well as described how they described their experiences.

Table 4. *Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 3: Overcoming Barriers.*

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
I think I was fighting a lot of stereotypes of, of women. Um, and I think that at the time that I started, um, my leadership roles, it was a time when there were a lot of	Gender Stereotypes

<p>white men in, in those roles. Um, and I think a lot of, a lot of these individuals still had that perception and that bias, that, um, women shouldn't be leaders. Um, I think there's the, there was a gender bias that I was, I was dealing with. Um, there was a lot of discrimination. I, I will tell you working with, um, several male principals. Um, I was, I was told that I was there to support my male administrators. Um, I, one time as we were preparing for an event, um, I was told that my contribution was to wash dishes and I was walked over to the kitchen and I was told to wash dishes.(Carlotta, 2021)</p>	
<p>I think the biggest obstacle has been um, not understanding, not growing up with um, with typical social cues. Um, I don't read them, I didn't used to read them well, I'm much, much better. Um, I think that has been an obstacle, I think um, focusing on um, I think sometimes focusing on the inequity can sometimes pigeonhole you. Um, I wouldn't say that's been a problem, but that's a constant challenge I have to not be pigeonholed. Um, I would say that's the thing to- to- to approach um, equity and to cope with the um, uh, the attitudes that are really focused, the negative attitudes and negative and low expectations that are focused on students of color. Um, it's hard to navigate that, because they don't see it and I see it very clearly, and it hard.(Aurora, 2021)</p>	<p>Navigation</p>
<p>Being a, being a young, uh, Chicana female leader, (laughs) all three. Um, I'm 41, but I still look younger than my age. And so that alone. And so, and then</p>	<p>Having to Prove Yourself</p>

<p>being a female. And then the education around me hasn't been too bad because there's a lot of females in education. I think it's the opposite. But in terms of, of being in leadership at such an early age, I guess for me, because I became, I think I became, uh, an administrator, I was either 34, 35 and I looked younger. Um, and here's this, you know, small, petite Latina. And I remember at the secondary level, I had to prove myself. Uh, I had to prove that I was knowledgeable, that I was skilled and I understood our students. And I think, um, I think having my ethnicity and growing up in a particular area in, in Ontario, um, I had that little feistiness to me, I guess, to, um, to, um, prove that I was more capable than what I think people's assumptions of me were. (Roseandrea, 2021)</p>	
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**Gender Stereotypes.** In each of the seven interviews, the participants faced barriers with regards to gender specific stereotypes in one way or another.

Carlotta (2021) stated:

I think in that discrimination and that gender bias, there was also a sense of, um, sexual harassment, I think because of the perception of women, I was not seen as a leader and I wasn't, they didn't see my strengths or my skills. So I think that I was seen as an object. I will tell you, um, I had several, uh, male administrators who, um, would look at certain parts of, uh, my body. Well, I'll say it in my chest area, or just looking up and down. Um, and, uh, I had gotten to a point where I would have to put my, my laptop in front of me, you know, so just, just trying to get through those,

those situations. Um, I think that because of that, um, there was, uh, an unfair treatment between, between other administrators, you know, like, like I mentioned, washing, washing dishes, I got more, um, assignments. Um, I was, uh, yelled at, in front of other administrators. I was yelled at in front of staff. Um, I would have a conversation behind closed doors with, um, with said principal. And we would deal with the situation and things, you know, were resolved and then going back out and having a meeting and then that set administrator would, or principal would bring those issues up. Not to talk about how it was resolved, but to address it again, you know? So, um, that, that made it very, very challenging. Um, other administrators were allowed to take time off for their family. Um, I was told that if I take time off for my family, that's because I don't know how to balance both professional and personal. Um, uh, male administrators were able to take time off to go to doctor's appointments. Um, I was not. Um, and so it, it just made it really difficult to, to operate, um, and to really enjoy that, that role, you know? Um, and so I think the other, and I could go on and on, but a lack of, of networking. I w- I didn't feel like I was in the in group. I didn't have a mentor. I didn't have a sponsor, someone who could support me and build me up and kind of guide me. Um, so I think in terms of professional barriers, though, those are the ones that, that stick out the most.

Carmen shares:

So when I first applied to be an assistant principal, um, I had, I interviewed, I remember I had two interviews back to back in different parts of LA. And I was in my late 20s and I went in, had the interview. And right before I left, um, the principal was male, older, Latino. Um, and the, I think it was either his AP or his AD, someone that did athletics, a white man were in the interview. And it was only two of them. And I had gone from an interview where there were like five people, women and men involved. ....he says, "I'm just very surprised that you were able to answer all of my questions, the way that you did." And so I looked at him and I said, "Well, what do you mean?" 'Cause I can't keep my mouth shut. Right? He's like, "Well, what do you mean?" And he's like, "Well, you, you have a lot of knowledge on all of these different systems that I didn't think you would have because of your experience." Carmen went on to share more by stating,

So he saw this young girl with these two men answering their questions. I didn't get the job, whatever I was fine. Um, it worked out, I, I'm a big believer that things happen for a reason. Um, but I think just my age, so people, people see me and they see, yeah, they see a female, they see Latina, but then they see this young girl.

These participants experienced the stereotypes associated with their gender at the beginning stages of their secondary administrative careers.

**Navigation:** All of the participants interviewed spoke to some degree of the challenges within the navigation of secondary administration. Ximena (2021) shared an example:

I mean a lot of barriers, a lot. Um, I feel sometimes that in public education policy, politics, um, funding, uh, um, mostly the politics, I think, get in the way of the right work. And we were looking at the contents. And, uh, as we talk about, you know, uh, society and politics and funding of public schools, and so on, we see that there are so many barriers. Um, but I think for me, uh, and I had this conversation with our superintendent, several people, um, being the only woman in the room a lot of the times, um, has been extremely challenging in that, um, I'm viewed as meek and quiet as compared to "strong." And, um, you know, I've... I had this conversation.....I said, "The way we define a strong leader, you say, 'I need a strong leader at the school.' So when you say I need a strong leader at this school, or I need a strong community of school administrator, I need a strong administrator of instruction, the minute people hear strong, what is their interpretation of strength?"

Miriam gave the following example:

I don't know if it had more to do with being female or Hispanic or combination of both. And, um, because I found that I was much more qualified for positions throughout my career that went to either white

females or, you know, non-Hispanic males or females in general, you know.

After much thought, Miriam followed up with the following story:

It was a very affluent school and community and the PTA, the PTA was doing a barbecue. I was brand new to this ticking and I, I actually, I loved the school. I love the staff and you know, you're gonna have great kids everywhere, right. That's universal, that's universal. You're gonna have great kids everywhere. But I remember what, you know, the, the principal telling us to go to the PTA barbecue. And I remember walking down and I remember one of the PTA moms literally looking down on me. Like, literally she goes, "Oh, we haven't called for the secretaries yet." (laughs) And I was like, "Oh, okay. I'm the new assistant principal, nice to meet you." And then she was like, "Oh my gosh, like, I hope that didn't come across the wrong way. I hope you didn't..." well, how would that come across? You know, like, how would she's like, "Oh, I hope that didn't come across the wrong way." I'm like, "Well, no." So I don't know if I was more offended at the fact that she... and of course we know secretaries run half of our schools. I don't know if I was more offended that she was so demeaning and degrading about the role of a secretary or that she talked to me in that tone because she made the assumption that that's what, that I wasn't an administrator because of my physical appearance, you know. Um, I also remember going to various events, and I think that this is this a



significant, um, going to various events, um, as the, the administrator and with like a teacher who happened to be a man, um, who happened to be not a minority, and they would walk up to him assuming he was the assistant principal.

Having to prove yourself. Age, appearance, and ethnicity was a prevalent theme which the interview participants referred to when they felt they had to prove themselves. Veronica shared:

...so it was that, it was my age because I was young and I'm coming in and telling, you know, veteran and veteran staff that, you know, we're gonna do things a certain way. Um, and, you know, I was a Latina, I'm Hispanic, you know? And so, I think those are things that we have to remain mindful of. Again, we cannot, let it slow us down, or let it charge us up. Right? And so I obvi- you know, I always choose to let that charge me up and, um, put a little fire underneath me. But so those were, those were some of the things, that I had to kinda work through when, um, really had some difficulty establishing some relationships with some people because of that at the very beginning, and really had to work harder to prove myself, you know? And again, that's okay. It is what it is, you know? I mean, I know that it's not okay, but at the same time, that's what it is, and that's kinda what it is now, and I just gotta push through it. I just gotta work. I just gotta push through it. Because the way I look at it is the only way we're gonna change it is by continuing to push through it, you know?

So, um, and that's something that even as a principal, when I first transitioned....., I was 30, I'd just turned 32 in November. I transitioned in December. That was an issue too, this young female coming in, you know? And so those were some of the same barriers that I kinda went through, more so with my veteran staff here. ...I just really had to establish myself, not only at that school, but in the district. So that was a little bit of a, more of a challenge.

Rosandra shared:

At least now I'm aware that, um, I guess I look a particular way, but it's until I, I have the conversations and meet with people that are like, okay, like she knows what she's talking about. You know, she has the experience, um, she's been in education for 16 years, but, um, that always seems like all those aspects of who I am as a whole kind of is not the norm, I think, for our society. And so, I still feel like I'm paving the way for a lot of younger girls. (2021).

**Theme 4: Familismo.** A thorough examination of the interviews as well as the analysis of the constructed meanings resulted in the emanation of the second theme, where the participants used their educational leadership to impact the lives of those they serve.. Table 5 represents the findings for Theme 4. The following is structured by the formulated meanings that arose from the participants' interviews. Significant statements supported the identified formulated meanings as well as described how they described their experiences.

Table 5. *Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 4: Familismo, and the Importance of Culture and Family.*

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Formulated Meaning</b>
<p>I think the, just the like values and morals, and the culture has really influenced, again, the way that I conduct myself and the way that I lead. Um, when, in terms of going into education, honestly, I'm the first in my family to go into education. So, you know, um, there wasn't any kind of, you know, particular influence or encouragement when it came to like, you know, going into education. You know, sometimes some, some educators come from an, a family of educators, right? And that wasn't the case with me. (Veronica, 2021)</p>	<p>Family influence &amp; Support</p>
<p>...just always, just um, "Keep going you know you, don't give up, it's school, you know, college will you change everything. Um, and mostly just you don't have to be good at it, you just have to persevere um, you know, we're not concerned about your you know, your grades and you know, you this high-achieving," none of that was like an expectation um, it was, "Do you best and um, just what, we have to get through this, we have to get you through this," so they were huge, it was huge. (Aurora, 2020)</p>	<p>College choice and family influence</p>

**Family influence and Support.** It was evident during the participants' interviews that family influence and support was the driving force behind these successful women. Carmen (2021) shared:

I think just, you know, having my mom, my mom was in she'll even say when she was in Mexico, um, she was like a catechism teacher and she, um, she came back from boarding school. She taught at the elementary school. Um, my mom wasn't, my mom wasn't educated here, but she made sure that my brother and I, um, did our homework. I would sit there and cry in high school because I was, you know, taking calculus and there was no way that she could help me. Um, but just, you know, that reassurance and that pushing of like, no, you have to finish, um, you have to do this, you have to, whatever it was that I had to do, she made sure that it was done. Um, she made sure I had warm food every day. You know, my, you know, she was just your typical Mexican mom.

Veronica shared:

I was a, a first-generation college student, first in my family to go to college, um, from both my mom and my dad's side of the family. Um, and the first one to go into education, and I'm still the only educator in my family. But I would say that again, just the culture, the traditions, the, um, the values, you know, that I've been taught is really what, what has helped push me into education because I wanted to take what I've learned and how I've been influenced and make, and do the same, you know, with

students and, others, and staff. So that's kinda how that's played a role in my, in my, my journey.

Rosandrea (2021) shared a different perspective with regards to family influence and support. She said:

...so it wasn't as a result of my family, it was a result of the lack of that connectedness at home. But I have to give props to my mom because my mom was that quiet, gentle spirit that got us through and believed in us and provided for us, um, our food and our clothing. And was this, that spirit, that everything was going to be okay if she can make it through, then, you know, we can be successful. And so, um, yeah, I, I don't see myself necessarily at times as a leader. I see myself as a person that just loves what she does. And in that, there's that leadership ability, I guess.

**College Choice and Family Influence.** The seven participants shared a different perspective with regards to college choice and family influence with the commonality that college was the only way to improve their lives. Aurora (2021) shared:

...college choice, I think um, you know, it was like I knew that they wanted me to go but I actually had very little help um, it was a very different time. You know, back when my dad, my mom didn't go to college but my dad, back when he went it was easy to get in you know. It was like... and they were all the students loans available, and it was so cheap, it was um, it

was just different, whereas in the late '80s early '90s college- getting into college was very different. And um, the only thing that they did say, like my dad was, did say um, you know, "You've gotta through affirmative action, you have to. You know, you gotta mark that box, that's how you're gonna get in and it doesn't um, just get into wherever you can go." And um, and so, I think I just chose to go where I thought I could get in and I thought I could make it, so.

Veronica (2021) shared her experience:

...really wasn't much of an influence other than, you know, just trying to support the process. You know, being a first-generation college student, uh, I didn't have anyone to really rely on to help me through that, through that journey, um, so that was a challenge. So, if, if anything, it was just like that constant encouragement of like, "You can do it." But my family was not well-versed in UC versus CSU systems and community college, nor was I. I did not have a good experience in high school. And that's why in turn, I was so strongly influenced to become a high school educator because I said, "You know what, I gotta be what kids need. And people weren't there for me. And I gotta be there for kids because they see the impact this can have on the trajectory of their lives. And I got to do better, you know, for kids." And so, um, in high school, I didn't have, I didn't have any support. I actually graduated high school early 'cause I was ready to get up out of there. I was like, "This is not, this is not for me." And so,

graduating high school early, I went through the community college system because I didn't know any better. We were struggling financially. So, you know, I had to work to try to get through community college and my parents would help me with my books. And back then, it wasn't very much, it was a \$6 a unit. Um, but I had to figure out how to transfer to, CSU, um, I couldn't, you know, that was, that's what was affordable for me.

Miriam shared a similar experience:

Um, college choice initially was, it was, um, uh, it was my only choice, right? It was, uh, it was Citrus College. I went to Citrus College. It was my only choice, it was, it was the local community college. I knew... That was all I knew. Um, so again, you know, um, and I know I said it, but just to reiterate, I just kind of told my parents, "I'm applying." My dad was very like, "Great. That's good. How can I help you? Let me know." Um, my mom was kind of like, "Oh, okay. You know, let me know how it goes." Um, and then, uh, from there I actually had applied to UCLA and I applied to, um, Cal State LA, you know, as a transfer student. (2021)

Rosandrea (2021) shared:

...you know, because when I went to get my master's and my doctorate, I got all As for my master's. I was given...award for my department of educational leadership at Cal State Fullerton for being recognized for my grades and the impact that one day I would make as leader in education.

However, my high school years, I was not thinking about college. I knew that college was a thing, but I was so occupied, um, with, and I think that's why I resonate with my, with students and with kids, because I was a social butterfly. I was distracted. I was on the dance team which kept me, but, um, I didn't think of college as a way. And then my senior year, I started making some changes because I knew I'm like, okay, I have to graduate because I was very close to not graduating, which I, I'm not too proud, but I use, I mean, I still share. I'm transparent in all aspects of my life, but, um, I almost didn't make it, so it was my senior year at the end when we had some kind of college fair at school. And, and then, um, FAFSA, so the, third department came and was talking about, you know, um, getting money to go to school. And my friend was like, yeah, I'm gonna go to Mt. SAC. And I'm like, whoa, we didn't have internet. We didn't have phones, I mean, we had like flip phones, but we didn't have access to the colleges. So unless they came or we went, um, she's like, yeah, I'm gonna go to, uh, Mt. SAC. And I'm like, well, what's Mt. SAC, she's like, Oh, it's a college. And it's a two year. And I had no understanding of two-year, four years. All I knew is like, at that time I was, I remember feeling okay, well, I'm gonna go to school. I have to figure out what that even looks like. So, I had a car, luckily, and I would drive myself to Mt. SAC and meet with their advisor and, you know, figure things out. So, I was going back and forth, but it wasn't something that I was set, or



my grades were set for. It just honestly happened where one day I'm like, I think I wanna, I think I wanna go. I was undecided, but being the oldest of five kids, having that motherly, I think, um, at times not by choice, but having that motherly role in my own household. I helped my mom. I helped, you know, with the kids.

**Theme 5: Finding Inspiration, Strength, and Motivation.** A thorough examination of the interviews as well as the analysis of the constructed meanings resulted in the emanation of the second theme, where the participants used their educational leadership to impact the lives of those they serve. Table 6 represents the findings for Theme 5. The following is structured by the formulated meanings that arose from the participants' interviews. Significant statements supported the identified formulated meanings as well as described how they described their experiences.

Table 6. *Significant Statement and Formulated Meaning Examples of Theme 5: Finding Inspiration, Strength, and Motivation to Continue*

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Formulated Meaning</b>
<p>So it goes back to you know, my... what drives me. It, it continues to drive me every day. And, and that is, uh, that I know the work we do matters to our kids. It matters to children. And, you know, right now, it's really tough, um, but I know that every, every decision, every action we take every, every kind act we have, whenever we, um, respond to parent concerns all of that, it's gonna, take our kids one step closer to achieving their American dream. And that's</p>	<p>The work that drives me</p>

really why we, why we do this. (Ximena, 2021)	
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**The Work that Drives Me.** Carlotta (2021) shared:

Well, I want to be a role model for, um, our students, for Latinas. I want to help families understand the educational system. I mean, especially our minority families, because as they have conversations with them, they don't know, and they don't know how to connect with those resources and they don't have relationships with their, um, principals or their APs, because there there's still that idea that I only talk to them if my kid is doing something bad. Right? Um, so I, I want to help families navigate through that. Um, I want them to know what's available. Um, I want them to know that, um, they're worth it, that, you know, there's, it's never too late. They can go in and make change, get their education, help their, help their students be successful. Um, I want them to... Let's see what I have here. Um, I, I had written down some, some thoughts here.. Just, you know, I, I just want them to know that that they're valued and that, uh, that, that they're important. And from a human perspective, I, I want to be there for, for all of my students and my staff and my community. Um, but I also want to send the message that here I am, this Latina who was raised in this single parent household, um, with a lot of stuff going on at, at home. Um, and not just growing up, but getting married and during, during that,

that time period, but it was still able to earn her degrees and, and move forward with, with my educational goals and my professional goals. Um, and so I just want to be able to give back, um, and, and let families know that, you know, they can do it too.

Carmen shared her experience:

I think that when I was in the classroom, I made changes in my classroom, but that wasn't my classroom. So that's really why I left the classroom. I wanted to have a bigger impact, a bigger change. Now, as a, as a school leader, as I said, I get myself not in trouble, but people question what we're doing, and then I have to go through the right process. So I'm hoping that, yeah, we did the waiver for EL program, but I'm hoping that policy changes so that there's no need for that waiver. You know? So knowing that you can impact policy and knowing that you can make changes and shifts and you know, right now it's my school and that school community, um, to really help our students. (2021)

Miriam concurred:

...you know, again, cliché, but it's the kids. You know, we did a distribution today. Um, my, my... we're doing a wellness week and, in a week and a half, uh, we're, we're gonna do a week just of mental health for our kids. We're gonna do a day of like teaching them to journal, teaching them the power of music. You know, we're gonna do an event a day, um, teaching them the power of, you know, um, calming apps. And so we did a

distribution today. We, we may backpacks for them with like the men-  
Mandela coloring bogs. And so we made these backpacks for them, with  
all these wellness things that, um, journals markers. And like it's the  
students and to see their faces and to see how appreciative they are and  
to see the joy, and mostly to know that I'm in some way as, as little as my  
new visit is, or as big as it is, that I am ,um, providing them, you know, a  
love and a passion for education that hopefully they're gonna carry with  
them.

Aurora (2021) added:

The work that still needs to be done, that's what motivates me. Um, the  
opportunity that I have each and every day to continue to do this great  
work and impact and influence the lives around me, as well as all of the  
work that still needs to get done. Everything that I see that, you know, of,  
all of the in- injustices, um, learning the stories of my students and, and  
seeing how much support is still needed. I mean, it's ongoing work, you  
know? And so, I see it as, um, this is God's work. I'm just here to do his  
work. I, you know, I have a strong faith and I go where he needs me, and I  
just pray that I have the tools that I need. But he equips me with the tools  
that I need to be successful and to do the work that he needs to, he needs  
me to do. And so, I just feel like there's just still so much work to do, um,  
and that's kinda what keeps me going every day. Yeah.

Roseandrea concluded:

I think I see growing and I see learning, um, now as an adult, as a privilege and I like learning. Um, and I think getting, receiving new opportunities to grow, because when you have new knowledge, you can grow in those areas and get experience in those areas. And so, um, I definitely, for me right now, more than ever identifying with my ethnicity and identifying as a Chicana. I've become more passionate in understanding our history so I can support and see, you know, what are some strengths of our society right now? What are some things that I can help with and make a difference? And though, so for me is if I can make a difference, then and if I can, you know, lead by example in some ways then I'm happy as a leader in that way. So, it's the continued growth for me. Um, I'm never gonna, you know, be at a 100%, you know, perfection of my knowledge, but you know, just learning, um, and we never become, um, as humans it's, we can continue learning in, in different aspects and I think that's the beauty of it.

#### Essence of Chicana/Latina Secondary Administrators

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore how Chicana/Latina Secondary Administrators navigated through their cultural wealth exploring their lived experiences that led them to their current role and successes. Along the way, there were obstacles, and barriers, however, the triumphs and success outweighed those experiences. The participants, overall, reported finding strength from their experiences. The seven participants were all

secondary administrators from Southern California and all were either site administrators or had recently been site secondary administrators.

By capitalizing on their leadership abilities to enact a change in policies and practices they used their personal experiences as guidance to affect the change they needed. These experiences have been the guiding principles and nonnegotiable that have led to their growth and success

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to investigate how Chicana/Latina secondary administrators navigated through the barriers and obstacles that led them to triumphs and discernment during their tenure. I conducted a semi-structured interview with seven participants who self-identified, three identified as Chicana, two identified as Mexican-American, one as Hispanic, and one as Latina. However, when answering the interview questions and referring to themselves all of the participants used their primary ethnic identity and the term Latina interchangeably. By way of the following research questions, 1) How do secondary Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators describe their professional and personal experiences in shaping their roles as a secondary school administrator? 2) What barriers do Chicana/Latina administrators experience as secondary school administrators? 3) What pathway did Chicana/Latina's use to reach their current position as a secondary school administrator? 4) What strategies do Chicana/Latina use to overcome barriers and maintain their positions as school leaders?" guided this study. These research questions were addressed through the formation of the ethos of the participants' experiences. The participants shared their experiences and motivation to continue on their educational leadership journey was a driving force to impact change. Although there were obstacles and barriers that were encountered, the *ganas* and grit to prevail was much more powerful and a strong

driving force. All seven participants shared their need and desire to impact change and inspire students and other female leaders by changing the narratives of their stories.

### Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this study are consistent with the comprehensive research of literature review found in Chapter Two. Yosso (2005) discusses the importance of Community cultural wealth defining it as “aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital”. The participants in this study revealed that it was the essence of their community and cultural wealth that permitted them to navigate through their high school, college, and professional careers. By capitalizing on their past experiences, the study participants were able to navigate successfully towards their administrative roles.

### Summary of the Study

The research questions guided this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study in order to ascertain an extensive understanding of the lived experiences of Chicana/Latina secondary administrators. The data collected was triangulated using semi-structured interviews via Zoom. The participants of this study were all either current or had recently been secondary administrators. Since the self-identification of Chicana/Latina was necessary for this research study, their ethnic identity was essential.



So barriers from the professional, uh, I think I was fighting a lot of stereotypes of, of women. Um, and I think that at the time that I started, um, my leadership roles, it was a time when there were a lot of white men in, in those roles. Um, and I think a lot of, a lot of these individuals still had that perception and that bias, that, um, women shouldn't be leaders. I think in terms of personal, um, I was dealing with that cultural because my mom was, she pushed me. She wanted me to do everything. Um, and she always told me that I, that I could. And so she was a big supporter. On the other hand, my in-laws were, "What about your kids? You're going to come late. Uh, you need to be there for them." And so there was this, this contradiction, so it made it really, really hard. Um, and there was a generational bias because as a woman, I'm supposed to be home taking care of the kids. Um, and I tried to do that and, and that that's the other, uh, uh, personal barrier, you know, trying to balance personal and professional. I would work all week and then I was expected to come home. It was like, I had a second job on, on the weekend having to do the cleaning, having to, um, you know, do the shopping. I mean, but that was the perception, you know, you're going to do both because that's, that's just what needs to happen if you're going to work fine, but you got to come home and you're going to take care of all of these other responsibilities (Aurora, 2021).

The recruited participants were all female and shared their childhood experiences through adolescence and into their current roles in leadership through the lens of Chicana/Latina women. Sharing their experiences and commonalities demonstrated a common phenomenon. Their early childhood experiences created the mold for their leadership while their perseverance broke the construct of cultural and societal expectations. Navigating through the educational system that has not always been an easy task without the proper guidance, these strong and adaptable leaders have created a space where they can lead, grow, and help other women.

The first research question explored the participants' experiences that shaped them within their current role as a secondary administrator. All of the participants recalled a time within their adolescence or youth where they observed an inequity either personally or through familial experiences. In many cases these experiences are what has shaped their educational leadership style as well as their role as such. Murakami et al (2018) shared the conclusion of a study conducted pertaining to Latina/o School administrators stating:

By learning about the careers and experiences of Latina/o principals, we learned more about the relationship between their identity and leadership and the relationships between leadership and advocacy.

Verónica shared:

And it comes from my upbringing, and my culture, and my family, you know, that's just how to be hospitable, to be welcoming. To give people

the benefit of the doubt, you know? To always look at things. You know, to be optimistic. To see things, to see things, you know, with the glass half full. Um, to always know that, *no hay mal que por bien no venga*. You know, that's kinda how I live my life. And so when I try to see life through that lens, it allows me to, you know, interact with my staff in a positive manner, even through some of those difficult situations, for them. And so, yeah, I mean, I think it's who I am. And I think that's how I conduct myself. It's because of my culture and my family upbringing.

The second research question analyzed the lived experiences of the participants within their role as secondary school administrators as well as the barriers encountered. Six of the seven participants shared the duality that accompanies being a Chicana/Latina secondary administrator while balancing the familial and cultural expectations. Overwhelmingly all participants shared ethnicity and gender as an obstacle within their experiences as secondary administrators. Méndez-Morse et al (2015) states:

Latina educational leaders continue to face gender stereotypes as well as racial or ethnic bias if not outrage discrimination or belligerence. For these women, the phrase above aptly describes their educational leadership experiences, with the main difference being that now there are more Latina school leaders working under the same biases, prejudices and antagonisms as their predecessors.

Furthermore, Méndez-Morse et al (2015) goes on to say that another obstacle for women in educational leadership positions is the matter of having to take care of the family needs as well as being a leader of the school.

The third research question looked into the pathways that the participants navigated in order to reach their current role. Part of this pathway includes college choice and access. On the surface it is easy to assume that college access or information was easy for the participants, however their narratives tell a different story. In fact, some of the participants shared that while in high school they had no idea how to begin the college going process, however, they were aware that in order to get ahead and have a better life, education was the answer. Their parents did not know how to guide their daughters, however supported their choice to better themselves. Their high schools failed them, nonetheless because of their determination they learned how to navigate the college system. Alemán (2018) states that “Educational sites in the United States function as a microcosm of these transecting power dynamics, often disenfranchising Latina/o Chicana/o students through a reinscription and flattening of various power differentials” (pg. 180).

Furthermore, as Welton and Martinez (2014) noted from their study findings focusing SOC (students of color) and their access to high education: Even with apparent inequities based on race, class, and/or academic ability, ultimately there were a number of SOC who used academic achievements to affirm their racial/ethnic identity. In this sense, they drew upon both aspirational

and resistant forms of capital to continue in their pursuits in spite of negative stereotypes or lower expectations that we often placed upon them. For instance, many SOC used family racial and social class struggles as motivation to obtain greater opportunities.

Rosandrea shared:

...it was like I knew that they wanted me to go but I actually had very little help um, it was a very different time. You know, back when my dad, my mom didn't go to college but my dad, back when he went it was easy to get in you know. It was like... and they were all the student loans available, and it was so cheap, it was um, it was just different, whereas in the late '80s early '90s college- getting into college was very different. And um, the only thing that they did say, like my dad was, did say um, you know, "You've gotta through affirmative action, you have to. You know, you gotta mark that box, that's how you're gonna get in and it doesn't um, just get into wherever you can go." And um, and so, I think I just chose to go where I thought I could get in and I thought I could make it, so.

Carlotta shared:

And so, again, going back to that cultural perspective for my mom, she never said, you're going. She never said you need to go to college. Um, there was no conversation. She didn't even know how to navigate through the system. Um, I relied on my counselor, who herself as a Latina, um, was not able to provide me the guidance that she should have because

she took me out of AP classes and put me in social skills. Um, and, and I don't think she realized what she had done. Um, so that was really difficult. I didn't have that support system. And then I had my in-laws who from a cultural perspective, um, it was selfish of me to want to go away. And that's what I was told, "You have to give up your dreams." And so what I ended up doing, I stayed local. I went to a community college and I stayed local for, um, the university. So I went to UCR and I just found something that fit my, my family.

The fourth and final research question explored the strategies the participants utilized to overcome the barriers while maintaining their positions as secondary school administrators. All of the participants shared an experience where they encountered a barrier or obstacle directly related to their ethnicity, age, or a combination of both. Sánchez and Thornton (2010) noted several factors that affect women in educational leadership roles such as unseen gender inequities, sexism, bias, discrimination, role conflicts, low salaries, high job demands, and balance of work and family amongst others. Sánchez and Thornton (2010) state that although questions with regards to gender in the K-12 educational leaders, there are countless barriers faced by women and the educational field are very slow to change. All of the participants shared the support they have within their families as well as the desire to affect change has been the key factor in maintaining their current positions as secondary administrators.

Ximena shared:

So it goes back to you know, my... what drives me. It, it continues to drive me every day. And, and that is, uh, that I know the work we do matters to our kids. It matters to children. And, you know, right now, it's really tough, um, but I know that every, every decision, every action we take every, every kind act we have, whenever we, um, respond to parent concerns all of that, it's gonna, take our kids one step closer to achieving their American dream. And that's really why we, why we do this. Um, so that's what motivates me every day is giving kids the same opportunities or better opportunities than those that I had... because I expect that they're going to be, um, not just the leaders of this world, but are gonna pay forward to their community. They're gonna come back to their community and, and offer the same opportunities or better opportunities to those kids. And that's how we elevate our people is through those, through those opportunities that we give, that we give them and those doors that we open for each other.

#### Next Steps in the Educational Pipeline for a Diversified Administration

This study is grounded on the lived experiences and voices of Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators. The gap in literature that highlights the obstacles, barriers, and lack of support is great, as is the culmination and success they have endured to reach their current position.

Therefore, in order for educational reform to take place, a number of things must be put in place to ensure the success and support of Chicana/Latina secondary administrators.

Sánchez and Thornton (2010) emphasize that in order to affect change within educational leadership for women within K-12 “the process for achieving gender equity, a reconceptualization of effective leadership must occur; this is beyond the need to recruit, develop, and retain highly effective women.”

Furthermore, Sánchez and Thornton (2010) state that both professional organizations and educational institutions need to motivate and vitalize research focusing on gender issues within educational leadership as well as promote collaboration between educational stakeholders to address the gender inequities as well as be cognizant of the existence of gender roles and the influence women have in leadership positions.

Mentorship is equally as important in order to address Chicana/Latina secondary school administrators. Of the seven participants, only one stated she had a mentor who helped her achieve her goal as secondary school administrator. Mentors as well as mentorship are crucial for the opportunity and guidance as a female secondary school administrator. However, not having a mentor does not indicate failure, quite the contrary, it does help catapult many people into leadership roles with support and guidance. Méndez-Morse (2004) found in a study conducted:



The traditional mentoring paradigm is not the only viable means for minorities seeking to have a wider influence in the schools or districts in which they work. The women in this study constructed a mentor that met their needs and thus were able to pursue their personal and professional goal of becoming a principal (pg. 587).

Lastly, in order to affect the change necessary for Chicana/Latina and all women of color it is imperative that systems be put in place to support, guide, and mentor them. By creating a pipeline within the educational system, districts can mold their future leaders by providing them with opportunities and experiences necessary to promote from within.

#### Limitations of the Study

There are limitations to this transcendental phenomenological study which investigated the lived and shared experiences of seven Chicana/Latina secondary administrators. The participants of this study were all from Southern California, therefore the experiences of many additional Chicana/Latina secondary administrators is missing in the study as a limitation. Further research can be conducted to include Chicana/Latina secondary administrators from a much larger geographical area, this will add to the gaps in the literature that currently exist. Another limitation is the recruitment of participants. Participants for this study were contacted via networking from personal and professional contacts. Therefore, the limited number of participants also contributed to the study and a limitation.

## Conclusion

The participants in this study all have a growth-mindset and challenge the status quo. Through grit, resilience, faith, family, and *ganas* the participants made the decision to change the narrative of their journey and positively impact the next generation of Chicana/Latina secondary administrators. Their voices, stories, and trajectory demonstrate the tenacity each one has and the courage to move forward knowing at times that they would have not a seat at the table, and in turn they have created their own place.

APPENDIX A:  
INFORMED CONSENT FORM



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## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: Erika del Rosario Tejeda

Title of Project: Chicana/Latina Secondary Administrators: Obstacles, Triumphs, and Discernment – Si Se Pudo!

The study in which you are being asked to participate in is designed to investigate Chicana/Latina secondary administrators. This study is being conducted by Erika del Rosario Tejeda, doctoral student from the College of Education; Educational Leadership, under the supervision of Dr. Angela Louque, Professor for the College of Education, California State University, San Bernardino for the purposes of completing the doctoral dissertation. Participants in this research study must identify as Chicana/Latina as well as be a current secondary administrator. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to capture the lived experiences and narratives of Chicana/Latina secondary administrators. There is a plethora of information that can be learned through the accounts and experiences shared by these trailblazing women as they have navigated through their tenure.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES:** Participation in this study supposes the following from you:

1. Be willing to participate in one face-to-face or zoom interview that will last approximately 45-60 minutes.
2. To ensure accuracy of information, you agree to have the interview audio-recorded. The recording will be transcribed and the investigator will maintain confidentiality by keeping your

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name by keeping your name and school district out of any publication that may come from this study. All state and federal laws will be upheld to maintain confidentiality and the recordings will be deleted after the transcriptions have been made.

3. All questions for the interview will be given to you before the scheduled interview and you may choose to stop the interview at any time without penalty or consequence.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL:** Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You may skip or not answer any questions and can freely withdraw from participation at any time. There is not compensation for your participation in this research study monetary or otherwise. Your participation in the study will be from February 2021 to April of 2021.

**CONFIDENTIALTY:** Information gathered as part of this study shall either be stored in password protected computer or in a locked cabinet that only the researcher will have access to. The investigator will take all reasonable measures to maintain the confidentiality of the participants identity and responses. Participants identities and responses will be coded for privacy purposes and only coded information will be used in accordance to federal and state research procedures on reporting the data gathered by this process. If the findings of this study are published, presented, or reported on for professional review, no personal information about the identity of the participant or affiliation to the school district will be released. At the end of three years, all filed collected as part of this study will be deleted.

**RISKS:** The researcher believes there to be only minimal risks associated with this study. As part of the research process, discomfort may arise from answering questions about past experiences. The researcher will work with you to ensure any concerns or questions are addressed throughout the process and discomfort is minimized to ensure no harm is caused to human subjects.

**BENEFITS:** There are no benefits to the participant by way of compensation. The information gathered as part of this study will go far to add to the limited body research examining Chicana/Latina secondary administrators as well as create mentorship and leadership opportunities for aspiring women of color administrators.

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**CONTACT:** If any questions, comments, or concerns about the research occur, please contact the lead investigator, Erika D. Tejada at (951) 722-6688 or [erika.tejada@puhsd.org](mailto:erika.tejada@puhsd.org), or the dissertation chair, Dr. Angela Louque, California State University, San Bernardino Department of Educational Leadership, 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA, 92407 or email at [alouque@csusb.edu](mailto:alouque@csusb.edu) or call at (909) 537- 7312.

**CONFIRMATION STATEMENT**

I have read the information above and agree to participate in your study conducted by doctoral student Erika del Rosario Tejada from the Educational Program at California State University, San Bernardino. I am aware that I may contact Dr. Angela Louque, Ms. Tejada’s dissertation chair, at [a.louque@csusb.edu](mailto:a.louque@csusb.edu) for questions or concerns.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

I hereby certify that I am over the age of 18 and agree to participate in the research fully described above. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and all procedures are fully understood.

Participant’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is the assertion of the researcher that the research procedures have been explained and defined to the participant and being of sound mind and body, the participant voluntarily and knowingly have given informed consent to be a participant in this research and I am cosigning this form as proof of acceptance of this person’s consent.

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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APPENDIX B:  
IRB APPROVAL

April 14, 2021

**CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

Expedited Review

IRB-FY2021-30

Status: Approved

Prof. Angela Louque and Ms. Erika Tejeda-VanRensburg  
COE - Doctoral Studies, COE - Educ Leadership & Tech ELT  
California State University, San Bernardino  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Prof. Angela Louque and Ms. Erika Tejeda-VanRensburg:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Chicana/Latina Secondary School Principals" has been reviewed and reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk and benefits of the study except to ensure the protection of human participants. Important Note: This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit the Office of Academic Research website for more information at <https://www.csusb.edu/academic-research>.

The study is approved as of April 14, 2021. The study will require an annual administrative check-in (annual report) on the current status of the study on April 14, 2022. Please use the renewal form to complete the annual report.

If your study is closed to enrollment, the data has been de-identified, and you're only analyzing the data - you may close the study by submitting the Closure Application Form through the Cayuse IRB system. Please note the Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is due for renewal. Ensure you file your protocol renewal and continuing review form through the Cayuse IRB system to keep your protocol current and active unless you have completed your study. Please note a lapse in your approval may result in your not being able to use the data collected during the lapse in your approval.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse



event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission Webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action.

- **Important Notice: For all in-person research following IRB approval all research activities must be approved through the Office of Academic Research by filling out the [Project Restart and Continuity Plan](#).**
  - **Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.**
  - **Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.**
  - **Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.**
  - **Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.**

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risks and benefits to the human participants in your IRB application. If you have any questions about the IRB's decision please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at [mgillesp@csusb.edu](mailto:mgillesp@csusb.edu). Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2021-30 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive regarding your research from participants or others should be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

*Nicole Dabbs*

Nicole Dabbs, Ph.D., IRB Chair  
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

ND/MG

APPENDIX C:  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Demographic Details (optional):

- What is your age?
- What Ethnicity do you identify as?
- What is your current job title?
- How long have you been an administrator?

### Interview Questions:

1. To what extent has your ethnic identity shaped your educational leadership?
  - a. Policies
  - b. Practices
  - c. Leadership styles
2. What inspires you as an educational leader?
3. What obstacles and barriers have you experienced in your role as an educational leader?
4. What has been your defining moment in your educational leadership career?
5. How did your family influence you in becoming an educational leader?
6. How did college choice and your family influence you?
7. What motivates you to continue being an educational leader?

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